Revelation 12

The Woman and the Dragon: Overcome by the Blood

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION

"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so."
Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

Behind every attack on God's people stands an angry, defeated enemy. He could not stop the Child, he could not stay in heaven, and he cannot win against those who stand on the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. His wrath is great because his time is short.

Ed Smith · Started 20 October 2026

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00 The Text

REVELATION 12 (KJV), MARKED

▲ Gold God — His character & actions
Green Command / instruction
Sky Key repeated word
⚠ Rose Sin / warning
★ Violet Promise / blessing
Amber Time / place / contrast

[1] And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

[2] And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

[3] And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

[4] And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

[5] And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

[6] And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

[7] And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

[8] And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

[9] And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

[10] And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

[11] And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

[12] Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

[13] And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

[14] And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time , and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

[15] And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

[16] And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

[17] And 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.

Marked in the text

- **v1** a great wonder in heaven
- **v1** a woman clothed with the sun
- **v1** a crown of twelve stars
- **v3** a great red dragon
- **v3** dragon *(every occurrence)*
- **v4** the third part of the stars of heaven
- **v4** for to devour her child
- **v5** a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron
- **v5** caught up unto God, and to his throne
- **v6** wilderness *(every occurrence)*
- **v6** a place prepared of God
- **v6** a thousand two hundred and threescore days
- **v7** there was war in heaven
- **v8** prevailed not
- **v9** that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan
- **v9** which deceiveth the whole world
- **v10** Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God
- **v10** the accuser of our brethren is cast down
- **v11** they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb
- **v11** by the word of their testimony
- **v11** they loved not their lives unto the death
- **v12** rejoice, ye heavens
- **v12** having great wrath
- **v12** he hath but a short time
- **v14** two wings of a great eagle
- **v14** and times, and half a time
- **v16** the earth helped the woman
- **v17** keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ

Marks are drawn on the KJV text. Quotations in the notes are from the NASB95, so their wording may differ from the KJV above.

01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 12:1 (KJV)

[1]And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

Setting

The seventh trumpet has sounded and heaven has announced that "the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord" (11:15). Now John steps back to show the war behind all the wars. Chapter 12 is a new vision of "signs" (vv1, 3) — a woman, a dragon and a child — that pulls back the curtain on why the world rages against God's people.

Structure

- vv1–2 — **the woman:** "A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (v1). She is with child and cries out in labor (v2).
- vv3–4 — **the dragon:** "a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems" (v3). His tail sweeps away "a third of the stars of heaven," and he stands before the woman "so that when she gave birth he might devour her child" (v4).

- vv5–6 — **the child and the wilderness:** "she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne" (v5). The woman flees into the wilderness to "a place prepared by God," nourished there for 1,260 days (v6).
- vv7–9 — **war in heaven:** "Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon" (v7); the dragon is "not strong enough" (v8). "The great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world" (v9).
- vv10–12 — **heaven's song:** "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 brethren has been thrown down" (v10). "They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death" (v11). Heaven rejoices, but "woe to the earth and the sea," because the devil has come down "having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" (v12).
- vv13–17 — **the woman pursued:** the dragon persecutes the woman (v13). She is given "the two wings of the great eagle" and nourished "for a time and times and half a time" (v14). The serpent pours out water like a river; the earth swallows it (vv15–16). The dragon, enraged, goes off "to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (v17).

Repeated words

woman (vv1, 4, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17); dragon (vv3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17); thrown down (vv9, 10, 13); heaven / heavens (vv1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12); wilderness (vv6, 14); war (vv7, 17); serpent (vv9, 14, 15); child (vv2, 4, 5, 13).

Contrasts

The woman clothed with the sun ⟷ the red dragon (vv1–3). The dragon ready to devour ⟷ the child caught up to God (vv4–5). Michael's angels ⟷ the dragon's angels (v7). Accused day and night (v10) ⟷ overcame by the blood of the Lamb (v11). Rejoice, O heavens ⟷ woe to the earth and the sea (v12). The dragon's great wrath ⟷ his short time (v12). The flood from his mouth ⟷ the earth opening its mouth to help (vv15–16).

Chapter theme (my words)

Behind every attack on God's people stands an angry, defeated enemy. He could not stop the Child, he could not stay in heaven, and he cannot win against those who stand on the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. His wrath is great because his time is short.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 12:5 (KJV)

5 And she brought forth ▲ a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was ▲ caught up unto God, and to his throne.

The woman (vv1–2)

Christians identify her in different ways. Roman Catholic tradition has seen Mary. Many Protestants and others see the people of God across both testaments — Israel giving birth to the Messiah and continuing as the church. Guzik, reading from a futurist and dispensational view, says, "Scripturally, this woman clothed with the sun should be identified with Israel." His reason is Joseph's dream, where the sun, moon and eleven stars stand for Jacob's family (Gen 37:9–10). He sets aside Mary because Mary does not flee into the wilderness for 1,260 days. The labor pains fit Israel's long travail awaiting the Messiah (Isa 66:7–8; Mic 5:2–3). Guzik also notes, "Women often represent religious systems in Revelation" — compare the harlot of chapter 17 and the bride of chapter 19.

The dragon (vv3–4)

Verse 9 removes all doubt: the dragon is "the devil and Satan." Johnson says the description "symbolically suggests his fierce power and murderous nature." The seven heads, ten horns and crowns look ahead to the beast of 13:1 and 17:3, 12; Walvoord ties them to a revived Roman empire. Guzik: "The crowns represent his presumptive claims of royal authority against the true King." The third of the stars swept from heaven is taken by many — Guzik among them — as the angels who fell with Satan; the stars are angels in 1:20. The dragon waiting to devour the child points to Satan's war against the promised Seed from Genesis 3:15 on, and directly to Herod's slaughter at Bethlehem (Matt 2:16).

The male child caught up (vv5–6)

The child is clearly Christ, who will "rule all the nations with a rod of iron" (Ps 2:9; Rev 19:15). Alford: "Words can hardly be plainer than these." John goes straight from His birth to His ascension; Guzik notes that by naming the starting and ending points of Jesus' earthly work, John alluded to all that stood in between — including the cross. The flight into the wilderness for 1,260 days jumps forward to the end; Guzik places it in the last half of Daniel's seventieth week and calls this kind of gap a "near-far" break typical of prophecy. Those who read the woman as the church see the wilderness as the whole church age, in which God feeds and protects His people in a hostile world.

War in heaven (vv7–9)

Michael is the archangel who stands guard over Israel (Dan 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9). Guzik rejects the view that Michael is Jesus; Alford agrees: "Michael is not to be identified with Christ, any more than any other of the great angels in this Book." Satan once had access to heaven to accuse (Job 1:6–12; Zech 3:1), but here "there was no longer a place found for them in heaven" (v8). Guzik places this casting down at the midpoint of the tribulation; others connect it with the victory of Christ's cross

and ascension (Luke 10:18; John 12:31). Satan's names give his record: dragon, ancient serpent (Gen 3:1), devil (slanderer), Satan (adversary), deceiver of the whole world.

How the saints overcome (vv10–12)

The accuser works "day and night" (v10). But the saints overcome him three ways. First, *the blood of the Lamb*. Guzik: "It is not a magical potion, nor is it the literal blood of Jesus"; rather, "The blood speaks to us of the real, physical death of Jesus Christ in our place." Satan's accusations may be true, but the blood answers them (Rom 8:33–34). Second, *the word of their testimony* — telling the truth about what Jesus has done overcomes Satan's deception (John 9:25). Third, *they did not love their life even when faced with death* — Guzik: "Loving not their lives overcomes Satan's violence" (Phil 1:21). The devil's great wrath is the rage of a beaten enemy who knows he has only a short time.

The woman protected (vv13–17)

The two wings of the great eagle recall the Exodus: "I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself" (Exod 19:4). "A time and times and half a time" is three and a half years (Dan 7:25; 12:7), the same as the 1,260 days. The flood may be literal or a picture of overwhelming persecution (Ps 124:2–5); either way God makes the earth itself fight for her. Walvoord: "Israel is hated by Satan not because of any of its own characteristics." Unable to destroy the woman, the dragon turns on "the rest of her children," whom Guzik takes as including Gentiles who come to faith during the tribulation. They are marked by two things: obedience to God's commands and holding to the testimony of Jesus.

Word study (Greek)

- **sign — *sēmeion* (G4592):** a sign, a mark pointing to something beyond itself.
- **woman — *gynē* (G1135):** woman, wife.
- **dragon — *drakōn* (G1404):** a dragon, a great serpent.
- **diadem — *diadēma* (G1238):** a royal crown, the crown of a king.
- **devour — *katesthiō* (G2719):** to eat up, consume.
- **caught up — *harpazō* (G726):** to seize, snatch away (1 Thess 4:17).
- **wilderness — *erēmos* (G2048):** a desolate, deserted place.
- **nourished — *trephō* (G5142):** to feed, sustain.
- **war — *polemos* (G4171):** war, battle.
- **thrown down — *ballō* (G906):** to throw, cast.
- **devil — *diabolos* (G1228):** slanderer, false accuser.
- **deceives — *planaō* (G4105):** to lead astray.
- **accuser — *katēgōr* (G2725):** a prosecutor, one who brings charges.
- **overcame — *nikaō* (G3528):** to conquer, prevail.
- **testimony — *martyria* (G3141):** witness, testimony.
- **wrath — *thymos* (G2372):** fierce anger, rage.

Cross-references

Gen 3:15; Gen 37:9–10; Exod 19:4; Job 1:6–12; Ps 2:7–9; Isa 66:7–8; Dan 7:25; Dan 10:13, 21; Dan 12:1, 7; Zech 3:1–5; Mic 5:2–3; Matt 2:13–16; Matt 24:15–21; Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Rom 8:33–34; Gal 4:4; Phil 1:21;

Heb 2:14; 1 Pet 5:8; Jude 9; Rev 13:1; Rev 20:2.

03 Application
HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · REVELATION 12:6 (KJV)

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

Command to obey — stand on the blood and speak
"They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony" (v11). When the accuser comes, I won't argue my own record. I'll point to the blood and say out loud what Jesus has done for me. That is the weapon I want every man I disciple to carry. A man with a record can't out-argue the accuser, but he doesn't have to — the blood has already answered.

Sin to confess — agreeing with the accuser
Satan "accuses them before our God day and night" (v10), and too often I take his side against myself, replaying old failures God has already forgiven. That isn't humility; it's unbelief. I confess it and receive what the blood says about me (Rom 8:1, 33–34).

Warning to heed — the enemy is angry
He has "great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time" (v12). I shouldn't be surprised when attacks come, especially right after a victory. The men coming out of prison or out of treatment often get hit hardest in the first weeks. I need to warn them ahead of time and stand with them when the flood comes.

Promise to trust — "a place prepared by God."
God had a place ready for the woman and nourished her there (v6, 14). He does not take His people into the wilderness without feeding them. For a man in a cell or a man starting over with nothing, the wilderness is real — but so is God's provision in it.

Example to follow — "they did not love their life even when faced with death."
These saints held their lives loosely because Christ was worth more (v11; Phil 1:21). I want to love Jesus more than comfort, reputation or safety. The one who has already lost his life to Christ has nothing left for the enemy to threaten.

Worship
"Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come" (v10). The Child the dragon wanted to devour sits on God's throne. The accuser has been thrown down. I worship the Lamb whose blood silences every charge against me.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You that the dragon could not devour You and cannot pluck me from Your hand. When the accuser reminds me of my past, teach me to answer with Your blood and my testimony. Make me love You more than my own life. Protect the men I disciple in their wilderness, feed them there, and make them overcomers. Amen.