

The Birth of the Male Child

Revelation 12:1-6

The End Times

In my last post, we explored **Revelation 11:15-19** dealing with the **Seventh Shofar**. In this post, we begin to explore **Revelation 12** by unpacking verses 1-6, **The Birth of the Male Child**.

"Now a great sign was seen in heaven — a woman clothed with the sun, under her feet the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ² She was pregnant and about to give birth, and she screamed in the agony of labor. ³ Another sign was seen in heaven: there was a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and on its head's were seven royal crowns. ⁴ Its tail swept a third of the stars out of heaven and threw them down to the earth. It stood in front of the woman about to give birth so that it might devour the child the moment it was born. ⁵ She gave birth to a son, a male child, the one who will rule all the nations with a staff of iron. But her child was snatched up to God and his throne; ⁶ and she fled into the desert, where she has a place prepared by God so that she can be taken care of for 1,260 days." ~ Revelation 12:1-6 (CJB)

Up to this point, the **Seals** and **Shofars** carried the story forward to the final judgment, dealing largely with the fate of the world. In chapter 12 the writer returns to the starting place and in another series of visions to portray things previously omitted, relating chiefly to the fate of those who refuse to repent.

Before we take an in-depth look at the main characters in this act, let's briefly identify them.

The Woman

The **woman** is not Miryam, Yeshua's mother, but Israel, in its normal sense, the Jewish people, because the imagery is from Isaiah 66:7-10 (also compare Isaiah 26:17, Micah 4:10). The imagery is like the sun, moon, and 11 stars that bowed down to Joseph in his dream (Genesis 37:9-11). We see Isaiah's prediction (Isaiah 66:7-8) of a woman (Israel) bringing forth a man child fulfilled.

The Child

The child is Yeshua, **the one who will rule all the nations with a staff of iron**. This imagery is taken from Psalm 2, in its entirety about the Messiah, is also quoted at Revelation 2:26-27 and 19:15.

The Red Dragon

The **Red Dragon** is Satan, the Adversary; its **seven heads and ten horns** also equate it with the "fourth beast" of Daniel 7:7, 24. It **stood in front of the woman**, opposing Yeshua, ready to **devour the child the moment it was born**.

The Birth of the Male Child

Now a great sign was seen in heaven — a woman clothed with the sun, under her feet the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and about to give birth, and she screamed in the agony of labor. Chapter Twelve reveals the ongoing battle between God and Satan that has been constant throughout history. The writer is exhibiting a panoramic view of the events, people and powers which are involved in this vast spiritual warfare. **Yochanan** begins with a flashback into history. The only interpretation that makes sense is that the woman in this passage is synonymous with Israel. This interpretation is in keeping with many Old Testament passages. Oliver Greene writes:

*The woman is not actually in Heaven—but upon the earth. The sign is in Heaven, but the birth takes place right here on this earth. This woman, clothed in the most unusual attire anyone could ever wear, is Israel. Do you remember when Joseph had his memorable dream in the Old Testament days, he saw the sun, the moon, and stars bowing down to him (Gen. 37). This was a prophetic picture pointing to his exaltation after he had been sold into Egyptian slavery by his wicked brethren. It was also a prophetic picture of the nation Israel. Joseph was sold into captivity, scattered to the four corners of the earth, suppressed and persecuted by Gentiles. Even in recent years, Israel has been persecuted by modern Pharaoh's, some of whom were Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and Eichman. They did their best to wipe out Israel, but they are gone, and Israel is still here!*¹

The supernatural child which Israel brought into the world had the authority to sit upon the throne of David and to be Israel's sovereign ruler, but the representatives of the nation rejected their King and brought about His crucifixion. Their rejection has and will continue to bring about unutterable anguish (verse 2). They will finally see the error of their way and turn to Him, crying out for His return and their deliverance.

Another sign was seen in heaven: there was a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and on its head's were seven royal crowns. ⁴ Its tail swept a third of the stars out of heaven and threw them down to the earth. It stood in front of the woman about to give birth so that it might devour the child the moment it was born. Yochanan goes back in time to recount the fall of Lucifer. Originally, Lucifer served God as one of His foremost mighty angels. Because of pride Satan and one-third of the angels in heaven rebelled against God and God cast them down to the earth. (Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:11-15). After his fall, Lucifer comes to be known by many names; he is given at least seven titles and subtitles here in Chapter Twelve alone.

1. Dragon (verse 3)
2. Devourer (verse 4)
3. Serpent (verse 9)
4. Devil (verse 9)
5. Satan [Adversary] (verse 9)
6. Deceiver (verse 9)
7. Accuser (verse 10)

It is known from passages such as Genesis 6:1-6; 2 Kefa 2:4; Jude 6; and 1 Kefa 3:18-20, that there were angels who deserted the purpose for which God had created them. Some of these angels, no doubt, are confined to the bottomless pit while others are serving with Satan, even now, to accomplish his purposes.

The ***seven heads and ten horns, and on its heads were seven royal crowns*** represent Satan's dominion as prince of this fallen world and efforts toward universal dominion. He is the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2), and the prince of this world (John 12:31) ~ but he is not God. He is not all-powerful, he is not everywhere, nor does he know everything. He ***swept a third of the stars out of heaven and threw them down to the earth***, which may signify his power to marshal the hosts of the unseen world against the saints of God.

She gave birth to a son, a male child, the one who will rule all the nations with a staff of iron. But her child was snatched up to God and his throne; and she fled into the desert, where she has a place prepared by God so that she can be taken care of for 1,260 days. Yochanan is now looking at events that occurred during his lifetime, while for us, these events are history, having occurred nearly two thousand years ago. This verse focuses on three things about **Yeshua**:

¹ A Layman's Commentary on Revelation by Don Jones.

1. His incarnation: ***She gave birth to a son, a male child.***
2. His ascension: ***Her child was snatched up to God and his throne.***
3. His kingdom: ***Who will rule all the nations with a staff of iron.***

Keep in mind that **Yochanan** is not concerned with recording a chronological view of history, but that his readers can envision the total picture. The image revealed to us in Chapter Twelve spotlights Israel.

During this interval, we have now been introduced to five of the seven principal characters who play a significant role in the last half of the tribulation. In Chapter Eleven the ***two witnesses***, Elijah and Moses or Enoch are introduced. In Chapter Twelve, verses one through five, there appears ***a woman clothed with the sun***, who is Israel; the ***red dragon***, better known as HaSatan; and ***a male child***, who is **Yeshua**. Before continuing with the action, **Yochanan** connects this prophecy so that we will not get lost! Verse six coincides with chapter 11:1-2. The ***1,260 days*** of Revelation 12:6 is the same as the 42 months in Revelation 11:1-2. Before **Yochanan** introduces the last two characters, the beasts of chapter 13, he recounts a fascinating event that occurs in heaven.

Special Comparative Note on Chapter 12:1-6²

Historicist Approach:

Historicists see the first series of visions contained in chapters 4-11 concerned with the outward state of the church. This second series of visions recorded in 12-19 covers the same time frame interested in the internal affairs of the church. The ***woman*** is the true church. The ***male child*** is seen as the body politic raised to a dominant power. The ***dragon*** fits the image of any heathen persecutor, Imperial Rome. The ***child was snatched up to God and his throne*** symbolizes the enthronement of Constantine over the entire empire in 324 CE.

Preterist Approach:

At this point, two groups of **Preterists** part company on their interpretation of the material. One group believes that the remaining chapters through chapter 19 continue the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem. The second group believes that Babylon is the city of Rome and that the destruction of Jerusalem is already complete. There is little disagreement as for the identity of ***the woman*** (a faithful remnant of Israel); ***the dragon*** (a combination of all four of the beasts in Daniel 7); and, ***the male child*** (Yeshua).

Futurist Approach:

Most **Futurists** take ***the woman*** to be Israel and ***the male child*** to be **Yeshua**. Since he named in verse 9, there is little difficulty in identifying ***the dragon*** with HaSatan. The prevailing opinion of ***1,260 days*** is the second half of the seventieth week of Daniel 9:24-27 and corresponds to the final three and one-half years before **Yeshua's Second Coming**.

Idealist Approach:

Idealists view the main characters of our passage similar to that of the **Preterists** and **Futurists**.

In my next post, we will explore **Revelation 12:7-12** dealing with **War in Heaven**.

² Material in this post is taken from "Revelation: Four Views, Revised & Updated" by Steve Gregg. Notations in brackets, if any, are my comments.