

REVELATION 12

I. BKGRD.

Last week in chapter 11 we saw John given a measuring rod and told to measure the Temple and its worshipers, but not the outer courts -- Gentiles trample it for 42 months (3 ½ years). We next saw two witnesses raised up to witness, be martyred and raised back to life, then caught up to heaven before the whole world during the Great Tribulation.

The 7th trumpet is sounded, whose events in judgment we see unfold completely in chapter 16.

Chapters 12-15 now interrupt the chronology of this 7-year period and tell us of 7 personalities prominent in these end-time events; sort of a "character development" aside to tell us more about the players involved.

II. TEXT

v. 1 **"Woman"** = Israel; the symbol of a **"woman"** is often used in the OT to describe **Israel**:

- after Israel's rejection of God, she is called a "desolate wife" or a "widow" (Isa. 54:3,4,6; Lam. 1:1),
- an "adulteress" (Hosea 3:1), and
- a "harlot" (Jer. 3:6-10). The symbol of the woman is also taken to be Israel in this passage.

"Stars in her crown" clearly relates to the 12 sons of Jacob, the historic tribes of Israel. Once Joseph had a dream (**Gen. 37:5-11**) in which he was binding his sheaf of corn and his brothers were binding theirs, but all their sheaves bowed down to his sheaf. When Joseph told them his dream, they became even angrier with him and said, "You think we're going to bow down to you? You've got another think coming!" Joseph had another dream which he told his father. "I dreamed that the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me." Jacob rebuked his son Joseph and said, "It's wrong to think that your mother, your brothers, and I will all bow to you." The sun and the moon referred to Jacob and his wife. The eleven stars referred to the eleven brothers. This dream was fulfilled when Joseph became the Prime Minister of Egypt and his brothers came to buy grain from him. Therefore, the sun, moon, and eleven stars speak of the nation of Israel.

Interestingly enough . . . the flag of the European Union is a sapphire blue background with 12 golden stars in a circle! And their statuary often depicts a woman with a 12 star halo above her head!

Additionally, the Judeo-Christian audience this letter was written to would have been very familiar with the Babylonian images of a 'goddess' with the 12 signs of the zodiac above her head and their beloved moon-sign under her feet; Babylonians used a lunar calendar and were the inventors of astrology...

The symbol does **not** refer specifically to Mary, the mother of Jesus, but to Israel as the source of the Messiah. **NOT** -- the church, who's described as a spotless, virgin Bride (2 Cor. 11:2); the Lamb's wife (Rev. 19:7); this gal's pregnant (see v.2)! The Church DID NOT give birth to the Messiah!!! Do the people of God eventually trample underfoot the Crescent Moon of Islam...?

v. 3 Introduces the 2nd personage: **"a red (= bloodshed during this period) dragon with:**

- **7 heads**" (symbolizing great, complete, universal wisdom and knowledge);
- **"Seven" diadems** ("crowns," symbolizing absolute and complete power and authority to rule) and;
- **"Ten horns"** (symbolizing great power); cf. Dan. 7:7-8, 24 and Rev. 13:1. Represents Satan's control over the end-times nations during the Great Tribulation (v. 9 identifies him as Satan).

"**10 horns**" = 10 kings and/or kingdoms who rule under the coming world ruler; mentioned in Dan. 7:7; Rev. 13:1. Inasmuch as Jesus describes Satan as the "*prince of this world*" 3 x's in the gospel of John and Paul calls him "*the prince of the power of the air*", these "**ten horns**" must represent all the kingdoms of this world: 10 regions of geo-political influence. There are 7 continents, 12 OPEC nations (6 in the ME) and with the addition of Croatia on July 1, 2013, the European Union numbers 28 member countries... when the number first reached TEN nations (Greece, 1981), many thought the end was upon us!

Rev. 17:9-12 "*This calls for a mind with wisdom. The **seven heads** are seven hills on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction. "The **ten horns** you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast."*

- The **Dragon** has 10 horns, 7 heads, 7 crowns (12:3);
- The **Beast** (the Antichrist) has "10 horns, 7 heads" (13:1c).

The first world dictator was Nimrod (whose name means "we rebel"), who ruled from Babylon. It is interesting that Micah also refers to the "land of Nimrod" in his allusion to the final world empire. Could it be that this final world dictator will be, in some sense, a return of Nimrod? Could it be that there will also be some kind of climactic ellipsis of Satan's kingdoms as we approach the final judgment? If so, it is noteworthy that Nimrod ruled from Babylon. The Babylonian Empire, as did the Roman Empire, incorporated eastern Iran as well as all of Iraq... (Ahmadinejad?)

v. 4 "Stars" = angels which have fallen; demons. The dragon is cast out of Heaven (cf. Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:12-17) in v. 9 and his angels with him (cf. Gen. 6; 1 Peter 3:18-21; Jude 5-7). These are the angels, which united with Satan in his rebellion against God.

vv. 5-6: The 3rd personage: "**The Male Child**" (Jesus); enmity between Him and Satan: Gen. 3:15. -- scepter (Gen. 49 "scepter" belongs to Judah till Messiah comes; Ps. 2:9 "*rod of iron*"); Israel's son's ascension is in view, **NOT** the rapture of the Church!

- Herod the Great, an Edomite (descendants of Esau, not Jacob) sought to destroy the baby Jesus (Mt. 2:16).
- Flight of Israel at beginning of the Great Tribulation foretold by Jesus (cf. Mt. 24:16 "*flee to the mountains*"; pp. Mk. 13:14).
- Some say to the rock-city of Petra in Jordan; was the fortress city of the Edomites, SE of the Dead Sea (today Jordan). When in Isaiah 16:1 God says to Moab, which is present-day Jordan, "*Open up your borders and receive my people. Shelter them in Sela [Petra] until the tribulation is complete.*" So they will flee to the rock-city of Petra where God will take care of them for 3 ½ years.
- Eusebius, the early Christian historian, tells us that before the final destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, the Christians there were warned by prophecy from trusted church leaders to cross the Jordan into Perea (Jordan) and to dwell there in a town called Pella (Eusebius, The Ecclesiastical History, III:5).

v. 7 Introduces the 4th personage: "**Michael**" ("*Who is like God?*") vs. Satan and his [fallen] "angels" (demons). He defeats Satan in spiritual warfare and functions as the protector of Israel (Dan. 12).

Cf. Jude 9: dispute re: Moses' body; "Michael" -- cf. Dan. 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 1:9). Satan is the "Accuser" of the saints: Job 1:6; Rev. 12:10.

"**Eagles wings**" - **NOT** a specific prophecy re: U.S. air power, but God's power to deliver; a figure of speech taken from such OT passages as Ex. 19:4; Dt. 32:11-12; Isa. 40:31). "*You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself*," God said in Exo. 19:4.

The flight of Israel to a place of safety also indicated in Mt. 24:16; Mk. 13:14; Lk. 21:21.

While not destroyed, Zec. 13:8 indicates "*2/3 will be struck down and perish*" as the "flood" comes against them.

v. 9 Not the original casting of Satan out of heaven, but his final exclusion from access to the courts of heaven above; no longer able to stand before the Lord and accuse the saints (cf. Job 1-2; Rev. 12:10). It explains his intense rage against God's people in the last days.

v. 10 "**Satan**" is Hebrew and orig. meant "adversary;" came to imply, "accuser." "Devil" (Greek) and means slanderer; one who throws accusation and slander across one's character.

vv. 13-16 Note the similarity to the Exodus!

v. 14 The woman escaped on the two wings of a great eagle. Again and again in the OT the eagle's wings are the symbolic of the uplifting and protective arms of God:

- "You have seen," God declares to Israel, *"what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings, and brought you to myself"* (Exodus 19:4).
- *"Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, the LORD alone did lead him [the people of Israel]"* (Deut. 31:11,12).
- Isa. 40:31 *"those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."*

"Time, times and ½ a time" is Hebrew expression; 1 year + 2 years + ½ year; same as 1260 days (cf. 11:3; 12:6), 42 months (cf. 11:2) and 3 ½ years. The time of protection equals the time of persecution.

v. 15 "**Flood**" – often used symbolically in Scripture: Dan. 11:10,40 *"His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress...." At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade."*

v. 16 Similar to when the earth opened up and swallowed the men following Korah's rebellion against Moses (Numbers 16:30-33).

v. 17 "**The rest of her offspring**" is a reference to believers on the earth at that time; Tribulation saints, whether Jewish or non-Jewish. Remember, not all "Jews" are truly Jews (John 8:39-58).

III. SUMMARY / APPLICATION / RESPONSE

(1) Satan's REAL; "slanderer/accuser"; the warfare is constant.

(2) Take heart! His time is LIMITED: v. 12.

(3) v. 11 tells us how we can overcome the enemy:

a. "**by the blood of the Lamb**;" We are "more than conquerors" (Rom. 8:37). Do we know it and act like it's a fact in our lives? It's the difference between "overcomers" and those who are "overcome."

b. 2nd weapon: not only the "**Word**" of God, the Bible, but the "**word of their testimony**." What is this? Telling them what God has done for you! The one weapon they cannot counter! They can challenge everything else except the historical person of Jesus and the "word of your testimony!"

We're already prepared for death.....Question is, "are we equipped for LIFE!"