

Revelation 12

1. Who is the Pregnant Woman?

And a **great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.** ² She was **pregnant** and was crying out in **birth pains and the agony of giving birth.**

a. Mary, the mother of Jesus?

- **The strength of this position** is that the woman is pregnant, gives birth to a male child who will rule the nations with a rod of iron (vs. 12:5). Also, “her” child is someone the red dragon is so focused on, he wanted to devour it (vs. 12:4). Finally, since her child was caught up to God and to his throne, a reference to his ascension, her child must be from a simplistic standpoint, this must be Mary.
- **The weakness:** This may sound crazy, but this “great sign” is too obvious at first glance. It is easy to conclude. “Mary bore Jesus,” end of story. However, there are speed bumps that get in the way of this smooth interpretation, which should make you slow down and pay attention to the road. First, this great sign appears not in Bethlehem, but in heaven, where this “woman” is clothed like the sun, a reference to radiance, glory, prestige in the heavenlies. Rarely is a human described with this kind of heavenly language. Secondly, this woman has the moon under her feet, which denotes subjection. Who would be subject to Mary, the mother of Jesus? Finally, she also wears a crown with twelve stars, which signifies heavenly royalty. Such an interpretation has led the Catholic Church to pay more homage to Mary than it should, which has led them to conclude Mary is the Queen of heaven.

b. The Woman is Israel?

- **The Strength of this position** is that it brings to mind some of the nation’s historical imagery. The most notable being the symbols associated with the pregnant woman, such as the sun, the moon, and the twelve stars, which brings to mind the second dream of Joseph. In this dream, Jacob, the father, interpreted it to refer himself (The sun), Rachel (The moon), and the eleven stars as his sons, each one bowing down to Joseph. If this is true, we know this pregnant woman represents the foundation of the nation of Israel, which are the twelve tribes and Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Factoring in these references, along with the fact that Jesus was born in Israel, this seems to make a strong case for the woman being Israel.
- **The Weakness of this position** is that ethnic Israel for the most part rejected Jesus, while playing a major role in orchestrating the death of Jesus. Secondly, it seems odd that divine language would be used to describe for a nation in heaven, and difficult to explain how the “moon” would be subjected under Israel’s feet. Lastly, the time stamp and end time events described focus more on the NT, not Old Testament Israel.

c. The Woman Represents the People of God (Believers in Jesus)

- **The Strength of this position** is the time stamp, which focuses on three specific events, the birth of Jesus, his ascension to heaven, and the great pursuit of “the woman’s” offspring afterwards. Secondly, the “woman” is persecuted by the dragon **after** Jesus’ ascension, which corresponds with Revelation chapters 1-3, where the churches are told they will experience persecution, yet told to remain faithful unto death. There is no record of Mary fleeing to the wilderness after Jesus had grown up, died, resurrected, and ascended to heaven. However, there is mention of this happening to God’s people, including in John’s time, prior to Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed in 70 AD.

- **The Weakness of this Position:** The order is backward. The church does NOT give birth to Jesus; but rather Jesus gives birth to the church.
- **Pastors Conclusion:** Visions, like dreams, are not easy to interpret. There will always be images and scenes that don't seem connected. One can spend too much time trying to force and "bend" the pieces to fit like a puzzle while missing the big picture of the Book of Revelation. Context is Important! Having stated that, I side with the pregnant woman representing the People of God (Believers) mainly because of the time stamp, which corresponds to the events mentioned.

2. Who is the Great Red Dragon?

³ And **another sign appeared in heaven**: behold, **a great red dragon**, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

⁴ His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. **And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.**

⁵ She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, ⁶ and **the woman fled** into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

a. Who is the Great Red Dragon?

- While there is mystery with regard to the pregnant woman, there is no such confusion regarding the identity of the red dragon. Verse 9 states, he is the ancient serpent (An illusion to the events connected to the Garden of Eden), the satan (The accuser), and the devil himself.
- The satan is the one who was focused on the birth of Jesus because he wants to "devour" him. This pursuit began in the Garden when the serpent was told that there would be conflict between the woman's offspring and his, anticipating the death (Satan strikes the heel) and resurrection (Jesus strikes the head) (Genesis 3:15).

Ever since, Satan has tried to pollute the bloodlines with angels that have sexual relations with women (Genesis 6), kings that have almost slept with the wives of the patriarchs (Sarai and Rebekah), giants (The Nephilim) nations that seek to destroy Israel (Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians), sexual immorality (Temple Prostitutes). To put it mildly, Satan has used anyone and everyone to prevent this offspring from being born.

b. His Features

- **Red Dragon.** Red denotes blood, which is associated with death. This beast is referred to as a dragon. In the bible, the dragon is the symbol of evil, the ultimate foe of God, who is great and powerful. Usually associated with a sea monster named Leviathan, who is said to breathe fire and cause terror. So powerful when it sneezes, it produces light, with flames coming from its nostrils (Job 41:18–23).
- **Seven heads and ten horns** are interpreted in Revelation 17:9-10, where the seven heads represent seven mountains. Fun Fact: Rome throughout the millennia has been known as the City on Seven Hills. Every reader would have understood that immediately.
- **Ten Horns (with diadems)** are simply 10 kings. Whenever you see multiple crowns, horns, and heads, on a beast, it often depicts kings and kingdoms the devil uses to corrupt and destroy God's people. Though these kings are in power, they are under the dragons control.

c. His Objectives:

- Again, his focus is to devour the woman's child because of the threat Jesus poses to his objectives to kill, steal, and destroy (John 10:10). **Sweeping Tail** taking down a third of the stars are a reference to the satan's recruitment of angels from heaven, after his fall (Ezekiel 28:11-19, Isaiah 14:12-17).
- **Why Jesus?** He is the Promised Child who is coming to rule the nations with a rod of iron (vs. 12:5, Psalm 2:9).

3. The Plight of the Red Dragon

⁷ Now war arose in heaven, **Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.**

⁹ And **the great dragon** was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

a. The War in Heaven

- After his initial fall from grace, satan still had access to heaven. In Job he is described as one of the sons of God, who vacillated between earth and heaven (Job 1-2).
- Satan was once an angel of prominence in heaven. The heavenly worship leader. However, his desire to be like God had him demoted, cast out if you will. In this failed endeavor he took with him 1/3 of the angels

b. His Defeat

- The victory Christ achieved on the cross was NOT limited to forgiveness and redemption, but also sealed the fate of the satan, who had to give up the keys of death and hades.
- Michael and his angels defeated the serpent in the war of heaven, resulting in his permanent banishment from heaven. Him and his army thrown down.

4. The Unlikely Conqueror

¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "**Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.**

¹¹ And **they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.**

¹² Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them!

But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because **he knows that his time is short!**"

a. **A Praise of Relief:** The Accuser has been thrown down from heaven.

b. **The Hero against the GREAT RED DRAGON:** A lamb that was slain, conquered with his blood.

c. **Plan B:** Go after God's People on Earth. Desperation. He is on the clock.

5. God's Great Deliverance

¹³ And when **the dragon** saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

¹⁵ **The serpent** poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood.

¹⁶ But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.

a. Eagles Wings: Protected By God

- Familiar Metaphor: How God's People achieve deliverance and freedom
- Encouraging in Times of Distress

b. God's Protection against satanic Assault

- **OT Illusion: Ezekiel 29:3-4** Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, 'My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.' made it for myself." 4 I will put hooks in your jaws, and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales; and I will draw you up out of the midst of your streams, with all the fish of your streams that stick to your scales. 5 And I will cast you out into the wilderness, you and all the fish of your streams; you shall fall on the open field, and not be brought together or gathered. To the beasts of the earth and to the birds of the heavens
 - **Though Satan is defeated**, he is desperate
 - **Main Point:** Expect the serpent's assault

6. The Dragons New Great Obsession

¹⁷ Then **the dragon** became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her **OFFSPRING**, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

a. The Woman must be God's People

- Representing both Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ as Messiah.
- Mary and Ethnic Israel don't fit the context of the dragon's focus

b. Practically Speaking

- Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8).
- Satan is desperate, his time is short. The Lamb has conquered
- The theme of Revelation: Be a Conqueror, even to the point of death