

The Woman Crowned with Twelve Stars (Rev 8, 12)



1. The Bride Makes Herself Ready (Rev 4:5 & 5:6)

The seven Spirits of God were sent out into all the earth. Why? (Rev 4:5, 5:6; C.f. Joel 2:28-32; Hag 2:6-9)
Let's pray and ask the Lord for the Holy Spirit.

- a. The book of Revelation is mostly about the glory of Jesus Christ. At the close of this age, Jesus will release His glory, power and judgment on the nations of the earth, and receive the great harvest of souls. Then mankind will be separated into two groups, represented by two women in Revelations – the Harlot of Babylon and the Bride of Christ. The sequence is events following the harvest of the nations (Rev 14:14-20) are judgment on the Harlot Babylon and the people who follow the antichrist system (Rev 17:1-19:4), and the bride making herself ready (Rev 19:5-10) which is the crowning moment of human history. This immediately brings Christ on the white horse to end the natural human history (Rev 19:11-16).
- b. Where does Rev 12 fit in? Here is a picture of a woman in the wilderness, getting ready. It will be a repeat of Exodus. *'Therefore, behold, I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her. I will give her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the days when she came up from the land of Egypt.'* (Hos 2:14-15)

2. The Framework of Rev 11-14

- a. The seven trumpet judgements have devastated a third of the earth (Rev 11:15-19). John must have been alarmed, 'Why is God's judgment so severe?' So he is given further insight the meaning of the 7th trumpet when loud voices in heaven announced, *'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!'* (Rev 11:15) It is the time for evil to be judged and saints to be rewarded. (Rev 12:11; 15:2; 21:7) So John is shown the final 3½ years of human history when satan, the antichrist and the false prophet will carry out great evil (Rev 12-13), and when God will protect His people who will overcome with great victory in the midst of deep darkness (Rev 12 & 14).
- b. Rev 12-14 involves **all SEVEN main players** of the end time drama: (i) Dragon; (ii) Beast; (iii) Another beast; (iv) Seven heads; (v) 10 horns; (vi) Harlot Babylon; (vii) Woman and Male Child. And **all the great actors** of the great tribulation are introduced here: (i) Woman; (ii) Dragon; (iii) 10 horns; (iv) Stars; (v) Male Child; (vi) Michael; (vii) Rest of the woman's offspring; (viii) Beast out of the sea; (ix) World; (x) Beast out of the earth; (xi) 144,000; (xii) Father; (xiii) Harpists; (xiv) Four living creatures; (xv) Elders; (xvi) Those who dwell on the earth; (xvii) Holy angels; (xviii) Harlot Babylon; (xix) Beast worshippers; (xx) Holy Spirit.
- c. All pointers and references to time in the book of Revelation are given in Rev 11-14, each of them pointing to the same 3½ years. (i) time, times and half a time (Rev 12:14); (ii) 42 months (Rev 11:2, 13:5); (iii) 1,260 days (Rev 11:3, 12:6, C.f. Dan 9:27)
- d. Outline of Rev 11-14
 - **Rev 11** – The power prophetic anointing during the great tribulation.
 - **Rev 12** – Satan's war in the heavenly realm and God's protection on the saints.
 - **Rev 13** – Antichrist's war on earth.
 - **Rev 14** – Seven visions of God's help for His saints to bring about the great harvest. Note: Satan's war in the heavenly realm (Rev 12) and the beast's war on earth (Rev 13) are sandwiched between the 'woman' in travail just about to give birth to a male child destined to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Satan could not touch either the male child or the woman during the 1,260 days (3½ years). This vision is clearly a prophecy concerning the *end time*.

3. War in Heavenly Places (Rev 12:7-12 C.f. Dan 10:13; 12:1)

We are given insight into the real cause for intense spiritual warfare on earth.

- a. Contrary to some people's belief, Satan still has his headquarter in the heavenly place (second heaven or mid-heavens). *'We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers,*

against rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places' (Eph 6:12; Job 1:6; 12; 2 Cor 12:2 – Paul was taken up to the 'third heaven'). However, at the end of the age Satan will be humiliated and enraged because he will be cast down to the earth and lose his place in the mid-heavens. He will have only a short time on earth before being cast into the pit, i.e., **3½ years**.

Satan's five stage fall: (i) third heaven; (ii) second heaven; (iii) earth; (iv) bottomless pit; (v) lake of fire (c.f. Is 14:12; Ezk 28:16; Rev 12:7-12; 20:1-3, 10).

Christ has permanently and completely defeated Satan on the cross, however the full scope of His victory is not yet fully seen on earth, hence 'Now and Not Yet' tension (Ps 110:1-2). '*For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under Him.*' (Heb 1:8)

- b. How could the devil have power after the cross? I believe the devil has access to God only 'as the accuser of the brethren', i.e., only in so far as 'God's people give him power' to accuse one another. This will change in the last days as he is 'cast down' violently to earth, and the saints are 'purified' to overcome his rage by (i) the blood of the Lamb (what Jesus' blood has done for us); (ii) the word of their testimony (our courageous testimony of Christ); (iii) and not loving their lives unto death (our love for the Lord is stronger than our need for self-preservation). What would cause the 'accuser of brethren' to be cast down to earth? Would 'persecution' of the church radically alter the infights, accusation, competition? (Matt 24:9)

Satan's four-fold description: (i) dragon (cruel nature); (ii) serpent of old (ancient deceiver); (iii) the devil (slanderer/accuser); (iv) Satan (adversary/resistor) (Rev 12:9 c.f. 20:2).

- c. Just as Daniel set his heart through prayer and fasting for twenty-one days which released the archangel Michael to war with the prince of Persia and Greece in the heavenly place and secure God's purpose for Israel, so also through the prayers of Daniel-like saints, Michael will be released again and cast down Satan from 'second heaven' to earth. And this will start the final 3½ years of the end-time drama (Dan 12:1).

Satan's presence on earth will be a unique dynamic in the great tribulation. It causes great 'rejoicing' in heaven, and 'woe' being pronounced on the inhabitants of the earth (Rev 12:10-12). 'Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come... Woe to the inhabitants of the earth...' Satan's removal from the mid-heaven triggers the unprecedented release of God's power of salvation on earth while the most intense spiritual battle is fought, i.e., 'praying through' in Dan 10.

4. The Great Sign in Heaven: 'Woman in Travail' (Rev 12:1-6; 13-17)

There are 3 signs in heaven (Rev 12:1, 3, 15:1-3) and 3 woes on earth (9:12, 11:14, 16:1ff).

a. **3 Signs in Heaven**

- Sign 1 ('great sign' in heaven) – Woman adorned with the sun, the moon under her feet and twelve stars crowning her (Gen 47:9-10). Jacob and Rachel with 12 sons point to Israel and her foundation, the 'commonwealth of Israel' (Eph 2:12, Rom 11:24). This is the first of the three great signs - a woman in great travail to give birth. (C.f. Matt 24:9 – the earth will be in labour pains.) This woman stands in contrast to the 'scarlet women' with no labour pains and gives birth to nothing. (Rev 17, 18)
- Sign 2 (another sign appearing in heaven) – An angry fiery red dragon with 7 heads and 10 horns gets thrown down to the earth, and his tail throws down a third of the stars of heaven. (C.f. Daniel 7:24)
- Sign 3 (Great and marvellous sign in heaven) – The saints who are victorious over the beast, his image, and his mark are in heaven singing the song of Moses before the fiery sea of glass (Rev 15:1-3).

b. **3 Woes on Earth**

- Woe 1 - Demonic locusts from the bottomless pit (5th Trumpet, 9:12). They can only harm those who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads (9:4).
- Woe 2 - Great earthquake after the two witnesses' resurrection and ascension at the end of 1,260 days (11:3, 14)
- Woe 3 - 7 bowls of God's wrath (16:1ff) occur immediately after the ministry of the two witnesses.

5. Identity of Woman and the Child

- a. Theory 1: (i) 'Woman' = Mary (catholic view); (ii) 'Male Child' = Jesus (Matt 2:16-18; Ps 2:8; Is 9:6); (iii) '1/3 of stars' = 'fallen angels'; (iv) 'rest of her offspring' = Jesus' brothers and sisters (Mark 6:3). However, the final 1260 days or 3½ years of the woman in the wilderness doesn't fit history.
- b. Theory 2: (i) 'Woman' = Israel; (ii) 'Male Child' = Jesus (Matt 2:16-18; Ps 2:8; Is 9:6); (iii) '1/3 of stars' = 'fallen angels' (Jude 6; 2 Pet 2:4); (iv) 'rest of her offspring' = tribulation saints/remnants of Israel. (v) 'they should feed her' = Gentile believers feed Israel during the tribulation period. This is the *only reference to 'rapture'* ('harpazo') in Revelations! (12:5)

This interpretation fits well overall. But this section Rev 12-14, which is the angel's 3rd explanation, is about the future events. Then this vision must be about the 'great tribulation' period (12:6; 14) just like 3 signs & 3 woes are the events of the great tribulation. This *first great sign* of the end is God's people. The second sign is about the battle in the heavenly place. The third sign is the final outpouring of God's wrath after 1260 days!

The dragon with 7 heads and '10 horns' is the last antichrist-controlled 10-king confederation (C.f. 12:3 & 13:1, 10 horns 'crowned'). If this passage is about the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus, it is strange that there is no mention of the cross; and it is a little odd to refer to 'ascended Jesus' as a 'child' ('teknon') & later 'male' ('arsen') rather than the 'Son' ('huios') (12:5; 12:13).

- c. Theory 3: sees the entire Rev 12-14 as events of the last 3½ years, i.e., the entire Rev 12 is prophecy, NOT history. (i) Woman = Church/Israel, i.e., one new man of Jews and Gentiles one in Christ, God's people on earth (C.f. Eph 2:12-18, 3:6-10) (ii) Male child caught up to God's throne = the 'overcoming saints' who access God's throne and will exercise great authority to rule and reign with Christ. ('spiritual rapture' - Acts 8:39) The 144,000 sealed with the seal of God on their forehead before the throne of God (Rev 7:1-8; 14:1-5), who are the 'first fruits from the earth'. *'The whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now'* for the revealing of the 'sons of God' who will bring liberty to creation (Rom 8:19-23). Satan hates and fights this first fruit from coming forth because it is the sign that the rest of the harvest will be following (Lev 23:10-11). This is the first great sign of the end time - those who have access to the throne of God (Rev 2:17; 7:1-8; 14:1-5); (iii) 1/3 of stars = 'great falling away' of great Christian leaders (Dan 12:3). Or 1/3 of fallen angels occupying mid-heaven 'dragging' them down to earth; (iv) 'rest of her offspring' = saints who come to faith during the great tribulation.
- d. One thing is clear. The woman given two wings of a great eagle - the believers in Christ on earth whether Jews or Gentile - will be to be taken to the *place* in the wilderness *prepared by God* to be 'protected', 'fed' and 'nourished' for 1260 days = the great tribulation period (Rev 12:6, 14, c.f. Matt 24:15-22) while the two witnesses prophesy with great power (11:2) and the antichrist rules with cruelty (13:5).

The Goshen principle of supernatural protection and provision will be fully in operation. *'You have seen....how I bore you on eagles wings and brought you to Myself.'* (Ex 19:4, c.f. Deut 32:11). *'As in the days when you came out of Egypt, I will show them wonders.'* (Mic 7:15) C.f. *'Come my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignations are past. For behold, the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.'* (Is 26:20-21) This is in the context of the resurrection of the righteous (Is 26:19).

Frustrated, Satan will spew water out of his mouth to destroy the woman by flood against her (most probably foreign armies), but the earth will open up and swallow this flood during the tribulation period. E.g., the 'flood' of foreign armies ransacked Herod's temple in 70AD (Dan 9:26). What is the place 'prepared by God' in the wilderness? (i) Israel needs to remember Jesus' prophecy (Matt 24:16). (ii) Believers worldwide will have places of refuge already prepared by the people called of God before the great tribulation.

6. Rage of Satan

1. The devil will be 'enraged' with 'frustration'. Why? (i) He lost his lofty position in the second heaven and was cast down to earth. He knows he has only a very short time – 3½ years. (ii) He lost the race to devour

the male child as he is caught up to God's throne and was out of his reach. God is always miles ahead of the devil. (iii) He wanted to destroy the woman with a flood, but God opened up the earth and saved her! So now the only thing he can do is to fight the rest of her offspring to destroy them – those born again during the great tribulation.

2. Four Categories of Endtime People: (i) Male child caught up to God's throne (Holy of holies - Protected); (ii) Woman given two wings of an eagle (Holy Place - Protected); (iii) Rest of her offspring (Outer Court - Not fully protected? C.f. Rev 14:2); (iv) Those who dwell on the earth (Outside all together - not at all protected).

Which one will you be?