So, I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.
Ezekiel 22:30

REVELATION CHAPTER TWELVE
Handout Eighteen
Prayer Study #417
First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia

Revelation 12

The theme of this chapter is the final war between Satan and Israel. There are seven performers that come forth in Chapters 12 and 13 by the blowing of the seventh trumpet during the Great Tribulation.

The Woman

12 *And a great sign (wonder) - [warning of future events of ominous significance] appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and with a crownlike garland (tiara) of twelve stars on her head.*
2 *She was pregnant, and she cried out in her birth pangs, in the anguish of her delivery.*
3 *Then another ominous sign (wonder) was seen in heaven: Behold, a huge, fiery-red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven kingly crowns (diadems) upon his heads.*
4 *His tail swept [across the sky] and dragged down a third of the stars and flung them to the earth. And the dragon stationed himself in front of the woman who was about to be delivered, so that he might devour her child as soon as she brought it forth.*
5 *And she brought forth a male Child, One Who is destined to shepherd (rule) all the nations with an iron staff (scepter), and her Child was caught up to God and to His throne.*
6 *And the woman [herself] fled into the desert (wilderness), where she has a retreat prepared [for her] by God, in which she is to be fed and kept safe for 1,260 days (42 months; three and one-half years).*

The identification of this woman is the key to the understanding of the book of Revelation. The Roman Catholics believe this is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Many protestant denominations teach that this is the Christian Church. Although I personally believe this, the problem with this interpretation is that the Christian Church did not birth the Messiah. Therefore, many believe that this woman is symbolic of Israel. There have been some women through the ages that have also taught that they were this woman. These have been leaders of cults and religious groups and even some lady pastors. Of course, all of those who have made such claims can be dismissed. This woman is symbolic and a sign in heaven, although her time, spoken of here, is on earth.

The sun and moon and twelve stars probably point back to Joseph's dream in

Genesis 37:9-10: *And he dreamed yet another dream and told it to his brethren, and said, "Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." And he told it to his father and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him and said unto him, "What is this dream that thou has dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?"* Jacob interpreted the sun as referring to himself, the moon referring to his wife Rachel, and the eleven stars as being his brothers.

Thus, the woman most likely represents Israel, although again I would think that, since we have been grafted in the vine and are spiritual Israel, that this could perhaps represent the Church. J. Vernon McGee, however, strongly disputes this interpretation, "…we identify the woman as the nation Israel. No one woman who has ever lived, including the Virgin Mary, fits into this. If we just keep our bearings here and not lose our heads, we know that this is the Great Tribulation Period and that the church has already gone to heaven. This woman is not the church of the ages."

There can be no doubt that the male child is the Messiah, Jesus, who will rule the nations with an iron staff.

The red dragon is obviously Satan, and John even tells us *that* in verse 9. McGee says that Satan is called "great" because of his vast power and his control over the nations of the world, a fact that is established by what he said at the temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:8-9). He is called "red" because of the fact that he was and is a murderer (John 8:44), and red is associated with blood. He is called a "dragon" because of the viciousness of his character. "Seven heads" refers to the complete wisdom given Satan when he was the "covering cherub." Ezekiel 28:12 tells us that at his origin he was "…full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." "Ten horns" refer to the final division of the Roman Empire, and "seven kingly crowns" show his complete authority on the earth. Satan is smart, clever and wise in a worldly way. We are no match for him and can never stand against him in our own strength.

The "third of the stars" in heaven represent the 1/3 of the angels in heaven who followed Satan in rebellion and became part of the kingdom of darkness. (See Daniel 8:10 and Jude 6).

Satan hates mankind because mankind was made in the image of God. His ultimate goal is to be worshiped. He hates the Man Child because he knows that the Man Child will be the One who destroys him: "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shalt bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel"* (Genesis 3:15).

The Man Child is caught up into heaven where he sits beside God the Father. This is a reference to the ascension of Christ. In the Gospel the emphasis is on the death of Christ for our sins. In the Epistles the emphasis is upon the resurrection of Christ. In Revelation the emphasis is on the ascension of Christ. We see in Revelation the glorified Christ who is coming in glory!

We don't know where the woman will flee. Some think that those faithful ones who remain will go to Petra, the rock fortress on top of a mountain. Others believe that she represents all believers who will disperse to all the nations and thus blend in with the people. We simply do not know but know that God will protect the woman for the 3 ½ year period.

The War in Heaven

7 Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels went forth to battle with the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought.
***8** But they were defeated, and there was no room found for them in heaven any longer.*
***9** And the huge dragon was cast down and out—that age-old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him.*
***10** Then I heard a strong (loud) voice in heaven, saying, Now it has come—the salvation and the power and the kingdom (the dominion, the reign) of our God, and the power (the sovereignty, the authority) of His Christ (the Messiah); for the accuser of our brethren, he who keeps bringing before our God charges against them day and night, has been cast out!*
***11** And they have overcome (conquered) him by means of the blood of the Lamb and by the utterance of their testimony, for they did not love and cling to life even when faced with death [holding their lives cheap till they had to die for their witnessing].*
***12** Therefore be glad (exult), O heavens and you that dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in fierce anger (fury), because he knows that he has [only] a short time [left]!*

Some believe that Satan hated Jesus so much that he pursued Him even to heaven, where he was met by Michael, the archangel, whose forces cast him out. Barclay tells us that in the New Testament Satan was a prosecuting attorney accusing us before God, bringing false charges sometimes and tempting people into actions where they open themselves up to charges. He is a slanderer, a seducer of men and women, and a deceiver. He sought to seduce Jesus in his temptations, he put the terrible scheme of betrayal in Judas' heart, he tried to make Peter fall, and he persuaded Ananias and Sapphira to keep back part of the price of the possession of land they had sold. He uses his tricks (Ephesians 6:11), tries to lead people astray (2nd Corinthians 2:11), he causes illness and pain (Luke 13:16; Acts 10:38; 2nd Corinthians 12:7), he hinders the work of the Gospel by sowing weeds, which choke out the good seed (Matthew 13:39), and he snatches away the seed of the word from human hearts before it can bear fruit (Mark 4:15). Satan is the ruler or prince of this world (John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11) and the ruler of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2). He is a murderer (John 8:44). He is a liar and

slanderer and adversary (1st Peter 5:8).

Verse 10 is a message of great triumph and great victory and hope for the people of God. Satan has finally been cast down from the heavenly places forever. And the whole atmosphere changed just like it will when Jesus comes. There will be no dying, no sickness, no pain, no uncleanness, no fighting or wars, no destructive weather patterns, no fear of animals, no lack, etc. Instead, will be salvation, and the word for salvation in the Word means not just being born again but all the promises of God, *Yes and Amen* (2nd Corinthians 1:20). There will be righteousness and holiness as Jesus takes over the rule of the world and establishes His kingdom.

The Body of Christ will overcome the accuser of the brethren by the blood, which is applied when someone invites Christ into his heart, and by quoting the Word of God. They will remain loyal to Jesus even if they have to pay for it with their lives, both physical and soulish (ego, ambition, personal plans, etc.) death.

The fall of Satan will bring two radical reactions. First, all of heaven will rejoice, but woe will be the reaction of those on earth as the seven bowls of wrath will be poured out.

The War on Earth

13 *And when the dragon saw that he was cast down to the earth, he went in pursuit of the woman who had given birth to the male Child.*
14 *But the woman was supplied with the two wings of a giant eagle, so that she might fly from the presence of the serpent into the desert (wilderness), to the retreat where she is to be kept safe and fed for a time, and times, and half a time (three and one-half years, or 1,260 days).*
15 *Then out of his mouth the serpent spouted forth water like a flood after the woman, that she might be carried off with the torrent.*
16 *But the earth came to the rescue of the woman, and the ground opened its mouth and swallowed up the stream of water which the dragon had spouted from his mouth.*
17 *So then the dragon was furious (enraged) at the woman, and he went away to wage war on the remainder of her descendants — [on those] who obey God's commandments and who have the testimony of Jesus Christ [and adhere to it and bear witness to Him].*

If the woman represents Israel, then we will see the worst anti-Semitism we have ever seen on earth, and it is even now much more prevalent than most realize. Satan knows his time is short, and he hates Israel because that is the nation from which Christ came. This will be the time of Jacob's trouble.

I believe the two wings of a great eagle, whereby the woman might retreat from the serpent, are possibly Prayer and Praise or the Old and New Testament or Prayer and Fasting. An early Christian leader, Hippolytus, believed that the two wings were the hands of Jesus stretched out on the cross. At any rate the Lord will keep the woman safe and fed.

Perhaps the water spoken of here is the accusations in Satan's mouth against the people of God. This could also symbolize armies flowing like water against Israel. This is found in Isaiah 8:7-8: *Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them the waters of the River, strong and mighty-the king of Assyria and all his glory; He will go over all his banks. He will pass through Judah. He will overflow and pass over. He will reach up to the neck; And the stretching out of his wings will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel.*

Some believe the water is literal and cite the Lord saving the people as they marched across the Red Sea out of Egypt and across the dry bed of the Jordan.

The chapter ends with an ominous warning. These times mentioned in this chapter will see a great increase in persecution of all kinds.