

Memorize the TRUTH!

Revelation

Lesson 13 The Woman and the Dragon Revelation 12

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.
Revelation 12:11

Identifying The Woman, The Dragon and The Child – Revelation 12:1-6

Day 1

1. How do these verses about Jacob from the Old Testament show that the "woman" in John's vision represents the Nation of Israel?
Genesis 37:9-10

Genesis 35:9-12, 23-26

2. Who is the "enormous red dragon?" (see verse 9)
3. a. Who is the "child that the dragon wanted to devour?" Luke 1:30-33

b. Why would such a powerful being want or need to destroy an infant?

1 John 3:8

Learn the TRUTH!

Do you ever sense an intense spiritual battle going on around you? Satan always opposes the plans of God, and you are part of that plan! Satan's time is short, so he furiously wages war against God's children. Don't be fooled by his schemes nor condemned by his accusations. Instead, trust the One who holds your future in His hands!

God's Protection – Revelation 12:1-6

Day 2

4. This "wondrous sign" of the woman, the dragon and the child is a picture that spans almost all of history. Can you think of what historically corresponds to :
 - a. The dragon waiting to devour the child when he was born?

b. The child being snatched up to God and His throne?
5. How does the fact that God protected the weak– a pregnant woman and an infant- from an enormous red dragon impact the way you view Satan, God and your own circumstances?

Satan's Agenda
Revelation 12:7-9

Day 3

6. What do you learn about Satan from these 3 verses?

7. What are Satan's goals and methods?
Zechariah 3:1

John 8:44

2 Corinthians 4:4

8. What defense do we have against Satan's schemes?
John 16:13

John 17:14-17

1 Peter 5:8-9

Overcoming Evil
Revelation 12:10-12

Day 4

9. a. Satan constantly accuses Christians before God. How can we defend ourselves against his accusations? 1 John 2:1-2

b. What kind of accusations do you think he makes against believers? Against you?

10. What do you think it means to overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony?

Luke 9:23-24

11. a. Which do you think is more difficult— dying for God, or living for Him? Why?

b. How are these two alternatives related?

Romans 12:1-2

The War Against Believers
Revelation 12:13-17

Day 5

12. As the dragon pursues the woman and God protects her, what role does nature play in all this?

13. With the woman protected, who becomes the dragon's secondary target?

Galatians 3:26-29

14. Why do you think obeying God and holding to the testimony of Jesus is always so important?

John 14:21-23

Live the TRUTH!

Heaven will rejoice when the accuser is finally hurled down. But woe to the earth, because in his fury, Satan will do everything he can to pull us away from God and destroy our testimony. If you are following Christ, your personal encounter with Jesus Christ *is* your testimony, and people need to hear it. So let go of your life and your safety. Trust God and tell people your story.

Commentary Revelation Lesson 13

**Check
It Out:**

The final trumpet has sounded, resulting in the declaration that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of God. Along with God's judgments on the earth, the remaining events include the last desperate and malicious acts of Satan. God's kingdom is closing in on sinful, unrepentant humanity and on the highest spiritual powers of wickedness. Chapter 12 depicts the final conflict between Satan and Israel and her offspring.

John observes two wonders, or signs, in heaven. The first is the woman, whose identity appears to be that of the nation Israel, with the twelve stars representing the nation's twelve tribes. Many sincere Christians, it should be noted, believe that literal Israel is no longer in the divine plan, having been replaced by the church, a spiritual Israel. Others, however, adopt the view explained here: literal Israel will experience a resurgence after the "full number of the Gentiles has come in" (Romans 11:25-32).

The second heavenly wonder is the dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns. The dragon is "that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan" (Revelation 12:9, 20:2). If the antichrist emerges as one of the ten but devours three others, the result is seven kingdoms and seven crowns. John's vision parallels that of Daniel 7: 7-8, confirming that the heads/horns/crowns of the dragon represent the end-time political structure of Gentile world power dominated by Satan and the antichrist.

The dragon's tail "swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth." This probably refers to the angels that Satan took with him when he rebelled against God in the beginning. The dragon stands before the woman about to give birth, intending to "devour her child the moment it [is] born." This actually happened in history when Herod tried to kill the infant Messiah after hearing about Him from the Magi (Matthew 2:1-18). Before the dragon can devour the infant, the royal Son escapes into heaven, probably a reference to Christ's ascension. The divinely anointed Heir of all things was snatched up to the Father in heaven without the dragon's mission having been accomplished.

The dragon's defeat leads to the flight of the woman to a desert place prepared by God. The "woman" refers to the generation of Jews living in Israel, particularly Jerusalem, during the last days. Her days of hiding in the desert are "1,260 days," or the last three and a half years of the Tribulation.

Next, there is a war in heaven (12:7-9). The birth of Israel's messianic Child and His escape to heaven results in an effort by Michael and his troops to eject the dragon and his angels from heaven. The time has come for heaven to be rid of Satan, the relentless accuser of the brethren before God. His accusations have now been answered by Israel's royal Son. Satan and his angels are ejected from heaven. Not only is Satan banished from heaven, but in his defeat he and his angels are thrown to earth. Here the identity of the "great dragon" is made clear as "the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan." God has a purpose for ejecting Satan to earth, rather than destroying him now. Satan (the dragon) "and his angels" will labor together in the tribulation finale.

Wasn't Satan defeated at the cross? Didn't the resurrection prove that Jesus is the victor? Why then will there be war in heaven? Yes, Satan was defeated at the cross, and sin cannot ultimately triumph. But in His sovereignty, God has chosen to delay the enforcement of Satan's defeat. Satan must operate under the limits God sets. If we realize that the only future he has is the Abyss for a thousand years and then the lake of fire for eternity, we will resist him in the power of our Lord and Savior—and Satan will turn and run.

James says, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (4:7).

Satan can make plenty of accusations about us because we are all sinners. But when we trust Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross to cover our sin, we are blameless before God. Every time Satan accuses us before God, Jesus, our Advocate, stands up and says, "I shed My blood for that sin on Calvary." God, the judge, says, "No condemnation!"

A loud voice in heaven celebrates Satan's defeat and its implications: the coming of God's kingdom, and the completion of the "salvation" of God's people. Until his expulsion, Satan had retained access to heaven and to God's throne, where he was an "accuser of our brothers...before our God day and night."

The heavenly voice also celebrates the victory of the saints, who have overcome Satan. They overcame him "by the blood of the Lamb." Because of their faith in Christ and His finished work on the cross, Satan lost the power to make valid accusations against them before God. "By the word of their testimony" implies that they spoke out for Christ when it was unpopular and even dangerous to do so. "They did not love their lives" suggests that they could not be intimidated into giving up their Christian walk or their witness; they did not "shrink from death" for Christ's sake.

The voice announces woe to the earth and the sea. Why? The devil has been banished to earth, "gone down to you. He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short" (12:12). His career is about to end. The earth will bear the brunt of his rage.

John's vision turns to the devil's persecution of the Son-bearing woman and her offspring. The dragon chases the woman because she "had given birth to the male child," that is, Christ, who defeated Satan (12:13). But God provides for the woman's escape. She is given "two wings of a great eagle" to "the place prepared for her in the desert." This place is likely the wilderness of Judea outside Jerusalem. The length of time during which she is cared for is given as "time, times and half a time," probably referring to the last half of the tribulation period.

"The serpent [Satan], spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent." Possibly a military force—a stream of soldiers—pursues those Jews fleeing Judea. But destruction will not reach the woman, for "the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth" so that what comes out of the serpent's mouth is swallowed by the earth's mouth in time to save her. God did something like this in Exodus 14:23-28 when He caused the divided waters of the Red Sea to swallow the Egyptians who were pursuing Israel. We have already seen in 11:13 that there will be considerable seismic activity in Israel during those last days, so a fissure in the earth's surface is not at all inconceivable.

The dragon then turns to the offspring of the woman. John notes once more Satan's rage at the woman because she bore the Messiah, who defeated him. He is "filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short." Satan will "make war" against believers.

Who are "the rest of her offspring" that Satan feels compelled to fight? Paul says in Galatians 3:29, "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed," which suggests that all believers, including Gentiles, would qualify as the woman's seed. Satan's persecution will only give God's people a better opportunity to overcome, to prove their determination in God's sight, and to lay up for themselves eternal treasure in God's coming kingdom.



Walk the Walk:

Many Bible interpreters say that when Satan is kicked out of heaven, he will come to the earth, incarnate the anti-christ, and place the abomination that causes desolation in the temple in Jerusalem. His purpose will be to make everyone in the world worship him. Remember the church in Smyrna, the persecuted church? Jesus' message to them was "Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). That is what it means to "hold to the testimony of Jesus." Regardless of the cost, the persecution, the suffering, we must determine in our hearts that Jesus Christ alone is our Lord. May we also be found faithful.



Dig Deeper

Here are some references that help identify the dragon, the woman and the child, and the battle between them.

Matthew 1:1-16

Romans 9:1-5

Genesis 3:15

1 Corinthians 15:24-26