

## **A Woman, A Red Dragon and A Child**

Rev. 12

### Introduction:

1. The Book of Revelation reveals the plan of God.
2. Chapter 12 envisions it as a spiritual war involving a woman, a red dragon and a child.
3. Who is this woman? Who is the red dragon? Who is this child? . . . And what are we to make of this spiritual war?
4. Already in our studies we have seen that God is the sovereign ruler.
  - a. Chapter 4 has presented Him on His heavenly throne. Twenty-four elders are praising Him saying, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power" (v. 11).
  - b. In chapter 11 they give Him thanks saying, "O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign" (v. 16).
5. From chapter 12 onward the Book of Revelation reveals something of how God executes His reign. He does it through a woman and a child and He overcomes a dragon.
6. Reading of Rev. 12:1-6.

### Discussion:

- I. A woman first appears in God's plan for mankind in Gen. 3:15.
  - A. In the curse upon the serpent that had deceived Eve God said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."
  - B. While the meaning of the text, if taken alone, leaves us wondering but when considered in light of the coming of Christ through woman it makes sense.
    1. Renowned O.T. scholar E. J. Young describes Gen. 3:15 as "the first announcement of the blessed deliverance to come." He describes it as the "Protevangelium" (the first gospel).
    2. His position is widely recognized as pointing to the coming of the Messiah, who is born of woman and though crucified (bruised on the heel) becomes victorious, crushing Satan's power (bruising his head) by being resurrected from the dead and exalted to the right hand of God, having become victorious over death.
  - C. While some have associated the woman of Rev. 12 with Mary, the mother of Jesus, it seems more likely that the woman in Rev. 12 refers to those of the Jewish nation from whom the Messiah is descended.
  - D. If this is what is meant in 12:1-2 and the woman represents the Jewish nation from whom the Messiah is descended, the sign John sees is of the coming of the Messianic King. Robert H. Mounce says,

Although the woman gives birth to the Messiah, she is not to be understood as Mary the mother of Jesus but the messianic community, the ideal Israel. Zion as the mother of the people of God is a common theme in Jewish writings (Isa 54:1; 2 Esdr 10:7; cf. Gal 4:26). It is out of faithful Israel that the Messiah will come. It should cause no trouble that within the same chapter the woman comes to signify the church (v. 17). The people of God are one throughout all redemptive history. The early church did not view itself as discontinuous with faithful Israel. [

New International Commentary, The - The New International Commentary on the New Testament – The Book of

Revelation.

II. The red dragon is clearly identified in the text as Satan, the adversary of the woman and of her child (3-9).

- A. Note that both the woman and the red dragon are identified in the text as “signs.”
  - 1. They are not meant to be taken literally, but are clearly identified as symbolic and representative.
  - 2. The text also specifically identifies who the red dragon is (see v. 9).
- B. The fact that the woman gives birth to a son confirms our understanding that she represents the people of God who give birth to the Messiah.
  - 1. The fact that he is said to “rule all the nations with a rod of iron” identifies the role of the Messiah as defined in Psa. 2. Note v. 9.
  - 2. “Is this Psalm really about the Messiah?” That’s the way the Christians of the first century interpreted it. See Acts 4:25-28. This passage confirms the unfolding of the purpose of God in the coming of Jesus and even in His being opposed (Acts 4:28).
  - 3. It is obvious in the text that God protects both the woman and the child.
    - a. The child is caught up to God.
    - b. The woman flees into the wilderness to a place prepared by God for her nourishment.
    - c. Notice the implications regarding God’s sovereign power. Even though it is this powerful dragon’s intent to devour the child he is thwarted by the action of God.

III. The war that continues both in heaven and on the earth reveals both the weakness of the dragon and the powerfulness of God (12:7-17). Often people perceive of a conflict between good and evil in which both are equally powerful, but such is not the case with the war described in this text.

- A. The war in heaven results in the dragon being thrown down to the earth (7-9).
  - 1. Three major views are held regarding this vision.
    - a. Primeval war between God and Satan.
    - b. An actual war where Satan tried to invade heaven.
    - c. A spiritual war that has been going on from the beginning that climaxes in Christ’s victory over Satan. This third view is best supported by Scripture.
  - 2. Beginning in Gen. 3 the conflict between the spiritual forces of darkness and the reign of God have been evident.
    - a. Whether between Israel and Egypt (Ex.) or David and his enemies the battle has always belonged to the Lord (1 Sam. 17:47; 2 Chron. 20:15).
    - b. Lk. 11:20; Matt. 12:28: Jesus said, “If I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”
    - c. Lk. 10:18. The disciples returning from the limited commission observed, “the demons are subject to us in Your name.” Jesus said, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightening.”
    - d. Paul reasoned, “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the

rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12).

- B. The war on the earth is characterized by the great wrath of the dragon being executed against the brethren, against the woman and her children (10-12).
  - 1. But they maintain their faithful conviction. They continue to testify even when faced with death.
  - 2. Their faith in God's sovereignty is sure.
  - 3. In doing this they followed Jesus the faithful witness who at the sacrifice of His life demonstrated His confidence in the sovereignty of God (Rev. 1:5-6). This was what was called for in 2:10.
  - 4. None want to experience this war. None of us want the persecution, the hardship, the death associated with it, but such is its nature. Cf. 1 Pet. 4:12ff.
- C. The power of God is evidenced in three ways.
  - 1. The brethren overcoming by means of the blood of the Lamb.
  - 2. The woman is protected.
  - 3. The earth helped the woman.
- D. The dragon is enraged and makes war with the rest of the woman's children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus (17).

#### IV. What is the take home?

- A. The plan of God reveals a spiritual battle between the forces of Satan and the kingdom of God.
- B. God is sovereign over the power of Satan. Though Satan executes his wrath on us and is enraged with us salvation is ours by means of the blood of the Lamb.
- C. We should maintain our faith in Him even when faced with death. We will die for Christ if called upon because we believe in God's sovereign power.
- D. Because this message is spoken in "signs" let us not discredit it as if it was not real. The war is real. It may not be physical in the sense that we often think of wars, but it is just as real. It is not just about the possible loss of physical life. It is a spiritual battle and the losses are spiritual in nature.
- E. Victory belongs to those who trust in the sovereign power of God.

#### Conclusion:

- 1. Is that where your trust is?
- 2. Will you overcome the great dragon because of the blood of the Lamb?
- 3. Will your testimony be "There is victory through faith in the sovereign God?"