

SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 48

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

THE WOMAN STUDY GUIDE

Review

The book of Revelation is organized in four prophetic cycles. It can be approached from different angles, but we have chosen to study Revelation through the four prophetic cycles of Revelation's seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials. Each of the four prophetic cycles begins in John's day (the apostolic age), and moves through prophetic history from that time to the New Heavens and New Earth.

Seven churches begins with Ephesus and takes us to Laodicea, with New Earth promises to them "that overcometh" (Revelation 3:21).

Seven seals begins with the Lamb that was slain, and takes us to New Earth promises (Revelation 5:6; 7:15-17).

Seven trumpets begins with the intercession of Christ in the holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, and takes us to New Earth promises (Revelation 8:3-5; 11:18).

Seven vials begins with the birth and ascension of Christ, and takes us to the New Earth promises (Revelation 12:2-5; 21:1-4).

The first three prophetic cycles are primarily history past. The fourth prophetic cycle is the opposite. While it begins with a review of history past in Revelation 12 and the first part of 13, it is primarily concerning the future. It lays out a brief history, a distillation of the first 11 chapters, and then moves us to the final crisis in Revelation 13. There we have God's last message to the world in Revelation 14, followed by judgment in Revelation chapters 15-20. And finally, we make it to Revelation 21 and 22 and the New Earth.

Sanctuary Confirmation

The first three prophetic cycles reveal a history that is primarily taking place during the ministry of Christ in heaven in the Holy Place (with the exception of the final church, seal, and trumpet). This final, fourth prophetic cycle, while it begins in the apostolic age like the previous three, offers a picture of prophetic history that is primarily taking place during the final Most Holy Place ministry of Jesus Christ (with the exception of the review of history in chapter 12 and the first part of chapter 13).

Candle Sticks in the Holy Place correlates with the message to the seven churches.

Table of Shew Bread in the Holy Place correlates with the seven seals of the scroll.

Golden Table of Incense in the Holy Place correlates with the seven trumpets.

The Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place correlates with the seven vials.

Revelation 12:1-6 "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. 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. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God,



"Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet..." **REVELATION 12:1**

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 12:1 WOMAN CLOTHED WITH SUN

Revelation 12:4 DRAGON READY TO DEVOUR CHILD

Revelation 12:5 SHE BOUGHT FORTH A MAN CHILD

Revelation 12:6 WOMAN FLED TO WILDERNESS

that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

These obviously symbolic representations are of significant importance. As in earlier visions, God opens the connected visions of chapters 12-14 with a picture of hope and encouragement designed to take us through the assaults of the dragon. This is the picture of the woman.

From the very beginning God has used the woman as a symbol of His church (see Genesis 3:15). In fact, the woman is used consistently through the Scriptures to represent either God’s church or an apostate church (2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:31, 32; Revelation 17:3-6). The woman here represents God’s church. Consider her symbolic appearance:

- She is clothed with the sun. This represents the righteousness of Christ revealed in the gospel (Malachi 4:2; 2 Corinthians 4:4, 6; Psalm 84:11).
- She has the moon under her feet. This represents the “lesser light” of the Bible compared to the great Light of Jesus Christ manifested in the flesh (John 1:1-9). God has given this light of the Bible to reveal Himself in the darkness of this world of sin (Genesis 1:16; John 1:1-5; John 5:39).
- The woman has a crown of twelve stars on her head. This is the kingdom number. The twelve tribes and twelve apostles represent the church of the Old and New Testament.
- The dragon seeks to devour the woman’s child (Revelation 12:4).
- The dragon also persecutes the woman and goes to make war with the seed of the woman (Revelation 12:13, 15-17).
- This woman has a remnant which keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus (Revelation 12:17).

This woman represents the church of God restored to God’s original glory, the image of God in which we were created. She is pictured in this first verse of Revelation 12 as victorious, having the righteousness of Christ, standing firmly on the Word of God and crowned with the victory emblem of God’s kingdom.

The next three chapters bring us the experience of this woman, God’s church. We are shown history past to events still future. They open up the tremendous conflicts and persecution afflicting God’s people down through the centuries. They also focus on persecution yet to assault the Church of Christ. The symbolic picture of the triumphant woman is offered by God to encourage His Church through all their conflicts. This initial vision of the woman is an accurate, trustworthy representation of our final destiny, and as such, it delivers hope and assurance to the church in every age, including the last.

The woman is the church at the point when Jesus is born. She is the Old Testament church, the Jewish church of which Christ the man-child was born. This church travailed in birth from the fall of Adam and Eve, longing for the promised Child. The entire Old Testament church has been waiting in pain for the birth of the promised Messiah.

A picture is given to us in the second part of verse four with the dragon standing before the woman to devour her child. Again, this is not to be understood literally. There wasn’t a great red fire breathing dragon roaming through Bethlehem looking for the newborn Babe. Satan worked through other instrumentalities as he has done from the very beginning when he worked through the snake to deceive Eve. (Genesis 3:1; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 2 Corinthians 11:14). As soon as the prophecies of the Messiah were fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, the devil sought to destroy Christ through King Herod.

Matthew 2:13-16 – “And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.”

This is how the dragon stood before the woman to destroy her child as soon as it was born (Revelation 12:4).

Summary

Jesus was born of the woman, God’s Jewish church. He was hunted by the dragon who sought to destroy Him as soon as He was born, and was finally slain on Calvary’s cross on our account. He was then resurrected victorious over sin and the devil, and was taken to heaven where He sits at the right hand of God.

First there was the birth of Jesus, followed by the attempt to destroy Jesus by the dragon through Herod, then the ascension of Jesus (caught up to God). By these three events in Revelation 12:1-5, we are now beginning a fourth and final prophetic cycle.

By His death, Jesus cast the devil down from heavenly places. He vanquished in the minds of the universe the accusations of the devil against God. Through His life, given for the world, we see a revelation of the love of God that will constrain and draw all men to overcome Satan. (John 6; 12:31; 2 Corinthians 5:15). Even the devil knows he has

been defeated and has but a short time; he seeks to deceive as many as he can by cunningly misrepresenting the character of God.

Yet God will have a victorious people! They are pictured by the woman clothed with the sun: Christ's righteousness, the

moon under her feet: the Bible, and crowned with the insignia of the kingdom of God. Through the power of the blood of Christ we are called to be part of this victory over sin. May we be among them by the grace of God and the sealing of the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus. Amen. ★

Questions for Review

1. How many prophetic cycles are there in the book of Revelation? _____
2. How do we know what begins a new prophetic cycle in Revelation? _____

3. What signifies the end of a prophetic cycle in Revelation? _____
4. What does a woman symbolically represent in prophecy? _____
5. The first three prophetic cycles correlate primarily with what part of the Sanctuary: Holy Place or Most Holy Place? _____

6. The fourth and final prophetic cycle correlates primarily with what part of the Sanctuary: Holy Place or Most Holy Place? _____

7. Who does the dragon represent in Revelation chapter 12? _____

