

From the Rapture to the Second Coming

Revelation 12: “Israel & Satan”



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Let's Get Started

At the close of Chapter 10, we learned that John was told to prophesy about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings. Chapter 11 began this prophecy which now continues into Chapter 12. Here we will learn more about Israel, Jesus, Satan, the archangel Michael, and the inhabitants of the earth.

The First Great Sign From Heaven

Revelation 12:1 A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.

The symbols in this first sign take us back to the Old Testament to one of the dreams (Genesis 37:9-11) of **Joseph** (Genesis 30:22-24; 37:3, 4). Joseph's father, a man named **Jacob**, interpreted the dream like this: the sun represented himself (Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel), the moon represented his wife (whose name was Rachel), and the crown of twelve stars represented their twelve children (the twelve tribes of Israel). **This family was the beginning of the nation of Israel.**

Notice that the three symbols in Joseph's dream (the sun, moon, and twelve stars) are all associated with this woman in Chapter 12. She is clothed with the sun (a symbol of Israel), has the moon (a symbol of Rachel) under her feet, and has a crown of twelve stars (a symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel) on her head. This woman represents the nation of Israel at its beginning.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ First Sign in Heaven—a Woman
 - Israel
 - *clothed with the sun*
 - Jacob
 - Israel
 - *the moon under feet*
 - Rachel
 - Israel's wife
 - a crown of twelve stars on her head
 - Jacob's twelve sons—Israel's twelve tribes

What Others are Saying:

Harper's Bible Dictionary: Historians see in Jacob, who was renamed "Israel" after his experience wrestling with an angel (Genesis 32:28; 35:10), the personification of the national Israel. ¹²⁻¹

Charles H. Dyer: In the Apostle John's vision the woman clothed with the sun, the moon, and the twelve stars represents the nation of Israel. ¹²⁻²

A Nation In Travail

Revelation 12:2 She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.

Verse 5 of this chapter tells us that Israel is pregnant with *a male child, who will rule all the nations*. Her pregnancy is a reference to her condition just before the birth of Jesus. John says she cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.

Before Christ's birth, Israel was a captive nation to the Roman Empire. She had to submit to Roman leaders, pay Roman taxes, and obey Roman laws. She was a nation in travail.

What Others are Saying:

Ed Hindson: The woman, then, has to symbolize Israel because Christ was born of the seed of Israel. ^{12:3}

The Second Great Sign From Heaven

Revelation 12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.

The first sign in heaven was a sun-clothed woman (the nation of Israel). The second sign in heaven is an enormous red dragon (**Satan**) that is explained further in Revelation 12:9. He is enormous because of his great power; red, since he has **killed multitudes** (John 8:44); and a dragon due to his fierce nature.

This fierce, powerful, murderous dragon will appear in heaven with **seven heads** (Revelation 17:10; symbols of world governments), **ten horns** (Revelation 17:12; symbols of powerful kings), and seven crowns (symbols of the seven divisions controlled by the ten powerful kings).

The dragon will have seven heads symbolizing the seven Gentile world governments that Satan has led since the beginning of creation. It will also have ten horns, symbolizing the ten kings that will reign with him during the entire **Tribulation Period**. The Bible teaches that these ten kings will rise to power, and that the **Antichrist** will come on the scene in a unified Europe (The European Community). The **Antichrist will subdue three** (Daniel 7:8, 24) of those ten kings so that their power will ultimately be concentrated into seven crowns (or seven divisions) of the last world government.

This must not be taken lightly. A one-world government empowered and controlled by **Satan** is a terrible thought. Some say it will make what Adolf Hitler did during WW II look like a Sunday picnic.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Second Sign in Heaven—**Red Dragon**
 - **SATAN**
 - *enormous*
 - **great power**
 - *red*
 - **the blood of multitudes**
 - *dragon*
 - **fierce nature**
 - *seven heads*
 - **seven governments**
 - *ten horns*
 - **ten powerful kings**

- **seven crowns**
 - **seven divisions**

What Others are Saying:

Hal Lindsey: The seven Gentile world governments are:

- ✓ Assyrian
- ✓ Egyptian
- ✓ Babylonian
- ✓ Medo-Persian
- ✓ Greek
- ✓ Roman
- ✓ The current European Community (Revived Roman Empire) ¹²⁻⁴

Falling Stars

Revelation 12:4 His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.

Stars are symbols of angels. The fact that **Satan** swept a third of the stars out of the sky means that he caused one-third of the **angels to fall** (Daniel 8:10; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6). **Satan's** mutiny was a tremendous rebellion involving millions of angels.

Satan has tried to destroy Jesus (or at least Jesus' mission of dying on the cross) many times while Jesus was on earth:

- ✓ **Satan** waited for the birth of Jesus because he **wanted to destroy Jesus** (Matthew 2:13-18). When Jesus was born, he stirred the wrath of Herod, King of Judea, to have all the male babies in and around Bethlehem killed. God, however, sent an angel to warn Jesus' father, Joseph, to take Mary and flee with Jesus to Egypt.
- ✓ At the beginning of Christ's ministry **Satan** offered Jesus the **kingdoms of the world** (Matthew 4:8, 9) if he would bow down and worship **Satan**.
- ✓ Later, when Jesus told his disciples he would die, Peter disagreed and Jesus answered, **Get behind me, Satan** (Matthew 16:23). **Satan** was working through Peter to tempt Jesus to by-pass the cross.
- ✓ Before Jesus was crucified he went to the **Mount of Olives** (Luke 22:39-46) to pray. There **Satan** came against him with such power that God sent an angel to strengthen him. Jesus was put under such agony and temptation that he sweat drops of blood, but he still prevailed.
- ✓ When Jesus was hanging on the cross the chief priests, scribes, and elders mocked him saying, *Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him* (Matthew 27:42, 43). **Satan** was doing everything he could to keep Jesus from dying on the cross.
- ✓ **Satan** even used the thieves who were crucified with Jesus. *In the same way (with insults and taunting) the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him*

(Matthew 27:44).

Key Point

- ✓ Many times **Satan** tried to devour the Messiah, but to no avail.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ **Red Dragon**
 - **Satan**
 - *tail swept a third of the stars (angels) out of the sky*
 - *wants to devour the child (Jesus)*

What Others are Saying:

Charles H. Dyer: **Satan** tried to short-circuit God's plans for the earth by eliminating God's Messiah. ¹²⁻⁵

Remember This...

- ✓ The seven stars are angels.

Snatched Up

Revelation 12:5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.

The woman will give birth to a son who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. The second Psalm identifies the one who will do this as God's Anointed One (Jesus, Psalm 2:2-9). Chapter 19 calls him the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:15, 16).

Her (Israel's) child was snatched up to God is a reference to the ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:9). He ascended to heaven following his death and resurrection (Luke 23:26–24:12).

Notice that Jesus will not rule the nations with love but with an iron scepter. The world is full of people who are in rebellion against God because they follow false teachings or religions (i.e. atheists, communists, Moslems). However, when Christ returns he will crush these rebellions with an iron scepter.

What Others are Saying:

David Jeremiah with C. C. Carlson: The identification of the child could not be clearer, even in symbolic terms. Christ was born, he was resurrected, and when he comes again he will rule the nations with a rod of iron. ¹²⁻⁶

Remember This...

- ✓ John saw a Lamb (Jesus), looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of God's throne (Revelation 5:6).

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Flee Away

Revelation 12:6 The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

We are now at the midpoint of the seven year Tribulation Period. 1,260 days (three and one half years) have past. Now there are 1,260 more days before Christ's Second Coming.

Jesus taught that the Temple would be defiled (Matthew 24:15) by an image of the **Antichrist** at the **Tribulation Period** midpoint. He told those who live in Judea to flee into the mountains (Matthew 24:16) when that happens.

Where will they go? The woman (Israel) will flee into the desert to a place prepared for her by God. Most prophecy experts believe the Jews will flee to a mountainous area in the Jordan desert called Petra. It is an abandoned city that was carved into the rocks of the mountains centuries ago. It has only one entrance, so the Jews will be able to hide in those caves and barricade themselves in for protection. They will hide there for 1,260 days (three and one half years), the last half of the **Tribulation Period**.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ The Woman
 - *a male child (Jesus)*
 - *rule with an iron scepter*
 - *snatched up to God and his throne*

Related Current Events

- ✓ Recently, Israel's (former) Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin toured Petra with his wife, children, and grandchildren. According to reports in The Jerusalem Post (May 13, 1995), Rabin expressed awe at the beauty of the site saying it was "indescribable." His wife's most notable comment was her surprise at the size of the city. ¹²⁻⁷
- ✓ Jordan now allows 1,400 (Jewish tourists) a day to enter the country and this has increased the number of visitors daily going into Petra. Also, according to a news item on page 24 of the October 28, 1995, Jerusalem Post, the Jews will soon be allowed to drive their own cars and busses into Jordan and right up to El Ciq, the narrow entrance to Petra. ¹²⁻⁸

Something to Ponder

- ✓ The ancient city of **Petra** lies in a mountainous area about 20 miles south of the Dead Sea in the country of Jordan. These white and red sandstone mountains are simply a great volcanic crater where the Edomites lived about 500 b.c. These people carved temples, houses, and businesses directly out of the rock face. The name Petra means "the rock" and the city is often called the "Rose Red City" because of its red stone buildings and the red cliffs they are cut out of. The city was long deserted and is still difficult to reach because of the narrow passages that serve as the only entrances. Due to the narrow passages it would be easy for a small force to defend the city against a larger army.
- ✓ **Petra** was hidden at the end of a mile-long, 1,000 foot-deep gorge. As you entered the city, through this corridor, you could see the columns of rose-red sandstone cut into the cliff.

Charge!

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

As soon as Israel flees, a great war will erupt in heaven. God's angels will be led by the archangel Michael (Daniel 12:1) in the fight against Satan and his angels. It will be a fierce spiritual battle, since the last thing **Satan** wants is to be cast out of heaven again.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ Michael
 - *God's head archangel in battle*

What Others are Saying:

Charles H. Dyer: These spiritual beings fall into two classes, angels and demons. Angels are those beings who, after their creation, remained true to God. Demons are spirit beings who were created perfect but who chose to rebel against their Creator. ¹²⁹

Remember This...

- ✓ Some of **Satan's** Names are:
 - **the prince** (Matthew 9:34)
 - **the prince of this world** (John 12:31)
 - **the prince of the powers of the air** (Ephesians 2:2 kjv)
 - **the god of this world** (2 Corinthians 4:4 kjv)

Banished Forever

Revelation 12:8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.

Satan and his angels will fight to no avail. They will lose their place in heaven forever.

What Others are Saying:

John Hagee: At the midpoint of the Tribulation, the **Antichrist** makes his play to control the earth. Simultaneously, **Satan** makes his play to control heaven. But while the **Antichrist** appears to be successful at first, **Satan's** all-out war against the archangel Michael for control of heaven results not only in a stunning defeat, but in banishment from heaven as well. [12-10](#)

Bittersweet

Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

There is no mistaking that the great dragon is **Satan**. He is also called that old serpent and the devil. This verse is bittersweet: Bitter because **Satan** and his demon angels will be thrown down to earth. Sweet because **Satan** and his angels will lose the war in heaven.

What Others are Saying:

Tim LaHaye: Today the world is prepared for a one-world governmental philosophy. That philosophy, propagated by **Satan** and advocated by the intellectual, godless, atheistic leading of world governments today, is rapidly spreading across the world. [12-11](#)

John Hagee: Not powerful enough to prevail in heaven, **Satan** lashes out on the earth against everything God holds dear. [12-12](#)

Something to Ponder

✓ **Satan** has always persecuted God's people. He especially hates the Jews because Jesus was a Jew. He and his demons will come to the earth with great wrath, but God will have Israel flee into the mountainous desert before they arrive.

▪ Examples of Jewish Persecution:

- The Holocaust
- Special taxes were imposed on them by Europeans during the Middle Ages
- They were placed in ghettos during the Middle Ages in Europe
- They were driven out of Spain in 1492

- In the 1800's Poland and Russia killed them in massacres called pogroms

For The Defense

Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

When **Satan** is cast out, heaven will rejoice because:

1. our salvation will be complete and **Satan** will be banished from our presence forever
2. all power will belong to Jesus, and there will be no more evil (**Satan**) in heaven
3. the kingdom of God will come to earth
4. Jesus will finally exercise the authority over earth that he won at the cross.

Today, **Satan** is the accuser of believers. He parades before the throne of God day and night pointing out the sins of God's people. Jesus, too, is there, defending us (1 John 2:1). But his defense will end when **Satan** is cast out of heaven. **Satan** will never accuse us again.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ **Red Dragon**
 - **Satan**
 - *hurled down from heaven*

We Have The Power

Revelation 12:11 They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Believers will have the power to overcome **Satan** during the **Tribulation Period** by

1. trusting in the blood of the Lamb, because through the blood, atonement was made for our sins
2. testifying to our faith, because if we acknowledge Jesus before men, he will acknowledge us before God (Matthew 10:32)
3. not fearing death, because a physical death is far better than being cast into hell.

Key Point

- ✓ Trust in the sacrifice of Jesus. Express your faith, and do not fear.

The Seventh Trumpet - The Third Woe

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

Heaven will celebrate its great triumph after **Satan** and his angels have been cast out. But watch out earth and sea. **Satan** and his demons are on their way filled with fury, knowing that their days are numbered.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ **Seventh Trumpet**
 - ✓ **Third Woe**
 - ✓ *Satan is on his way*

Remember This...

- ✓ When **Satan** is cast out of heaven, Jesus will exercise his authority over the earth. He will declare that the Kingdom of God will come to earth. Because of this, **Satan** will do all the damage he can with the time he has left.

Flee

Revelation 12:13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

Israel will flee (Matthew 24:17-22) when **Satan** is cast down to the earth, because his rage will burn against the nation of Israel for bringing forth Jesus. The quicker the Jews escape the better.

The Wings of An Eagle

Revelation 12:14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.

Israel will escape **Satan's** grasp on the *wings of a great eagle*. Some believe the United States is the wings of a great eagle. They believe she will rapidly airlift the Jews to safety. This is probably not the case.

By letting Scripture be our guide, we learn that God says he brought Israel out of Egypt on eagles' wings (Exodus 19:4). The Jews interpret this to mean they escaped by the grace of God (Deuteronomy 32:11, 12) because they could not deliver themselves. This is most likely the way it will happen during the **Tribulation Period**. God will intervene to help them escape.

Notice that Israel will flee to *the place prepared for her*. God knows everything. He knows

what **Satan** will try to do to Israel during the **Tribulation Period**, so he has already devised an escape route to safety. God will prepare this place of safety, so it will be ready when needed.

When Israel arrives, God will take care of her. He will supernaturally provide food, water, clothing, protection, and anything else she needs. It will be like it was during the days of Moses when they were wandering in the wilderness. God fed them **manna and quail** (Exodus 16:13-15), **provided water** (Exodus 15:22-27; Exodus 17:1-7), and did not allow their **clothes or sandals to wear out** (Deuteronomy 29:5).

This will go on for three and one half years. It is the meaning of *a time, times and half a time*. God will sustain this remnant of Israel in her special place for the entire second half of the **Tribulation Period**.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ The Woman
 - *given two wings of a great eagle*

What Others are Saying:

Noah Hutchings: As we (Hutchings and other tourists) were walking into Petra we observed a new, wide road being constructed right up the Ciq entrance. The article (p. 24 *The Jerusalem Post* Oct. 28, 1995) also indicates that a new wide bridge will be constructed at the Allenby checkpoint. Our Jordanian guide also pointed out plans for utility improvements. Another item of information of great interest was that this next year (1996) Petra will come under United Nations supervision as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has invested millions in excavation and improvement projects. ¹²⁻¹³

J. Vernon McGee: This is the **Time of Jacob's Trouble** (Jeremiah 30:7), and this is the reason I cannot rejoice in the present return of Israel to that land. Some people seem to think they are going back for the Millennium. They are not, they are going back for the **Great Tribulation Period** if they are going back for any purpose at all, according to the Word of God. ¹²⁻¹⁴

Remember This...

- ✓ Even in Biblical Times Efforts to Eliminate the Jews Failed:
 - The king of Egypt could not diminish the Jews (Exodus 1:9–12).
 - The Egyptian army could not recapture them (Exodus 14:13–31).
 - Balaam could not curse them (Numbers 23:7, 8).
 - The nations of the world could not assimilate or destroy them (Esther 3:8–9:17).
 - The dictators of the nations cannot annihilate them (Isaiah 14:1–5; Zechariah 8:22, 23). ¹²⁻¹⁵

Like A Flood

Revelation 12:15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.

In the Old Testament, God used the flood waters of a river as a symbol to represent an attack by the King of Assyria (Isaiah 8:7, 8) on Judah. The flood waters (Jeremiah 46:7, 8; Jeremiah 46:13–47:3) represented enemy troops pouring into the tiny nation.

This verse uses that same type of symbolism. When **Satan** sees Israel fleeing into the wilderness, he will probably speak through the **Antichrist** or his **False Prophet**, using their mouths to incite an attack on the terrified Jewish people. It will be his intent to pour many troops into the wilderness, and drown the woman (Israel) with an overwhelming force.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ **Red Dragon**
 - **Satan**
 - *spewed water like a river*

What Others are Saying:

David Jeremiah with C.C. Carlson: The **Antichrist**, indwelt by **Satan**, is going to be furious that the believers have escaped his grasp, so he will send his henchmen after them like a flood. ^{12:16}

Into The Pit

Revelation 12:16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

God will intervene. A supernatural catastrophe will befall **Satan's** pursuing army. The earth opening its mouth probably symbolizes another great earthquake with the earth splitting open. **Satan's** troops will suddenly drop into the pit.

This is why the Jews should not go back after anything when they see the **Antichrist** defile the Temple. Instead they should escape the enemy troops and stay ahead of the great earthquake.

Key Symbols:

- ✓ **Earth**
 - *opened its mouth (an earthquake) and swallowed the river*

Pick Your Target

Revelation 12:17 Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

The escape of Israel will infuriate **Satan**. Since he failed to wipe out Israel, he will pick another target, *those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus*.

Notice two things:

- ✓ we have now started reading about things that will happen during the second half of the **Tribulation Period**, and
- ✓ there will be Gentile believers on earth at that time. Israel's offspring is a reference to Gentile believers. **Satan** will go on a rampage against God's people in the second half of the **Tribulation Period**. He will do everything he can to destroy the elect.

Study Questions

- ✓ What are the two signs in heaven and what do they represent?
- ✓ What is the meaning of the number 1,260 and what will happen now?
- ✓ Who is the angel that will cast Satan out of heaven?
- ✓ Where will Satan go when he is cast out of heaven? Why will he be so angry?
- ✓ What powers do believers have for overcoming Satan?

[Go to Answers](#)

Chapter Wrap-up

- ✓ Israel, represented as a woman clothed with the sun, is the first sign in heaven. She is pregnant with a child. ([Revelation 12:1, 2](#))
- ✓ A great red dragon, symbolic of **Satan**, is the second sign in heaven. He will cause a third of the angels to fall to earth due to rebellion. ([Revelation 12:3, 4](#))
- ✓ **Satan** will war against God in heaven, but God's angel will overpower him, expel him, and throw him to earth. ([Revelation 12:7-9](#))
- ✓ After **Satan's** heavenly defeat he will try to attack God's people on earth, so he will send an army to drown them. ([Revelation 12:15](#))
- ✓ The earth, however, will help God's people by swallowing these troops in an earthquake. ([Revelation 12:16, 17](#))

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