

“Victory of God Over Satan”

(Explanatory notes and chapter summary at end of study)

I have no doubt that many who read this will not accept some of its teaching. This is mainly because they come to The Revelation with preconceived ideas. These ideas are the result of much reading, or listening to a variety of prophetic teachings. I can only say this – I have considered the text and, at this time, I am led to produce this lesson as it stands. If, in the light of further information, I am led to amend my view, then I will do so.

Readers must bear in mind that the views they have hitherto read or heard have *also* been produced by men. So, it comes down to whether or not you wish to amend your own view, if the view expressed here seems probable or more suited to the text. The real measure is *scripture*, not any views given by men, including myself. This chapter has been problematic for theologians throughout history, so I am in good company when I say that this chapter is far from easy to interpret!

At this time I am not sure about certain aspects of the chapter, and I say so. There is no shame in admitting that one's knowledge is incomplete. In writing this chapter I am aware of the mainstream and less well-known theories concerning its supposed meaning. Though the mainstream ideas are usually held by the Reformed churches, I have avoided this avenue, so that, hopefully, God will speak more clearly to my own mind and heart. In other words, I have tried not to allow past theories to cloud my thinking. This is the only honest way forward for any preacher and student of God's word.

There seem to be two possible ways to look at this chapter, which describes yet another vision given to John. There appears to be no pattern to the various visions, or any particular time reference, so I will not try to invent one just to make it appear that we have one single thread or theme. Each vision should, then, be looked at in its own right, without any necessary affiliation to any of the others. This does not mean there is no link at all between the visions – it just means that none is yet apparent. No attempt has been made to marry other passages to this text, such as may be found in either the New or the Old Testament. Thus, the text is allowed to speak for itself. The interpretations are those I believe, at this time, to be reasonable.

Verses 1-3

The Revelation 12

Written by K B Napier
Friday, 12 June 2015 15:48

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.”

John saw a marvellous sign in heaven – a woman clothed in the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars. With some confidence, I suggest that the woman is the Church. As the word ‘woman’ can mean a virgin or a married lady, we should assume it means in this text, a woman (the Church) married to Christ. It is not Mary. (Note: The ‘wonder’ is a portent of something amazing about to happen. It can also refer to a miracle).

The sun probably refers to Christ. The moon may mean the things that are temporal and made. The stars could be one of several things. It could refer to the 12 Apostles, because ‘stars’ can also mean people or spirits. Note that Roman Catholics have misappropriated this image and use it in the new European parliament’s flag, etc.

Mainstream thinkers tend to include the Old Testament prophets and the Gospel itself, as part of the meaning. The overall image may point to the fact that the Church’s destiny and being is enclosed in the being of Christ, that it has been promised all things will come under its feet in the last days (reflecting the fact that Adam had total control over the earth), and that it had its beginning with a humble but powerfully-led Apostolate. Though seemingly reasonable, this is an assumption. The woman was pregnant and cried out in pain. This appears to speak of the birth of the early Church and possibly the pain of those who had much to endure in the early days.

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Then, an ominous second sign appeared in the heavens – a great red dragon (or ‘serpent’) with seven heads with a crown on each, and ten horns. The colour of the dragon, almost invariably speaks of blood and violence. The main view of the dragon is that it is symbolic of the pagan Roman emperors. Personally I do not accept this view, but see the dragon as Satan, along with his demonic host. Though the main view comfortably interprets the meaning of the heads, crowns and horns, I cannot do so, and must at this time leave the meaning out of the interpretation. I do so without fear of any problems arising because of its omission.

We do know, however, that the head often means the chief or supreme leader of something. Horns usually mean great bravery, but this cannot be applied to Satan. A horn can also harm. The crown here is a diadem, a blue band combined with white and attached to a turban or tiara, to show regal position. It represents a sign of victory. Obviously, if this serpent is indeed Satan, he had a deluded view of his own greatness and believed he would somehow win against God.

The main fact appears to be that Satan and his demons are always there to attack any who follow Christ, especially if they are openly faithful. In this text they are waiting to attack the early Church which was by no means proficient in its ability to know all attacker, or to fend them off. The knowledge we now have is far greater in volume and type than many of the early churches seem to have known, as the history of dogma proves.

Verses 4-7

1.

“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.

2.

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.

3.

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.”

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The dragon had a long tail that brought down one third of the stars. These he hurled to the earth. This drawing-down holds as part of its meaning those who are destined for punishment given by a judge. That has been the fate of the demons since they were cast out of heaven. I am not happy with the main theory that the tail represents Roman military officers, etc. To me, this picture is that of Satan taking as many angels from heaven as he could influence, thereby pitching them toward the hell they will be imprisoned in on the Day of Judgement. However, the term “cast them down” also seems apt for those whom Satan tried to destroy in the churches.

This hellish dragon then waited to see the birth of the Church, the child whose Head is Christ and whose Father is God. His aim is very simple – to destroy all who profess Christ. However, it is observable fact that he concentrates his evil gaze especially on those who minister truly, for they can potentially influence many others to follow God faithfully in purity; this is why true ministers know many trials. The stance of the dragon is to stand. This means, to stay firmly in place, without moving. His eyes are directed at the woman, the Church, for he wishes to know all who are born to her. He is ‘before’ her – in her very presence. He began his evil attack on Christ... if Satan could destroy Christ then the Church would have no true Head.

The Church sometimes fears Satan, and this is proper, as even Christ warned, for we should fear the one who is able to deny us holiness and truth. But, this fear can be supplanted by God’s truth and by holy resolve. Such faith in God does not mean we are free to laugh at Satan and his demons, or to fight him in our own strength, as so many charismatics do today. Satan, and even the weakest of his demons, are stronger than the strongest man on earth. Only a fool will try to fight him, when even the Archangel Michael dared not do so! We have no personal strength, except in and from Christ.

Satan, or his envoys, are ‘before’ all Believers who are serious in their walk with God. He is not so bothered by the mass of Believers whose faith is only notional or petty, for they will influence no-one toward holiness and truth! If anything, they tend to influence people in the opposite direction, toward sin and earthly misery and ignorance. This suits Satan well, and so he concentrates mainly on those who are either very influential in guiding the Church toward holiness and truth, or if they display the future capacity to do so. These he will sit before, patiently waiting and prompting a fall, so that, when they fall, they inflict the most damage upon the Church. Note how predatory animals will spot a sick or injured victim, and will follow it until it drops of exhaustion. Then it will kill and eat.

It is without any kind of drama that I say Satan and his demons are always watching, and in the

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near vicinity of, Christians of these credentials. That is where countless trials come from. Trials that God will use for His own ends, so long as the Christian does not buckle under the strain. We should not worry about seeing demons under our beds all the time, but we should not be so silly as to suppose that they will leave us alone if we show a tendency to holiness, preaching the truth, or opposing lies.

Eventually, John saw the birth of the child, a boy I suggest was Christ. It is not true that the Church gave birth to its own Lord. Remember that this is symbolic. We are told that the child would rule the earth with a rod of iron. This was said of Christ. The rod represents both a royal sceptre and a rule of severe strictness. God is both loving and judging. Immediately it was born the child was taken to be with God, away from the waiting destruction planned by the dragon. (Christ, when He began His public ministry was in the desert 40 days and nights, as a preparation).

That is, Christ was of His Father from His birth, and even before. (He did not *become* the Christ or divine at birth, or when baptised. This is heresy). I suggest that this was Christ and not Constantine as many suppose, because God could only take the holy lamb to His throne – a sinner could not satisfy God's demand for a spotless lamb, and anything tainted cannot be in His presence. Only Christ satisfies this rigorous criterion.

As soon as she gave birth the woman fled to a safe place given to her by God. 'They' fed her. I do not know who 'they' were, but it is likely that 'they' are angels sent by God to give strength and succour to the Church. I have no doubt that angels help prepare and feed us spiritually when we experience times of trial. Note that God had already prepared a place of succour: it was not just a crisis decision. It was part of God's overall plan.

The place of safety is also used to 'fatten up' in readiness for coming trials. Thus, though we experience many trials in our lives, each one is used to strengthen us more and more. In our flawed humanity we tend to look at trials as weakening and full of woes, but in God's eyes, they are sublime acts of kindness, meant to give us increasing power in the Lord. Do you see your trials as bad and weakening – or, as acts of God giving you immense advantage? Think about it.

This act of nourishing was for three and a half years. Nourishment is used not just to maintain life – it is also used to build one up for a future conflict or time of adversity. What is meant by the three and a half years of nourishment? Was it the time Christ preached on earth?

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Verses 7-9

1.

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.

2.

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

3.

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.”

The conjunction “and” does not necessarily mean this text follows on historically from the previous text. Thus, it *might* have occurred during the time of the woman’s hiding and nourishment, though I doubt it. Michael, who we may safely think of as the archangel described in Jude, and God’s angels, fought a mighty battle with Satan and his demons. Satan and his army could not win and so were banished from Heaven. Does this talk of the time Satan was cast out of heaven? Or, of the final time, when he and his demons will be thrown into the pit, no more to harm the people of God? I suggest it speaks of the time they were originally cast out of heaven, because of the words that follow: *“he was cast out into the earth...”* Scripture tells us that he and his demons are all around the earth looking for whom they may devour. They deceive everyone and try to lure them away from God and into much sin.

Verses 10-12

1.

“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.

2.

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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.

3.

Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants 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.”

Then, John heard a loud voice in heaven saying that now salvation had arrived, with the kingdom of God and all the power given by Christ. It was able to shine through because Satan's power had been broken. This seems to describe the moment when Christ died and rose again. At that time He won against Satan and sin and gave great heavenly power to all who believed. That is why we are told that we can overcome by the blood of Christ, by our faithful testimony, and by our complete trust in Him. This kind of trust leads us to love Christ more than we love ourselves, even if it means our death on this earth. I lend no time-scale to this text, for at once it applies both to time and to eternity... we are saved before time began, in time, and also in eternity!

This overcoming is not in our own strength, but only in the blood of Christ the spotless Lamb of God. It is this strength of God that Michael used to win against Satan. Even he knew he could not win in his own strength.

This great victory by God causes heaven to rejoice, but earthly sinners to sigh with anxiety. The 'sea' represents the huge number of evil men and women whose task it is to bring down faith and joy and truth. The anxiety is caused because Satan, who once tried to harm Believers, now has only sinners to crush! And he will do so with power and zeal... they will know the full force of his revenge.

I have observed that those who intensely follow Satan, such as spiritists, eventually come to know his awful wickedness and destruction in their lives, as he casts them aside for new spoils. He delights in making them believe they have power from him; then he takes more delight in bringing them down, showing that it is *he* who controls *them* – *they* do not control *him*!

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He spares them no fury and they sink to oblivion, mentally, physically and spiritually. He does so because he knows his time is very short, and so he goes about his task with 'great wrath'. Ye who have eyes to see should see. Charismatics are currently under this devastation, but they do not know it as they carouse in their feeble moments of so-called Holy Spirit 'power'.

Verses 13-17

1.

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

2.

And 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.

3.

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.

4.

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.

5.

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."

When Satan realised his terrible fate, he immediately started to persecute the Church with an intense ferocity. At times this ferocity seems absent, but it continues unabated. Often, this fury is continued almost silently, perhaps even as something 'good'. The infamous Toronto Blessing is one such silent attack that brought down many thousands of Christians and local churches. Such attacks will get far worse and will centre on the so-called 'church' that is built upon lies.

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Even though this ferocity will continue and get worse, the Church will be given – or has been given already – two wings of a great eagle, representing power and majesty and ability to reach above the things of this earth. The Church will use this true power to get away from her adversary and to find a hiding place in God, where she is nourished for a season ('time, and a time and a half' etc).

In his fury, Satan will then throw his might against the Church so that in the greatness of his power it will fall. To my mind this describes the 'waves' of the Toronto Blessing and similar acts and movements of evil that have hitherto swept away many who thought they could stand. They were swept away because they stood in their own strength, using borrowed ideas and doctrines of men.

Convention says that the meaning of the earth opening up her mouth to protect the woman is a reference to the time when the Goths and the Vandals finally toppled the Roman empire. This may, or may not, be true. 'Earth' can also mean 'a standing ground'. It was observed during the time of the Toronto Blessing, for example, that only those who had true knowledge of God's word stood against the evil tide or flood of Satan. It was to these few that people ran to in terror and confusion, and it was they who provided a safe haven, in Christ. Could this kind of thing be the meaning? Or, perhaps both are true.

When Satan saw that this move of his (featuring the death of Christ) was divested of all power, he then began an attack in earnest on the remnant, the remaining few who stood firm. This is occurring today as only a small number of true believers ('which keep the commandments of God') stand against the evil of so many false movements and fraudulent 'Christians'. But, its prime meaning must refer to the vicious onslaught of the Roman emperors when the Church was young.

The reader can see, then, that the traditional view is that this chapter deals with the history of the early church in its connection with the Roman Empire. My own view is that it deals with the general statement of God's power over Satan and the overall victory of the Church over him. However, both views may be true and therefore are capable of a combined witness. The main truth to discover is that God is in control and it is He Who gives victory.

Additional notes: Revelation 12

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These help to explain why I interpret parts of this text as I do.

1.

Verse 1: Some think the 'woman' is Mary. But, the word for woman in this text (*gynē*) can refer to ANY female, whether married or unmarried, virgin, or widow. It can also refer to a wife. Note that the Church is the Bride of Christ. Nothing in the text implies it is Mary. Rather, I see this as the Church, particularly because of later information. This being so, it agrees with Henry et al, who believe this and the following two chapters are of things past. This would make sense if it refers to the Church of the New Testament, which, by this time, had already been 'born'.

2.

"clothed with the sun" = imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is, it has none of its own. Is this not how we are as believers?

3.

"moon under her feet" = a term for the earth – we are both in the world and yet not of it, hence the world is under our feet, as if we were standing above it.

4.

"crown of 12 stars" = doctrine, as preached and taught by the apostles.

5.

The woman was 'with child' (the Church), thus implying that the things spoken of were in the past. The birth took place, with the Gospel of Christ being preached, and was immediately attacked by Satan's men, the Pharisees, etc.

The analogies, then, seem to follow naturally.

1.

"great red dragon". Verse 3. A dragon is usually depicted as a foe of immense strength and

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wickedness. If the Church is meant by the first part, then this can only be Satan, come to destroy the work of Christ. If the 'seven heads' represent Jerusalem, then it can only be as the agents of Rome, who themselves are the agents of Satan. In chapter 17 the 'seven crowns' are shown to be seven kings, which fits the idea of regality and a diadem. Thus, the heads and crowns probably refer to the Pagan Roman emperors (as agents of Satan).

2.

These tried to destroy the Church of Christ by removing its preachers, "casting them down". (verse 4). It may, or may not, also refer to the demons who left Heaven with Satan.

3.

"in heaven"... a battle in 'heaven' is said by some to mean it was fought against the churches. But, this is not the structure of the Greek. The word "in" (in Heaven) is a preposition that easily lends itself to the English 'in', though it can also mean by or instead of with. This preposition is the most common, often meaning 'of place', e.g. 'in Heaven'.

4.

"two wings". Pteryx literally means wings, in this case the wings of a mighty eagle, making decisive and strong moves.

5.

"for a time" = the place she flew to, ekei. Note that the word 'time' is not about time but a place, and the second word 'times', kairos, does refer to time. Thus, she was nourished in the place she flew to, for a specific length of time, here spoke of as "times and half a time".

6.

"from the face of the serpent". The preposition, apo (from), tells us that the Church was protected from Satan until it grew stronger. Obviously this place of protection had to be under the wings of God.

7.

"water as a flood". Figuratively refers to many peoples, e.g. their hatred welled up against the churches, as did happen, even up to the time John was on Patmos. The hatred as so widespread as to be like a flood, or many waters from various sources, e.g. many people.

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8.

“remnant of her seed”. That is, believers who had not capitulated or been killed, hence the remnant, of those who remained alive and faithful, “which keep the commandments of God”. Laipos= the rest of those who remain. This is a warning that not all who claim Christ are His. Also, not all who are His will remain faithful. We also see this today as apostasy grips the churches. Thus, today, Satan will destroy those who hide from him and try not to witness of Christ in truth. Even at the time of John many had recanted for fear of death by torture or murder, etc. As in Isaiah, then, where ‘remnant’ is used, it does not refer to the small number of believers, but to the ‘remnant of a remnant’ – those who are true faithful witnesses out of all who claim to be believers.

9.

Thus, John was shown the reality of things he already knew.

Chapter Summary

John was shown two vivid visions, which are simple in concept:

The first was of the birth of the Church, through and by Jesus Christ. This birth was accompanied by much trouble and pain, as evil men attempted to destroy it, pressed on by Satan.

The second vision is of Satan, wicked beyond imagination, working through a variety of evil rulers on earth.

The account goes back to the dawn of time when God threw Satan out of Heaven, after the arch-angel Michael and good angels fought a war against Lucifer and his minions. As the chief arch-angel with immense power and beauty, Lucifer (Satan) obviously had great influence on the angels, for when he was thrown out, a third of the lower angels went with him (as we are told there are myriad angels in Heaven, the number of demons around the earth must be in their millions). When they were thrown out, the angels and Lucifer became demons, beings of power and hatred.

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When Christ came to earth, Satan waited to turn Jesus' head, offering Him vast wealth and power (which He already had anyway), but, when Jesus refused to be turned, Satan used all his persuasive powers with human rulers to kill off the new Church founded on His Name. But, Jesus Christ is supreme and greater than Satan, and so His rule won.

Jesus won the final battle by His blood and sacrifice, and by the true witness of saved men and women. Though Satan and demons still roam and wreak havoc, they have lost the war, and it is now only a matter of time before they are cast into the pit.

Until that time Satan will use everything in his power to completely destroy the Church. He will do it by literally submerging it under filth and evil so great as to be like a flood. We see this beginning today in so many wicked movements and governments who show open hatred for God and His people. But, God is in control and has won the war. In particular, Satan will oppose the people of God with violent vengeance. Note that his anger is also aimed at all who are born, even his own and those who are wicked. But, it is God's people who are the central target.

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