

## **REVELATION 12:** A Paradigm for a Pilgrim People

### **I. READ TEXT**

**12** A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; **2** and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

**3** Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads *were* seven diadems. **4** And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

**5** And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to shepherd nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. **6** Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that they would nourish her for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

**7** And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, **8** and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. **9** And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

**10** Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ, have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. **11** And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life, even to the point of death. **12** For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short."

**13** Now when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who gave birth to the male *child*. **14** But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time away from the face of the serpent. **15** And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. **16** But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river that the dragon poured out of his mouth. **17** So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

### **II. OPENING PRAYER**

### III. WELCOME / INTRO

#### A. Blind Men Need Good Glasses!

- Dean needs glasses
- Dean needs GOOD (clear) glasses

#### B. Christians Need a Proper Paradigm!

- Definition: A set of conceptual glasses through which we can see and understand the world and our lives as they really are

#### C. God has given us one!

##### 1. It originates in the Law, appears in the Prophets, illuminated in the NT

###### a. The Exodus motif

- Exodus (rescue from DOD)
- Pilgrimage (our journey with the Lord through the wilderness of this present evil age; led, fed, learning to worship God)
- Entrance (final restoration to EL in the World to Come)

###### b. Prophets: Hosea 2

###### c. Note: The Elijah Motif

##### 2. It is taken up one final time here in Revelation 12

- The central chapter of the book
- An open invitation to receive Scripture's most powerful paradigm of the Christian life
- Loaded with wisdom, comfort, and exhortation
- My brother Clint reads it EVERY DAY!

### III. SOME PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ABOUT THE REVELATION

A. It is a NT example of *Biblical Apocalyptic* (symbolic depictions of universal history, judgment, and redemption)

B. It is a *Prophecy* – a majestic word of edification, comfort, and exhortation to the Church about her pilgrimage through the remainder of the present evil age

C. It is the *Grand Finale of all Scripture* – using a great multitude of Old and New Testament language and imagery to communicate NT truth to God's NT people / As such, it contains no new doctrines, but instead powerful reminders and repetitions of the old

D. Above all else, it is a *Celebration of the Heavenly Reign of Christ*, who is gathering in, building up, caring for, and finally rescuing and glorifying His pilgrim people (the Church) **(HO)**

E. On the matter of different interpretations:

- I'm familiar with them all
- I will not explain or critique them today
- I will simply present my own view: The amillennial
- **This view is NOT new or heretical!** In fact it has been the majority opinion of the Church down through the centuries; it is embodied in all the great Protestant Creeds (including Baptist Faith and Message), and is held by many outstanding pastors and theologians today.
- Knowing this, you can take a chance, listen carefully, and see what the Holy Spirit may be saying to YOU!

#### **IV. (1-2) THE HEAVENLY WOMAN: THE BRIDE OF CHRIST**

A. Text: A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; **2** and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

B. Explanation

C. Application: Christ's pilgrims understand that they are a heavenly people with a heavenly destiny, even though, for a short season, they suffer on earth.

#### **V. (3-4) THE DRAGON: PERPETUAL FOE OF THE WOMAN AND HER CHILD**

A. Text: Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads *were* seven diadems. **4** And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

B. Explanation

C. Application: Christ's pilgrims understand that they live in a world largely controlled by a powerful spiritual enemy, who would destroy Christ and His Bride if he could.

## VI. (5-6) A FLIGHT INTO THE WILDERNESS

A. Text: And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to shepherd nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. **6** Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that they would nourish her for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

### B. Explanation

C. Application: Christ's pilgrims understand He will one day come again to judge and destroy His enemies. They also understand that until then they must be regularly nourished by Christ if they hope to complete their journey through this dangerous world.

## VII. (7-9) THE DRAGON CAST OUT AND THROWN DOWN

A. Text: And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, **8** and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. **9** And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

### B. Explanation

- Col. 2:13-15: And He has taken (the certificate of debt) out of the way, having nailed it to the cross; *and thus* having stripped the rulers and authorities *of their authority and power*, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.
- Luke 10:17-20: The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." **18** And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.
- John 12:30-32: Jesus answered and said, "This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes. **31** Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. **32** And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." **33** But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

C. Application: Christ's pilgrims understand that the world is a field of battle between opposing spiritual powers, but that through His righteous life and atoning death Christ, *in principle*, dethroned Satan from his position of authority over the nations when He (Jesus) ascended into Heaven, and that Christ, in practice, is presently dethroning him through the Church's preaching of the Gospel. / As the Bride preaches Christ, children are born to them both, children who join the great throng in their pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God!

## **VIII. (10-12) JOY IN HEAVEN: THE KINGDOM HAS COME, THE BRIDE HAS TRIUMPHED!**

A. Text: Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ, have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. **11** And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life, even to the point of death. **12** *For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them.* Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short.”

### B. Explanation

C. Application: Christ’s pilgrims walk in joy, knowing that because of His finished work they now live in heavenly places, unafraid of Satan’s powerless accusations, and ready to lay down their lives for the One who saved them, keeps them, and will soon bring them into the Promised Land!

## **IX. (13-17) THE DRAGON PURSUES, THE WOMAN IS NOURISHED, HELPED, AND GRANTED CHILDREN!**

A. Text: Now when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who gave birth to the male *child*. **14** But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time away from the face of the serpent. **15** And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. **16** But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. **17** So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with *the rest of her children*, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

### B. Explanation

Then they came to Elim where there *were* twelve springs of water and seventy date palms; and they camped there beside the waters. – Ex. 15:27

Manna in the morning / The means of grace

C. Application: Christ’s pilgrims know that they are people on a mission for their Lord, to give birth to the rest of His children through the preaching of the Gospel; and they know that despite the best efforts of their adversary the devil they will succeed in their mission and complete their journey, for the Lord will help them all along the way!

## **X. CONCLUDING APPLICATIONS**

- A. Constantly keep in mind the Pilgrim Paradigm—the single most powerful in Scripture!
- B. Constantly keep in mind that no matter how good it looks, this world is a dangerous wilderness that will soon pass away in the judgment fires of God; but also remember that it is destined to become a Garden Paradise!
- C. Go regularly, and in a disciplined manner, to the place that God has prepared in the wilderness of this world; in other words, know and faithfully use all the means of grace
- D. Follow the Leader!
- E. Stick together!
- F. Constantly remember in our journey through the wilderness we are on a mission for the Lord. In the power of the Spirit, we are to invite all we meet to join us in our journey to the Promised Land!
- G. Become a joyful, worshiping people, constantly look back in gratitude and praise to our rescue from the Domain of Darkness, and constantly looking ahead in hope and joy to the Second Coming of Christ and our joyous entrance into the World to Come.
- H. Finally, turn and tell your neighbor: “We are closer now than when we first believed!”