

Lesson 8 Part 1 Recap:

Here is a summary of what I was trying to say in the lesson tonight. We covered so many topics and chased many rabbit holes. I hope this helps your understanding of what I was trying to say. First I will give a brief summary of my view and then an explanation to say why I think this way.

Brief Summary:

12:1-6 – story of the pregnant woman (12 disciples) experiencing the death and resurrection of Christ and the devil trying to devour the Christ (temptation in the Garden? Thinking he won by Jesus dying on the cross?). Son is taken up into heaven and escapes the Dragon's attack.

12:7-12 – The son of the pregnant woman (Christ) goes up to heaven and Satan follows waging war against God and his angels. Loses. Cast back down to the earth. Then a hymn is given which tells us that we have victory over the Satan by the blood of the lamb and our witness, even to the point of death! The Kingdom has come, God's will has come to the earth!

12:13-18 – Having realized he lost the battle in heaven, Satan now goes after the woman (12 disciples) in the wilderness where she is nurtured (by the holy Spirit). The disciples' ministry is protected to get the church up and started. They escape his evil until their proper time is up. When Satan realizes he cannot get the 12 disciples (the woman) he goes after her offspring. This is you and me! Watch out!

Explanation of the Summary above:

I will get to this again next week as we progress through chapters 13, 14, and in 15; that is that Revelation 12 is talking about an event that comes into the present. Revelation 13 will be talking about the present time. Revelation 14-15:4 will be talking about the future judgment and wrath of God. So just like with the Seals and Trumpets so far, we start by describing the time we are in, and then we are brought to the end of the world (Seal 6, and Trumpet 6).

In Revelation 12, we see the cosmic woman who appears robed in the Sun with 12 stars and the moon at her feet. This woman refers to God's chosen people. Perhaps even, just the 12 disciples who were the immediate followers of Christ. At the very least, she represents all of God's people but for reasons that I will explain below, I think she might be a direct reference to the apostles, or the 120 who started the church on the day of Pentecost.

She is depicted as giving birth to a baby. Now the classical understanding of this passage is that this is the spiritual scene of that silent night of the first Noel. How peaceful we perceived it, but perhaps it was not that peaceful where there are dragons trying to eat babies!

HOWEVER...

My understanding of the giving birth scene is a little different. I suggest that what we have here is the story of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension into heaven. I base this primarily off something else the Apostle John wrote in his gospel, 16:19-22 which say,

“¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wished to question Him, and He said to them, “Are you deliberating together about this, that I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me, and again a little while, and you will see Me’? ²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy. ²¹ Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world.²² Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one *will* take your joy away from you.”

Here Jesus describes his followers (the 12) as the ones who are in labor because of the pain of Jesus leaving them via the crucifixion and the resurrection and ascension. Because John has already used this description of a woman in labor in relation to his followers and the event of his death, I think we can transplant that understanding here. Then things begin to become clearer in the rest of this first Sign.

Her child is caught up to the throne room of God and then the woman is left to fend off the Dragon. To me, that sounds like Jesus' ascension and then his disciples (with the power of the spirit) to engage in this cosmic battle with the dragon and his evil forces. The woman is in the wilderness, a place that was prepared for her. This once again sounds like something else we see in the gospel of John in the same section as the previous allusion. In this case it is to John 14:3 which says, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” This would be where we are now, a kingdom/church being tended to and nurtured by the Holy Spirit. All through chapters 14 and 16 the lines are blurred between Jesus and the Holy Spirit sent to minister to us. The indwelling of the Spirit is how Jesus is with us now.

So the woman (12 disciples) is in a time of wilderness. Typically, the wilderness refers to a trial period. The disciples were given special blessings from the spirit and at times protected from persecution to advance the church, John has been protected the longest.

The next section of chapter 12 tells us that after the son was caught up (the ascension into heaven) there was then a battle in heaven and the Satan and his angels waged war

against Michael and his angels. Satan loses and is cast down to the earth . . . where the woman is . . . and then he goes after her.

Perhaps this battle, which traditionally we take to mean happening before the creation of the world, occurs at the ascension of Christ into heaven. The Dragon is sent down where we are. This would be the cause of all the persecution that John has described since the beginning of his book. John is explaining why the persecution of God's people is taking place. He pulls back the veil to the spiritual and reveals a war raging. That manifests itself in our physical world through the persecution of God's people.

There is a pause in the action for this hymn:

"Now the salvation, and 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 because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with 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 he has *only* a short time."

In it we are told that the Kingdom has come, the authority of Christ has come. We are also told that Satan has come down to earth so look out! But we are also given instructions on how we overcome, the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony even in the face of death! We overcome the dragon by living a life of faithfulness to God!!!

In the final third of this first epic sign, we return to the action of the Dragon attacking the woman. But he is unsuccessful because she is given wings to get away. The Dragon spews out water to drown her, but the earth swallows it up. Even the Earth is fighting for God's people! Because the creation is a testament or witness to God's righteousness and power!

The serpent, foiled in fighting the woman, then goes after her offspring. That's US!

1. **Woman** = (at least) the 12 disciples, or (at most) Israel.
2. **Dragon** = Devil/Satan/Ancient Serpent. He is described similar to the four beasts of Daniel 7 which were 4 kingdoms to come.
3. **The son** = Christ/Jesus
4. **The wilderness** = period of trial prepared for the 12 disciples and the church but they are also nurtured by Holy Spirit to nurture her. – the attack of Satan
5. **The sweeping of a 3rd of the stars** = Satan's persecution against God's people. Not his taking of a 3rd of the angels. We have already seen judgements of 1/3 of

something being destroyed. We already know there are martyrs in the throne room asking God how much longer (seal 5).

6. **The War in heaven** = perhaps a real battle that took place after the ascension of Christ into heaven. This is when Satan is hurled to the earth and goes after the woman. By following the story of this one sing (all of Revelation 12) it would be illogical to move this event before Creation. It naturally flows from the resurrection and ascension of Christ.
7. **The Offspring of the woman** = the rest of Christendom. Those who came from the ministry of the original apostles. That's Us! Satan is after us.