



WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN

By Mike Taylor

“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:” (Revelation 12:1)

Many people have read chapters in Revelation and are very confused by all the symbolism represented in its passages. We read about the seven churches in the first three chapters, and then there’s a sudden shift in focus to the throne room of God and 24 elders sitting on thrones with crowns on their heads in chapter 4. Jesus then takes the seven sealed scroll from God the Father’s hand in chapter 5 and upon opening each seal, a progression of sudden destruction is unleashed on this earth. As seal after seal is broken, a new sign appears that is designed for one thing: and that is the cleansing of this earth of all rebellion and the reclaiming of God’s creation by His Son, Jesus Christ. The beginning of this reclaiming of the earth for the Kingdom of God and the beginning of God’s wrath begins in Chapter 6.

Let us take note of the symmetry of the chapters of this book, as given to John through revelation by our Savior and soon coming King, Jesus Christ. I believe that the book is divided almost evenly from the first part, which deals with the church in its phases down through the ages, then the church being in heaven at the beginning of chapter 4, and then in chapter 5, as Jesus takes the land deed to earth in the form of a seven sealed scroll. Note also, that the church is not mentioned again until chapter 19. God’s people are thus called “saints”, not the Church.

THE BEGINNING OF THE TRIBULATION AND GOD'S WRATH?

Thus begins a series of 6 chapters that chronicle the successive pains and purging of the first part of the Tribulation, from chapters 6 through chapter 11. I will not focus on the details of these chapters as the beginning wave of destruction comes upon the earth, but my focus is on chapter 12 and identifying the two characters of this book past chapter 5. Chapter 12 to some, just drops down in the middle of this book and to many it seems out of place, but is it? What is God trying to convey to us? He gave us hints in the preceding six chapters, but here God identifies the major players in this drama of the coming of the Kingdom of God and a possible division in Daniel's 70th week of years as promised to Israel. But the clock stopped when Jesus was crucified nearly 2000 years ago, after 69 weeks of years had been completed. Let us take a quick look at those hints in the preceding six chapters up to the start of chapter 12.

Hint #1:

“And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” (Revelation 6:9-11)

We are introduced to martyrs for the testimony of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. They are placed under the altar of God and are given white robes, because of their sacrifice in blood. Who are they?

Hint #2:

“Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.” (Revelation 7:3-4)

Here it is revealed that God calls 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel. They preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all who will listen and pay a heavy price for their ministry, in blood. As noted in the following verses:

Hint #3

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;” (Revelation 7:9)

As I have preached before, palm fronds in their hands is a sign of Israel. The hints get stronger and stronger as we progress to the 12th chapter coming up. Then there is this verse in Revelation:

“And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Revelation 7:13-14)

They are those who have been killed during this first part of the tribulation and have paid the ultimate price, only to receive white robes and stand before Almighty God and the picture becomes more clear that there is a distinct difference in what is happening to the world at large, (the Gentile nations), and the nation of Israel. If you think this is bad, you haven't seen anything yet, but let us first look at chapter 12 and the symbolism that identifies one of the main focuses of the coming 7 year tribulation.

WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN....ISRAEL!

“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:

And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.” (Revelation 12:1-2)

In Genesis, Jacob clearly understood that he was the sun, his wife was the moon, and his twelve children were the stars. This is the root of the nation of Israel. In Revelation, these symbols are used for two reasons. One is to signify the root of the woman portrayed there, that she is Israel: the sun, moon, & stars—Jacob, Rachel, and the twelve sons. But the sun, moon, and stars also have a secondary meaning: to indicate glory. She is a *glorious* woman—one that can be associated with the glorious things in the heaven—the sun, moon, and stars.

Note this allusion to glory because, as God is looking at Israel at this time—that is, in the prophetic sense, in the time within the prophecies—Israel is glorious. Israel's beginning was glorious—glorious as the heavenly bodies. Israel's end will be just as glorious, because of the promise made to the fathers of Israel, not because of anything they have done, but because of God's Holy Name and His promises to Israel. God fulfills His Word.

Then notice the adversary that has wanted nothing better than to destroy Israel and the lineage of the coming Seed, Jesus Christ to prevent His birth.

“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. 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.

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.” (Revelation 12:3-5)

Satan is pictured as a great red dragon who has tirelessly waged war against the children of Israel in an effort to usurp the plan of God and prevent the fulfillment of the prophecy at the Garden of Eden:

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:15)

Here the prophecy of the coming Messiah was proclaimed by God, and Satan has attempted to thwart God's plan from the very beginning. He hates mankind as we were made in the glory and image of God and given dominion over the earth, instead of giving it to Satan, (Lucifer in the beginning) and his pride just could not stand it.

As we continue in chapter 12 of Revelation, we see the woman fleeing from the dragon, or Satan, as written by John and prophesied by Jesus when He spoke to the disciples in the Olivet Discourse:

“And 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.” (Revelation 12:6) which mirrors what Jesus said in Matthew:

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand :)

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house:

Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

And woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days!

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matthew 24:15-21)

What follows in the next few verse of Revelation chapter 12, speaks of the war in heaven between the angels of God, lead by Michael the archangel, casting Satan and his demon hordes from anywhere in the heavens, down cast to the earth. Satan now knows his time is very short and is desperate to destroy the remnant of Israel, to make God a liar, but God helps the woman, (Israel) to escape the evil of this great dragon, Satan, the devil.

The chapter ends with this verse which shows Satan unable to touch those whom God has removed to a place of safety, but a “remnant” remains that Satan takes out his vengeance upon:

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Revelation 12:17)

THE GREAT TRIBULATION?

This begins what is the most graphic of all the passages in Revelation from chapters 13 though chapter 18 of Divine wrath, poured out without measure upon this earth. Preceding our brief study on chapter 12, God tells us this in chapter 11:

“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.” (Revelation 11:14).

More is to come, and it starts in chapter 13 after identifying the major player that only had been hinted at, and briefly named. At some point, as identified by Jesus and Daniel the prophet, the abomination that causes desolation is revealed, not mentioned here, but in other parts of the Bible. The point of the Tribulation, as a major focus is Israel. The other players are the Gentile nations that experience God’s wrath, because they have taken the mark of the beast and not repented of their sins. Even though God has given them ample signs prior, they have embraced their lawlessness. But notice what Paul wrote and it confirms once again the other major player in this drama of the Tribulation and the Great Tribulation:

“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (II Thessalonians 2:10-12)

John, all through Revelation, switches back and forth between the focus of these chapters since chapter 6. The “actors in this drama” of the end time years of Tribulation have been identified.

Paul gives in our previous scripture verses (noted above in II Thessalonians 2:10-12) and the end verse a revelation of the condemnation and the inability to be saved. That group of people mentioned are the Gentile nations apart from Israel experiencing strong delusions of the beast’s power and the false prophet.

But out of the Tribulation and the Great Tribulation, God redeems His chosen people for Himself, as He promised their forefathers, and they dwell with Him forevermore.

“These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.” (Revelation 14:4-5)

But note the next two verses just right after the quote above:

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” (Revelation 14:6-7)

Now why an angel would be preaching the Gospel? Are we not entrusted with spreading the Good News of the Gospel to all generations? That is the church’s job, as the commission given by Jesus to preach unto all the world. Why is an angel messenger doing it? Because the church is not on earth to preach anything. We have been removed prior to this Revelation drama and the Revelation focuses on four objectives.

- 1. The removal of the Bride of Jesus Christ in chapter 4, as noted by the 24 elders sitting on throne with crowns on their heads, as overcomers to rule.*
- 2. To purge this planet whom God the Son has purchased with His own blood, His creation stolen by Satan at the Garden of Eden. God will destroy all rebellion through divine wrath and the wars constructed by evil men.*
- 3. God will refine His chosen people, Israel, as silver is refined in a white hot furnace to remove all impurities from her and bring her to the knowledge of her Messiah, at long last.*
- 4. To restore the Kingdom lost when sin entered into the world on toward eternity, and defeat Satan and his demonic horde.*

God has made it pretty plain that the book of Revelation begins with the Church justified through His blood, and ends with the Church redeemed and glorified.

*“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in **fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.**_(emphasis mine)*

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”(Revelation 19:8-9) and further:

When Jesus comes back with all His saints, the Bride of Jesus Christ, we will be with Him, to finish what He has begun, the removal of rebellion from this earth:

*“And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, **clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**” (Revelation 19:14, emphasis mine) Note the underlined portion that we go for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and come back clothed in the same linen, white and clean being the armies of heaven.*

Notice the symmetry of the chapters of this book. The first three chapters deal with the church down through the ages. The last three chapters deal with the church back on earth, and the Millennial Kingdom, leading into eternity. Between that we have six chapters that could be called the Tribulation, (chapters 6-11) then the 12th chapter identifying Israel as one of the main characters of the Book and then six more chapters from 13-18 that could only be described as the culmination of the Great Tribulation, or God’s Divine Wrath in its full strength from the cup of His indignation poured upon the earth’s inhabitants. Why do I say that there are only two characters in this drama of the end times from chapters 6-18? It is because of God’s wrath and its focus. Note what the Bible says and it’s sprinkled here a little, there a little. Let’s note the verses and I ask you to take the time to read them prayerfully and I’ll not do it here for brevity sake (Isaiah 26:19-21; John 14:2-4; I Thessalonians 4:15-18; I Corinthians 5:50-56; I Thessalonians 5:9-10; Revelation 3:10), just to name a few.

Since the chapters in Revelation deal with three sets of people as noted above, where will you fall during this time of Tribulation that will come upon the whole earth? If you feel that the Bride of Christ, the Church must endure the coming holocaust of the destruction of mankind, and believe that somehow, Jesus did not quite get the job done by shedding His blood on Calvary, you join the millions that think that we must endure an end time purgatory, as many Catholics believe and are deceived. Then you are not counted in the first group that Jesus removes from this earth, which some mock is “our escape hatch” from the coming tribulation, but do not realize it not so much as an “escape hatch”, but Jesus Christ’s and His victory over sin in our lives, as we have been found in His righteousness and blameless before God. We have been purified by His blood, by His sacrifice and to allow the “purging” of our sins by Tribulation and enduring God’s wrath makes a mockery of His shed blood and broken body for His bride, the Church.

So my friend that leaves two other characters in the drama. If you’re not Jewish by birth, then you must be counted in the Gentile nations that God will send a strong delusion to blind you. You will, most undoubtedly, take a mark of loyalty, known as the Mark of the Beast, to your own spiritual destruction. If you have not believed on the name, the only Name of the only Begotten Son of God, through faith, then your fate may be sealed when the Church is lifted out of here by our Blessed Hope. You may not get a second chance as some so foolishly think that when they see things get really bad, they will get serious about the Man, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Will you make that mistake? Will you continue in your unrighteous behavior and neglect so great a salvation?

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?” (Hebrews 2:3-4

If you neglect His call, the moving of the Holy Spirit in your life, you may lose all chance of being counted among those who live with God for eternity and receive the payment for your rejection, which is separation from God for all eternity...Don’t make that mistake. Today is the day of salvation:

“For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (II Corinthians 6:2)

This is Pastor Mike Taylor, praying for your acceptance by faith of the only payment for your sins, my sins, Jesus Christ. If you have a need, like prayer, counseling, or just a listening ear. Email me at realteam1999@sbcglobal.net, or visit me online at www.churchofgod-usa.org.

God bless you, till we meet at Jesus feet.