

Identifying the Antichrist in Revelation 12

Introduction:

The background for understanding this chapter is found in the first prophecy found in the Scriptures regarding the conflict between Christ and Satan which began on earth.

Genesis 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15) 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.

The ending of this chapter records the final battle between Christ and Satan.

Revelation 12:17 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.

Let's notice the parallels to these two passages in the following:

1. The serpent or the dragon
2. Enmity or wrath
3. The woman
4. The seed

1. The identity of the serpent in Genesis 3 or dragon in Revelation 12 is Satan.
2. The enmity or wrath is hatred, variance leading to persecution of Christ's seed.
3. The identity of the woman in Genesis 3 is primarily Eve, secondarily the church; the identity of the woman in Revelation 12 is primarily Mary, secondarily the church.
4. The identity of Eve's seed in Genesis 3 is primarily Christ, secondarily the servants of Christ; the identity of Satan's seed in Genesis 3 is all those in the service of Satan.

A woman in Bible prophecy represents a church.

Jeremiah 6:2 I have likened the daughter of Zion to a comely and delicate woman.

There are two symbolic women in Revelation. The one here in Revelation 12 is the pure church. The one in Revelation 17 represents the apostate church, the antichrist who unites with the kings of the earth in an illicit union of church and state.

Revelation 12:1 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 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2) With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

Starting from Genesis chapter 4 extending to the end of Revelation, the Bible records the battle between Christ and Satan, between Christ's servants, also known as the church, and Satan's servants, the wicked.

What do we find in Genesis 4? A battle between two seeds, the first two sons of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel.

1 John 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

Satan's most prominent seeds, or servants, as recorded in every vision of Daniel, are Rome in its pagan phase and Rome in its papal phase. We will discover that in Revelation the same is true, Satan's servants which most represent his kingdom principles are Pagan and Papal Rome.

The book of Revelation reveals events that transpire between Pagan Rome and Christ's everlasting Kingdom set up on earth. In other words, events that transpire between the ascension of Christ in Pagan Rome and His return at the demise of Papal Rome. We find this same cycle of events from the ascension to the return of Christ in the seven churches, the seven seals and the seven trumpets. **Most** of the events from Revelation 13 on are yet future. Revelation 12 is unique in that it gives us the big picture of the cosmic battle between Christ and the first antichrist, Satan which war began in Heaven as we shall see.

Summary of events prophesied in Revelation 12:

We need to understand that Revelation 12 does not follow a sequence of events in chronological order. The major emphasis in this chapter is to understand that the dragon, Satan, is the one behind the scenes working through his servants, the wicked, to destroy Christ and His servants. Its emphasis is on Rome's attack in its different phases on Christ and His church.

Revelation 12 starts with the record of how Satan worked through Pagan Rome to destroy the seed (Christ) who it was prophesied would crush his head (Genesis 3:15). It then flashes back to the war that began in Heaven. Next it describes how Satan worked through Papal Rome to persecute the seed of Christ, the church, during its first reign of 1260 years. Next, the chapter describes Satan working through Pagan Rome in crucifying Christ. Next, it returns to Satan attacking the church through Papal Rome during the 1260 years. Why the emphasis on the 1260 years, and why is it brought up again? Because the persecution of the saints and the suppression of the Scriptures during the 1260 years is going to be repeated when the wound is healed. In order for us to survive the future persecution during the mark of the beast conflict, we **must** know the history of Papal Rome's persecution of the past. The second and last phase of Papal Rome will be when she is "wroth with the woman" and goes to "to make war with the *remnant* of her seed." Who is the remnant? The final or very last generation.

Let's begin our study of Revelation 12:

Let's start unpacking right from the beginning. We will leave a fuller unpacking for another study, and just hit the highlights so we can identify the antichrist's activities and compare them with other passages to verify its identity.

Let's notice what condition the pure woman is in. She's about to give birth and as we shall see, the seed represents Christ. The birth of Christ represents the change from the Old Testament times to the New Testament times. Of special importance is the fact that there is only one woman described from the time of the Old Testament church of faithful Israel through the phases of Pagan and Papal Rome right down to the remnant, the last generation of God's faithful seed known as the church. Christ has always had only one church made up of the faithful of all ages and all denominations. "Clothed with the sun" represents the New Testament church, and "the moon under her feet" represents the Old Testament church which reflected Christ.

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

We know that it was Mary, the mother of Jesus who gave birth to Christ. But remember that a woman in Bible prophecy represents a church.

Revelation 12:3 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.

We do not have to go far to understand who this dragon and the stars represent.

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation 12:4a And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth:

When were Satan and his angels cast out into the earth?

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8) And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Just as the woman symbolized two things, Mary and the church, so we will discover that the dragon also symbolizes two things. We have learned that the dragon primarily represents Satan, but now we will discover the second entity it represents, that being Pagan Rome through which Satan worked. More specifically it represents Herod, a King of Rome, whom Satan had jealously motivated to destroy the Christ child.

Revelation 12:4b ... and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Following is the account of how Satan worked through Herod, a king of Pagan Rome in a failed attempt to “devour her child as soon as it was born.”

Matthew 2:3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4) And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. ... 16) 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 enquired of the wise men.

We know that the seed, the child represented Christ from reading the following verse.

Revelation 12:5 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.

In verse 6, John leaps into the future from the birth and ascension of Christ to the first phase of Papal Rome, the next seed or servant of Satan through which he persecuted Christ's church during the first phase of the papacy in the 1260 years.

Revelation 12:6 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.

The above verse refers to the dark ages of the 1260 years, when the papacy persecuted the church and suppressed the Scriptures, causing the church to flee into the wilderness. It also reflects on the fact that even though there was “darkness” because of the corruption of the Scriptures, God preserved His word and fed His church.

John next flashes back to Heaven where this war between the dragon and Christ first began.

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8) And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Did you notice that he is called the dragon, the serpent, the devil and Satan in chapter 12:9? As a dragon, he persecutes the church, as a serpent, he uses his subtle lies to deceive the world by distorting the Scriptures.

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.

John next jumps ahead to describe what was prophesied in Genesis 3:15, how Satan would bruise Christ at the crucifixion, another instance where the union between church and state, ended in the persecution and death of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

The above verse records a second casting of Satan. The first was out of Heaven, the second is down to earth. When Satan was unsuccessful in crushing Christ first at His birth and now second at His crucifixion, he turned his attention to persecuting the church. But his attempts just grew the church through martyrdom during the period of Pagan Rome.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

John describes why Satan was cast down to the earth in the following verses. The passage suggests that Satan no longer had any influence with those that dwelt in Heaven, but now focuses on destroying the church on earth during Pagan Rome.

Revelation 12:12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13) And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

But again we see Satan's efforts have failed to crush Christianity during Pagan Rome. Satan continues his attack against Christ by attacking His church as we find John again jumping to a future persecution of the church during the next phase of Rome, the 1260 years of the first papal reign. The first verse that gives this account is found in verse 6. Revelation 12:14 is the second account of the 1260 year reign of the papacy. The purpose in repeated reference to the 1260 years is to emphasize the workings of the papacy during the first reign so that we can prepare for the coming crises when the wound is healed as recorded in Revelation 13:3, 12, 14. Much of the history that took place during those 1260 years will be repeated.

Revelation 12:14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

Revelation 13 records the healing of the wound.

Revelation 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. ... 12) And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein

to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ... 14) And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

Did you notice that he is called the dragon, the serpent, the devil and Satan in chapter 12? As a dragon, he persecutes the church, as a serpent, he uses his subtle lies to deceive the world by distorting the Scriptures.

Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.

The following verse describes the papal persecuting flood of enemies that murdered millions, none know how many million of the followers of Christ were martyred during the first phase of papal reign.

Revelation 12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

But we find God interceding for His church through the pilgrims who fled from Europe to the unpopulated shores of America which helped put an end to some of the persecution, not only from the persecuting tyranny of the church/state union in Europe, but also from the efforts of Satan to suppress the Scriptures. Here is where a new form of government without a king, and a liberated church without a pope was birthed in republicanism and protestantism represented by "the two horns like a lamb." This was the founding of another beast, a new kingdom, based on liberty and justice for all, coming up some time around the end of the first papal reign.

Revelation 12:16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Revelation 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

These two lamblike horns, republicanism and protestantism, were founded west of Europe and reflected more closely the Spirit of the Lord, His glory and character.

Isaiah 59:19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

A new kingdom, based on God's kingdom principles instead of Rome's kingdom principles of self-exaltation and force, where church and state united to enforce worship of the papal church.

Zechariah 4:6b ...Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.

2Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

However, as we read in Revelation 13:11, this new kingdom based on liberty, political and religious freedom, will speak as a dragon and will give its power to the papal church and make an image, a (church/state) union which will legislate and enforce worship of the Papal Roman Church as prophesied in Revelation 13:11-18.

Revelation 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12) And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. ... 15) And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, [legislate] and cause [enforce] that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

In the United States of America there will be a movement to unite church and state which will heal the wound and we will see the final battle of Satan against the church of Christ.

Have you heard the rumblings of this movement?

Revelation 12:17 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.

Summary of the characteristics of the antichrist in Revelation 12:6, 13-15, 17:

Revelation 12:6 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 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14) And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15) And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

Revelation 12:17 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.

What are the characteristics that we glean from the above verses?

1. She reigns after Pagan Rome ends.
2. She persecuted the saints for 1260 years, being the same as time, times, and half a time.
3. She denied access to the Bible for that same period of time.
4. Her reign ends having received the wound at the time of the end.
5. Her wound is healed and she again persecutes the saints, this time it's the remnant, the final generation.

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