

## Bible Prophecy and the book of Revelation, Lesson 17

**Chapter 12** - One of the more misinterpreted chapters in Revelation and possibly in the entire Bible.

- ✓ In Part due to what is called replacement theology (i.e. – the Church has replaced the Jews and would receive their promises).
- ✓ God promised the Jews prosperity (making this line of thinking attractive).
- ✓ Jesus promises the Church trouble and not necessarily prosperity, on the other hand.

This chapter is not sequential but is a recap of a broader picture being played out since the beginning of time.

- ✓ **Revelation 12:1** – Consider this detail from the life of Joseph in the Old Testament. **Genesis 37:9-11** – notice how Jacob interprets these symbols.
  - ✓ It directly relates to what we are about to see here: **Verses 1 & 5.**
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Remember our interpretation rules:

1. Resist the urge to speculate – there is nothing in this book that you can figure out on your own!
  2. Follow the rules of interpretation – “sign” that means it isn’t literal and when it doesn’t say “sign” you should take it literally no matter how hard it is to conceive of.
- This is the first time in Revelation that John sees anything called a sign – that is instructive.
  - Since it says sign we can be certain that it isn’t a literal woman, like Mary. Nevertheless, all signs refer to something concrete.
  - Is it the church? Well, I would think simple logic would deliver you from that one: did the church give birth to Jesus or did Jesus give birth to the church?
  - **Sometimes, all you know is that you don’t know enough to know!!** Not a bad place to be.

**Verse 1** – 4 figurative women in Revelation: 1. Jezebel; 2. Harlot; 3. This Woman; 4. Bride of Christ.

- ✓ The interpretations of who this woman have been amazing in their inaccuracy!
  - 1. Bride of Christ – now she’s pregnant with the Messiah, so did the Church give birth to Jesus or did Jesus give birth to us??
  - 2. Mary the Mother of Jesus, but this is clearly a figurative individual who is hidden during the last half of the Tribulation according to the remainder of this chapter.
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**Verses 2 & 3** – The number 7 is not the number of perfection, since Satan is anything but perfect, it is the number of completeness – completely wicked and evil, in this case.

- ✓ Why 7 heads? His earthly power is going to be defined in the 7 heads and 10 horns of the Antichrist.
  - ✓ “7 Diadems” ?? These are ruling crowns like the ones Jesus is wearing when He comes to fight at Armageddon: Satan has been given authority – He offered Jesus all the kingdoms and Jesus did not challenge his right to do that.
  - ✓ **Ezekiel 28:1-19** – Gives us a good lesson on one of unusual characteristics of prophecy: the prophet focusing on a local and immediate event or person, but his language takes us far beyond that person or event. **Isaiah 14:1-15**
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### Verses 3 & 4

- ✓ Devil knows that through Israel the One who would crush him would come – so what did he do? He hunted Israel down and tried to annihilate them.
  - ✓ **Genesis 3:15** – War is declared here and the Devil fights to keep this birth from happening.
  - ✓ Some things we can learn from the Devil – he takes God seriously and literally!!
  - ✓ It's a good lesson on how symbolism works in the Bible: not literally a red dragon chasing the Israelis all over the planet but a spiritual entity empowering leaders and armies to destroy.
  - ✓ Notice: it's a heavenly conflict but it plays out through human agency on earth.
  - ✓ From **Pharaoh** throwing the Jewish babies in the Nile to **Haman** in Esther trying to wipe the Jews out, to **Herod** having all the babies in Bethlehem killed – Satan tried his best to stop this birth.
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**Verse 4** – Are these literal stars? No, because we've already been told that this is a sign!

- ✓ We see that the devil didn't fall by himself, he influenced many in heaven to follow him – **Verses 7 & 9** refer to the devil and "his angels."
  - ✓  $\frac{1}{3}$  is a significant percentage especially when you consider: **Hebrews 12:22**; it tells us that those who fell may be beyond our comprehension.
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### Verses 5 & 6

- ✓ "Rod of Iron" – Nothing new in Revelation – Characteristic of Jesus that has been around since the writing of – **Psalms 2:8-9**.
  - ✓ Some pretty graphic language – not exactly the flannel graph Jesus you saw in Sunday School, but it is, nonetheless, the real Jesus.
  - ✓ Thus, the reason why this book is called "The Revelation of Jesus Christ", because if all we knew about Him was His sacrifice and His gentleness of dealing with sinners in His first coming we might be inclined to think of Him as a pushover.
  - ✓ Who's the Woman? Israel.
  - ✓ Wilderness for Israel is always understood as south and east of Jerusalem. **Zechariah 14:4-5** fills in some information for us here.
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