

A GREAT WONDER IN HEAVEN

REVELATION 12:1-6

Text:

Introduction:

We are moving into the second half of the book of Revelation today. This second portion opens with an amazing vision of some great wonders on the heavens.

Revelation is not written in chronological order.

Chapters 4-9 take us all the way through the end of the Tribulation Period. **Chapters 10-11** are passages that stand as like a parenthesis in the action. They reveal some of the “*behind the scenes*” activities of the Lord.

Chapter 11 takes us to the very edge of eternity. It closes with the Lord Jesus claiming His rightful dominion over this universe and it reveals as the inhabitants of that glorious land praise their King.

Chapters 12-19 take us back through the Tribulation once again.

While **chapters 4-9** deal with the timeline or the plan of the Tribulation, **chapters 12-19** deal with the characters, or the people of the Tribulation. We are introduced to some of the individuals who will figure greatly during that period of time.

So, we are going to tread once again on ground we have already visited. As one writer said, "***In Revelation 4-9 we see the events of the Tribulation through a telescope; in Revelation 12-19 we see things through a microscope.***" In other words, we are about to get a more detailed look at the events of this period.

What is said in **chapter 12** is essential to a proper understanding of what is going to be said in the rest of the book. If we misinterpret things here, we are going to be off track the rest of the way through Revelation.

Let's look into these six important verses today. And see the truths that are revealed here. I want to preach on the subject: ***Great Wonders In Heaven***. The primary characters of this passage are a woman and a red dragon. Let's see what we can learn about them today.

1. THE PERSONALITY OF THIS WOMAN

Revelation 12:1-2

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.

The identity of this woman has been the subject of debate and false doctrine for centuries. Let me share a few of those with you.

1.) Roman Catholics have said that this woman is Mary. There are several reasons why this cannot be true: Mary never ascended in Heaven; Mary gave birth on earth and not in Heaven; Mary cannot be wedged into **verse 6**.

2.) Some believe the woman is the church. However, it was Christ, the man-child that gave birth to the church and not the other way around.

3.) A woman by the name of Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy claimed that she was the woman and the religion she gave birth to in 1879, Christian Science, was the man-child. For sake of time, let me just say, that isn't true either!

So, who is this mysterious woman? The clues given in the text tell us all we need to know about her identity.

A. Her Description (vs 1)

Revelation 12:1

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:

The woman is "***clothed with the sun***". This speaks of heavenly glory. The "***Moon***" is "***under her feet***". This speaks of dominion and power. She wears "***a crown***". This speaks of royalty. The "***twelve stars***" speak of the twelve tribes of Israel.

I believe this woman is none other than the nation of Israel. I think this is born out by a couple of Old Testament passages. The first tells of a dream that Joseph had thousands of years ago, **Gen. 37:9-11**. It is obvious from Jacob's reaction to Joseph's dream that the sun, moon and stars represent the nation of Israel. The second passage is **Gen. 15:5**. There, the seed of Abraham is compared to "*stars*".

This verse reminds us of what we already know to be true. God is not finished with Israel! He chose them out of the nations of the earth for His purposes and He has not written them off forever. They will once again be clothed with glory and have dominion over the earth.

B. Her Destiny (vs 2)

Revelation 12:2

² And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

2. THE PERSECUTOR OF WOMEN

Revelation 12:3-4

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. ⁴ 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.

A. The Personality of the Dragon (vs 3)

The next vision is of a “**great red dragon**” who has “**seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.**” Let’s take this description of the dragon and break it down symbol by symbol,

1. **Red** – The color of war and bloodshed. It brings to mind the red horse of **Rev. 6:4**. This dragon is a killer. He brings death, war and bloodshed with him when he comes.
2. **Dragon** – A dragon is a winged serpent. There is no such thing in our natural world. It is a picture of the devil. In fact, we are very safe in identifying the dragon and the devil because of what **Rev. 12:9**.
3. **Seven heads** – Speak of vast intelligence. We are dealing with a brilliant and wise creature. Ill. **Eze. 28:12**, “***thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.***”
4. **Ten horns** – Horns are a symbol of power. Satan is not all-powerful, but his power is cast. The number ten may refer to a ten nation kingdom that will figure greatly during the last days.
5. **Seven crowns** – Crowns are a symbol of authority. Satan is still “***the god of this world***”, **2 Cor. 4:4**.

B. The Pollution of the Dragon (vs 4a)

The reference to the “***stars of heaven***” being “***cast down to the earth***” by the tail of the dragon refer us back to the fall of Satan. He has not always been an evil creature. In the beginning, he was the ranking angel in Heaven, **Eze. 28:12-15**. But pride was found in Lucifer’s heart and he tried to take God’s throne. He tried to overthrow the Lord, **Isa. 14:12-14**. Lucifer sinned and became Satan. He was cast out of Heaven, **Isa. 14:15; Eze. 28:16-18**. When Lucifer fell, he drew one-third of the angels of Heaven into his rebellion. They were cast out of Heaven as well. We call these fallen angels demons. They are part of Satan’s kingdom and do his bidding, **Eph. 6:12**.

C. The Plans of the Dragon (vs 4b)

Satan is pictured as standing before Israel waiting for the birth of her child. His intention is to destroy the seed of the woman as soon as He is born.

Satan had worked from the beginning of time in order to prevent the birth of the Promised Seed of the woman.

Satan moved Cain to kill Abel, thinking he could stop God’s plan. He did not know that God would send Seth.

- He tried to corrupt the human blood line by having the godly line of Seth intermarry with the evil line of Cain. He did not know about Noah and the Ark.
- He aroused Esau to anger so that Jacob might be killed. He did not know God would help Jacob escape.
- He tried to kill off the Jews in Egypt by having Pharaoh slay all the little boys. He did not know that God would save a little boy named Moses who would lead the people out of Egypt.
- He tried to lead Israel away into idolatry thinking God would destroy the nation. He did not see God sending them into captivity, where He would forever rid them of their idols.

He failed in every attempt to stop the birth of Christ. And, when the time came for Jesus to enter the world, Satan did everything in his power to slay the Christ child when He was an infant. He moved Herod to destroy all the babies in Bethlehem under the age of two, **Matt. 2:16-18**.

3. THE PROGENY OF THIS WOMAN

Revelation 12:5

⁵ 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.

A. His Description

He is called a “**man child**”. The Seed of the Woman came into the world like every other baby. He came from the womb of His mother; but this child unlike any other child that had ever, or would ever, be born.

B. His Destiny

His destiny is “**to rule the nations with a rod of iron**”. This man child would come into the world and He would one day rule the world. We see this prophecy fulfilled in **Rev. 19:15**. He will rule for several reasons. First, He will rule because He created this universe and it is His, **Col. 1:16-17**. Second, He will rule because He purchased this world with His Own blood when He died in the cross, **Rev. 5:9**. Third, He will rule because He alone is worthy to rule and reign, **Rev. 4:11**.

C. His Deliverance

The man child is pictured being caught up to God and to the throne of God. Here is the good news of the Gospel contained in this verse. Jesus Christ died for our sins on the cross. But, He did not stay dead! He arose from the dead three days later, **Rev. 1:18**. After He arose from the dead, He ascended back to Heaven, **Acts 1:9-11**. He sat down at the right hand of His Father in Heaven, **Heb. 1:3; 10:12**. He will not stay there forever! He is returning for His bride real soon, **1 Thes.**

4:16-18. Then, He will come to defeat His enemies and assume His rightful place as “***King of Kings and Lord of Lords***”.

4. THE PROTECTION OF THIS WOMAN

Revelation 12:6

⁶And 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.

A. Her Distress

The Woman flees from the Dragon and she goes away into the wilderness to hide. We are reminded here that Satan hates the nation of Israel. He has tried to defeat her and destroy her since she first appeared. I have already touched on this. No other nation on the face of the earth has suffered as much as Israel. No other race has been persecuted as have the Jews.

The Jew had suffered, but the Jew has survived! They have survived because of the providence of God. He is not through with Israel. Ill. **Jer. 31:35-36!** The only way to get rid of the Jew is to drag the sun, moon and stars from their places in Heaven!

The hatred against the Jew is growing stronger in our day as the Muslim nations of the Middle East cry for the destruction of Israel. This hatred will continue to grow into the Tribulation Period. During that Time, the

Antichrist will bring persecution upon the nation of Israel and the Jewish people like nothing they have ever experienced. When that persecution arises, Israel will seek refuge. This was prophesied by the Lord Jesus in **Matt. 24:15-22**. Yet, they will survive that too, for God has a plan for them!

B. Her Deliverance

We are told that in this wilderness refuge the people of Israel will be taken care of. We do not know who the **“they”** are who will feed the Jews, but we do know that for the last half of the Tribulation Period, 1,260 days, Israel will be cared for. In spite of the sin, the hatred and the evil of those days, God will see to the needs of His people. He will either use friendly nations or supernatural means, but when the Tribulation ends and Jesus returns, there will be a remnant of the nation of Israel left. These faithful Jews will embrace the Lord Jesus and they will worship Him as their Messiah.