

# Revelations Lesson 5

We have seen the seven seals and seven trumpets. Now there is an interlude period described in John's vision, which lasts from Rev. 12:1 until Rev. 14:20. After that, the woe of the seventh trumpet is described which involves God's wrath being poured out in the seven bowls. In the interlude period, we start to see events described which can be called "snapshots".

These snapshots can be thought of as seven film clips of different parts of the Tribulation, at times covering a spectrum even broader than the Tribulation.

The New Testament frequently recognizes that it is to be the normal experience of the church on earth to suffer tribulation and persecution.

John 16: 33

Acts 14: 21-22

At the end of the age, the church is destined to undergo the most intense persecution of her history. Jesus said in Matt. 24:21 "that it would be great tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be."

Chapter 12 describes the battle between God and Satan in mythological terms. It explains to God's people on earth why they must face such satanic evil and persecution; but it assures them that in reality Satan has already been conquered and they are therefore able to conquer him by the blood of the lamb.

The first snapshot is about the woman, the man-child, and the two beasts.

This is covered in Revelation 12 and 13. These snap shots are not in chronological order. These snapshots give us details of events that are taking place during the time period already described.

## **Revelations 12:**

This is probably one of the most confusing chapters in Revelation and in the Bible as a whole. There are two basic interpretations of Revelation 12 of which I am aware.

### The Woman:

[1] The classical interpretation is that the woman described is Israel [physical Israel], and the man-child is Christ. Some scholars believe that the birth of the man-child represents the actual physical birth of Christ on earth; others feel this refers to the arrival of His kingdom.

There are some major difficulties with this interpretation.

This is not a vision of an event, which is to take place on the earth. This is describing the heavenly battle, which takes place between God and Satan, which has its counterpart in history in the conflict between the church and demonic evil. As such, the vision completely transcends the usual categories of time and space. It is not meant to be a foretelling of history but a representation of the struggle in the spiritual world, which lies behind history.

Verses 1-12 describe the heavenly battle and verses 13- 17 describe the battle taking place on earth.

[2] The second interpretation is that the woman is the heavenly Jerusalem. The heavenly representative of the people of God.

Paul speaks of the heavenly woman when he speaks of the Jerusalem which is above, who is the mother of the people of God on earth.

Gal. 4:21-31

### Heb. 12: 18-24

Heavenly Jerusalem symbolizes the people of God. This is what John is seeing in the heavenly realm. She is the ideal church in heaven. Her children are the actual historical people of God on earth.

### The Male Child: verse 5

Male child: one who is to rule the nations with a rod of iron. This speaks of God's anointed who is destined to reign in God's Kingdom over all the earth.

Some think this is obviously referring to Jesus but it is also referring to the church.

Rev.2: <sup>26</sup> He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; <sup>27</sup> AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received *authority* from My Father;

This is not speaking of the literal birth of Jesus to Mary or Herod's attempt to kill the child. If this is the case then we ought to hear John speaking of the crucifixion for the death of Jesus on the cross is what defeated Satan. The child is caught up to God and His throne. The scene is still heaven! There is no indication that the woman has descended to earth to give birth to her child. This is not referring to the ascension of Christ for His ascension had nothing to do with escaping Satan's hostility. To the contrary He had already won over Satan through the cross and resurrection. This is not speaking of the rapture of the church. This is simply God showing John the victory of God's anointed over every satanic effort to destroy him.

Verse 7-11: This describes Satan's defeat in the heavenly realm. His accusations do not have power. This shows clearly that the victory over Satan, which John describes in mythological terms, actually was accomplished in history at the cross. The shed blood of Jesus is the real means of victory over Satan. Without that, the angelic hosts would have no authority to kick the devil and his angels out of the heavenly realms.

Verse 10: The voice is not identified but it represents God's people for it speaks of *"our brethren".* It announces the triumph of God's Kingdom, the establishment of his rule over every demonic power.

Verse 12: The defeat of Satan has a twofold result. It means rejoicing for the angelic hosts of haven who surround God's throne; but it means woe for the inhabitants of the earth.

Verse 17: "The other children" – obviously, this refers to the Christians who are presently on earth at this time. John at this point turns from the heavenly picture to the persecution of the saints on earth. The spiritual description of war in the heavenly realm is the backdrop for the actual struggle on earth between the church and the Antichrist. John has assured the church in this chapter that Satan has already been defeated and cannot win the victory over the church.

## Chapter 13 : The Beast from the Sea and the earth

Having lost the battle in the heavenly realm where he failed to destroy the woman and the anointed man-child the dragon now directs his wrath against the church on earth. John now sees the dragon standing on the seashore and calls from the deep the beast who will be his primary instrument in the last persecution.

Satan is a defeated foe but he will be allowed one final convulsive warfare against the saints through the agency of the beast.

## Rev13: 1 -10

There are two beasts in the book of Revelation. There is the dictator beast and the prophet beast. The dictator beast is, in a sense, a false Christ, and the prophet beast is, as we will see later, a false Holy Spirit.

The **dictator beast** arises out of the sea [verse 1]. This does not mean the ocean, as can be seen in Rev. 17: 15 And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues..."

Thus, we know that the dictator beast will be a human.

Blasphemous names - the beast claims divine prerogatives.

Matt 24:15.

# 2Thess. 3-4

Verse 4: The world follows after the beast and worships him. To turn from God and submit to the beast is in reality to worship Satan. The time of the Antichrist is a struggle for the souls of men.

Verse 5-6: For 42 months, the dictator beast blasphemes the Lord. The blasphemous words are words of self-deification. The 42 months is the symbolic number for the entire period of persecution of the church, but particularly the end of this period – the time of the great tribulation.

Verse 7-8: God gives him permission to overcome the saints and as we will read later [Rev 13: 15] to kill them. He killed them but he did not conquer them because Rev. 15:2 shows us the saints standing before the throne of God who were victorious over the beast and his image. They conquered the beast by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. They were steadfast in their loyalty to Christ and refused to worship the beast or the dragon.

It was given authority over every tribe, people, tongue, and nation. In other words a worldwide authority.

# The prophet beast: the false Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit does not glorify himself; He glorifies Christ. The prophet beast does not glorify himself, he glorifies the dictator beast.

### Rev 13: 11-18

He could be representing organized religion. He uses religion to inspire men to worship the first beast. He is also called the false prophet. He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. The second beast is no competitor of the first beast. He has no power of his own but derives his power from his association with the beast. His single objective is to capture the religious loyalties of men for the first beast.

In verses 13-14 we see that the prophet beast is able to perform miracles, and even makes fire come down from heaven as Elijah did. Paul said the same thing in

2Thess. 2:9-10 <sup>8</sup> Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; <sup>9</sup> *that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, <sup>10</sup> and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.

Rev 13: 14-15

Verse 14 - "Those who dwell on the earth" - is a frequent expression in Revelation to describe those who are unregenerate men; the false prophet will not deceive the saints.

The prophet beast creates an image of the dictator beast, which people worship. If they do not worship the image, they are killed. Giving breath to the image of the beast is the supreme claim to divine power: the claim to be able to create life as God himself does. Whoever did not worship the image of the beast was killed.

### The Mark of the Beast

The prophet beast causes everyone to take the mark of the dictator beast on the forehead or the right hand.

The beast has a countermark which is branded on the hand or forehead of all those who worship him. Thus, we have two bands of people – those sealed for God and those marked for the beast. The mark consisted of the name of the beast or the number of his name. It is not at all clear that the mark is a literal visible brand on the person. The seal of God on the 144,000 is not meant as a visible mark. The mark of the beast may be a parody on the mark of God.

Anyone who refuses becomes an outlaw. The mark is the beast's name or number and that number is 666.

Six is the number of man [man was created on the sixth day]. I think it represents man to the ultimate height of rebellion. It may not be an actual number but symbolic of man's rebellion.

This probably does not mean that there will be a 666 stamped on people's foreheads and right hands. The forehead represents what we think and the hand represents what we do. Man will think demonic, worldly thoughts do deeds according to what he thinks. The thinking and deeds will be under the control of the beast rather than God.

I don't believe that we need to fear the mark of the beast. Rev 5 tells us that God is going to seal His people in their foreheads so that there will be no room for the mark of the beast. When the time comes, God will show us what the mark is.