

19; Luke 24:50, 51; Acts 1:9-11). He waits there for the coming expression of glory (Eph. 1:20-22; Heb. 2:9; 10:13; Psa. 110:1).

d. His mother

Her flight into the wilderness is a jump into the future. The entire present Age of Grace is between verses 5 and 6. The flight is in the Tribulation. This is the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7). The details of this time are given (Matt. 24:15-28). But God does not desert the nation, rather He provides for the nation over a period of 1260 days, the extent of the last half of the tribulation. What an amazing account!

Conclusion God has allowed the student of this portion of the Bible to look into the real conflict of the ages. He is able to see God's purpose for Israel, Satan, and the Messiah. The triumph ultimately belongs to God. All hell and its leader, the dragon, have been thwarted. What a joy to the believing heart to read this. But oh, if you are not saved. What hope have you? None! Turn to Him while there is yet time! The day of salvation is NOW (2 Cor. 6:2).

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

"A Woman, A Dragon, A Child"  
Revelation 12:1-6

Introduction

1. This is one of the most important chapters in the Bible. It explains both history and prophecy. It is an inset for it tells the truth of God both past and future. It goes back to Abraham and forward to the Tribulation.

2. Chapter 11 dealt with the witnesses during the Tribulation. They suffered death at the hands of the Antichrist (11:7). The Antichrist broke his covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27). What comes now?--the truth concerning the nation Israel. That's what this chapter is about. It is the unravelling of the mystery of Israel.

3. But more! This chapter shows that the conflict of the ages is more than just a battle between good and evil. It is not a mere abstract problem. The true conflict of the ages concerns personalities. The scope of time is tremendous. Great past and future items are compressed into a few verses. The church age is omitted. It is a fabulous study. Give your time to it now:

1. A WOMAN vv. 1, 2.

In the Bible, a woman is a symbol for religion, false or true. There are four major ones: 1) Jezebel (2:20) symbolizes paganism and idolatrous worship. 2) Scarlet woman (17) symbolizes ecumenical false religion. 3) Bride of Christ (19) symbolizes the true church. 4) Sun-clothed woman (here) symbolizes Israel as a nation. Note what the Book says about her:

a. Her appearance

Her clothing is the sun, her feet have the moon under them, and her head has a crown of 12 stars. There is only one other place in the Bible where these items are mentioned (Gen. 37:9-11). The reference is obvious: Israel. True, the Genesis passage dealt with Israel at the beginning and as a family of Jacob, but the seed of the truth is there. The woman is called a "sign" (wonder).

This word is used 77 times in the New Testament and points to something to show a relationship. Here, of Israel as she is before God.

b. Her activity v. 2.

This verse is very dramatic. All the verbs are present tenses. The force of these verbs is that from the time of Abraham until the birth of the Messiah, this was the intent of the nation. Hence, Genesis until Matthew is set forth in one single verse! It is an amazing situation: Israel was always concerned with bringing forth the Messiah!

BUT, there is opposition to the establishment of God's rule under the Messiah. It comes from the Evil One, Satan. Study:

2. A DRAGON vv. 3, 4.

a. His appearance

Twelve times the word dragon is used of Satan in this book of Revelation. It points to his hideousness and horror. It is true he is described as being beautiful (Ezek. 28:12ff.) and one with whom even Michael, the archangel, dared not get involved (Judge 8, 9), but the fact is: he is a dragon! He is of great proportions. He is red, suggesting at once attractiveness and repulsiveness. He is a murderer and liar (John 8:44). His seven heads speak of wisdom, his 10 horns of governments at his feet (cf. 17:12), and his seven crowns (diadems) of his despotism or diabolical exercise of power. The whole picture is breath-taking and formidable. The connection with Antichrist (13:1) is obvious, but this is Satan himself.

b. His activity

All of Satan's activities have a double motive of concern: 1) to rule and worship. 2) To hate God's Messiah (Chosen One) and prohibit Him from reigning. Some aspects of his efforts are given here:

1) Stars. He drew 1/3 of the stars after himself. These stars are angels (v. 7). This may well be

the exact proportion of angels who followed Satan in his rebellion after creation. Their number is fixed and they land with Satan in their judgment (Matt. 25:41). They were cast to the earth as Satan's followers (cf. John 10:4).

2) Woman. He stood before her. The verb is imperfect and outlines Satan's historical intents to do harm to Israel. A study of Israel's history bears this out! The preposition "before" suggests that Satan was right there all the time to do the harm, although not always recognized by Israel. If you take the time to review Israel's history from Abraham right through the life of Christ, you will see how breath-takingly Satan has sought to destroy God's plan of the ages! His whole purpose was to "devour the child" as soon as it was born. The life-story of Christ is the account of Satan's attempts at His life! Satan pursues his hatred even after the Lord's ascension by harassing Israel (v. 6).

3. A CHILD vv. 5, 6.

a. His birth

It is the woman, Israel, who brings forth the child, the Messiah. This is all to say that the woman cannot be Rome nor the Church, but Israel. It is Israel who travails and not the church. It is Israel who brings forth the Messiah (cf. Micah 5:2, 3; Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Heb. 7:14). He is a "man" child. All the talk of the Lord being a "woman" has no Bible support.

b. His future

Clearly God marks that He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. The word "rule" means to shepherd. This He will do. The reference to the Old Testament is patent (Psa. 2:9). He will break all the governments and be established as King of kings! He does it with a crashing blow (Dan. 2:44). We shall have an exalted dignity with Him (2:26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3).

c. His rapture

The Bible records His ascension. This is a mark of His personal glory. The record is factual (Mark 16: