

THE CHURCH AND THE DRAGON Revelation 12

Introduction: This study shows the struggle between God's ever living church and Satan, primarily in the New Testament dispensation. It focuses on Satan's failures, notwithstanding his apparent successes, to destroy the church and climaxes in his efforts to flood the church with unconverted people and the Lord's intervention in purifying the church by removing the unconverted.

Prayer Thought: **7BC 974** "Satan's Masterpiece of Evil.--Those who love and keep the commandments of God are most obnoxious to the synagogue of Satan, and the powers of evil will manifest their hatred toward them to the fullest extent possible. John foresaw the conflict between the remnant church and the power of evil, and said, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." {7BC 974.6}

"Only Two Parties Upon Earth.--There are only two parties upon this earth--those who stand under the bloodstained banner of Jesus Christ and those who stand under the black banner of rebellion. In the twelfth chapter of Revelation is represented the great conflict between the obedient and the disobedient [Rev. 12:17; 13:11-17 quoted] (MS 16, 1900)." {7BC 974.8}

1. Read Rev. 12: 1, 2, 5.

What does a woman represent in Scripture?

Jeremiah 6: 2 - church

G.C: 381 "...In Revelation 17 Babylon is represented as a woman --a figure which is used in the Bible as the symbol of a church, *a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church.*" {GC 381.1}

Which church does the woman of Rev. 12 represent?

It was the *Jewish church* that brought forth Christ, "the man child." It could not be the Christian church for this church was formed years after His birth. After living a perfect life and being victorious over Satan, Jesus ascended on high after His death and resurrection - **Rev. 19:15; Isa. 11:4**

What is depicted by the woman being clothed with the sun?

The Bible – **Ps. 119: 105**

What does the moon under her feet represent?

The period of oral tradition.

G.C: v “During the first twenty-five hundred years of human history, *there was no written revelation. Those who had been taught of God, communicated their knowledge to others, and it was handed down from father to son, through successive generations.* The preparation of the written word began in the time of Moses. Inspired revelations were then embodied in an inspired book. This work continued during the long period of sixteen hundred years--from Moses, the historian of creation and the law, to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel.” {GC v.2}

What does her crown of 12 stars represent?

The Authority and Government of the church – Matt. 19: 28. Thus the 12 Patriarchs, 12 tribes, 12 apostles and later the 144,000 (12 thousand out of each tribe).

2. Read verses 3, 4 & 9.

Who is the Dragon?

The Devil / Satan

What do his seven heads indicate?

Satan controlled all the churches at the time of Christ’s birth. **AA 585.3** “...The number 7 indicates completeness,” and heads denote religious bodies (**Rev. 17: 9; 13: 3**)

What do his ten horns indicate?

Satan controlled the civil government of that day (**Dan. 8: 20, 21**). Ten denotes universality (ten virgins, ten toes of Daniel.2 image).

What do the seven crowns upon his heads depict?

While the dragon ruled both civil and religious worlds, he crowned the religious. Thus the church held the scepter; the church sat on the dragon’s throne

What is meant by the dragon casting a third part of the stars of heaven to the earth with his tail?

The stars represent the fallen angels - **3T 115** “...Satan in his rebellion *took a third part of the angels.* They turned from the Father and from His Son, and united with the instigator of rebellion...” {3T 114.2}. They voluntarily followed Satan in rebellion. Had he forced them, the symbol would depict him using his claws instead of his tail.

What is meant by the dragon standing ready to devour the child as soon as it was born?

Satan waited for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, and tried to destroy Him. The decree Herod made to destroy all male children under two years old (**Matt. 2: 16-18**) illustrates this. His failure to do so represents Satan's **FIRST DEFEAT**.

3. Read verses 7-9 & 13.

When was Satan cast out unto the earth?

Shortly after the resurrection of Christ, Satan was cast out of heaven and thus sustained his **SECOND DEFEAT**.

DA 833, 834 "All heaven was waiting to welcome the Saviour to the celestial courts. As He ascended, He led the way, and the multitude of captives set free at His resurrection followed. The heavenly host, with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song, attended the joyous train. {DA 833.2}

"Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the angelic throng sweep through the gates amid a burst of rapturous music. {DA 833.7}

"There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King." {DA 834.1}

DA 761 "Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. *The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.* {DA 761.2}

- He was not cast out immediately after he rebelled or even when he caused Adam and Eve to sin, for in *the time of Job* he had access to heaven. - **Job 1:6, 7; 2:1, 2.**
- According to Rev. 12: 13 he was cast out *before he went to persecute the church,* for when he realized that he was cast out he persecuted the woman. This was at the time of Acts 8: 1.
- The incident of **Rev. 12: 4**, *the dragon drawing down the stars*, took place before the Lord was born, and the incident of **Rev. 12: 9**, *the Lord casting down the dragon*, took place after His resurrection. See Tr. 12: 80, 81; 2TG 28: 13; SR 27.

4. Read verses 10-12.

Satan dropped down with great wrath.

PK 585 "Satan's accusations against those who seek the Lord are not prompted by displeasure at their sins. He exults in their defective characters; for he knows that only through their transgression of God's law can he obtain power over them." {PK 585.3}

- God's people should recognize the *voice of the Spirit of Christ*, which *strives for obedience to God's Word* as well as *discern the spirit of Satan*, which *excuses sin and sympathizes with the sinner*.
- The faithful overcome Satan "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." They love "not their lives unto the death." **Rev. 12:11.**

5. Read verses 6 & 14.

The church flees

- The church fled her home (Jerusalem) and went into Gentile land (wilderness).
- God fed (nourished or sustained) the church in Gentile land for 1,260 years (538-1789 AD)
- Her two wings represent two periods of church history: (i) From Adam to the cross (ii) From the cross to the end of the world. This proves that God has only one true church in all ages.

6. Read verse 15.

The serpent's flood.

After recognizing that persecuting and slaying the Christians failed to stop the spread of Christianity, Satan changed his strategy. He tried to destroy the church within by infiltrating it with the unconverted, casting a flood of water (people – **Rev. 17:15; Isa. 17:12**) after the woman. This became prominent with Constantine and has continued up to our time. See **GC 385, 42, 43; EW 227, 228; R.H May 21, 1901; R.H Jan. 10, 1893 par. 2; 6T 371; COL 315, 316**

7. Read verse 16. *The earth helped the Woman by swallowing up the Dragon's flood.*

This is Satan's **THIRD DEFEAT**. See **Num. 16: 23-34; Nah. 1:15; Isa. 49: 18 23;**

TM 372, 373 "Page after page might be written in regard to these things. Whole conferences are becoming leavened with the same perverted principles. "For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth." *The Lord will work to purify His church. I tell you in truth, the Lord is about to turn and overturn in the institutions [SEE APPENDIX.] called by His name.* {TM 372.4}

"Just how soon this refining process will begin I cannot say, but it will not be long deferred. He whose fan is in His hand will cleanse His temple of its moral defilement. He will thoroughly purge His floor..."

1T 190, 198; 2T 445

8. Read verse 17. Warring against the Remnant of Her Seed.

The Dragon is wroth with the Woman, the 144,000, who remain after the destruction of his flood, but he cannot harm them because they are sealed. Thus he wars against the “remnant of her seed” the Great Multitude, those still in Babylon – **Rev. 18:4**. This brings the “time of trouble such as never was” – **Dan. 12:1**, the mark of the beast decree – **Rev. 13: 15-17**.