

Note

Revelation – Part 6 of 15

Summary

John sees a pregnant woman (God's people) and a great red dragon (Satan). After being thrown to earth, having being defeated in heaven, the devil wages war against God's people. God's people will suffer persecution during the last days. The first beast (the antichrist), from the sea, resembles the dragon in terms of head and crowns. He is allowed to speak blasphemy against God, persecute God's people and rule the world for 42 months. The second beast (the false prophet), from the land, resembles a lamb. It makes everyone worship the first beast and take a mark. There seems to be an unholy trinity of devil, antichrist and false prophet. A new song is sung in heaven. An angel proclaims the eternal gospel of the Creator to all the earth.

Transcript

Revelation – Part 6 of 15

We come to Revelation Chapter 12. John sees a pregnant woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and having a crown of 12 stars. The number 12 tells us this is got something to do with God's people.

And this pregnant woman gives birth, and the next thing we see is a great red dragon, with 7 heads, 10 horns, and 7 crowns. This dragon is later identified as satan. We know a dragon is identified as satan many, many times. All these pictures, 7 heads, 10 horns, 7 crowns mean he rules the world. I think that's what it basically means. And this great red dragon wanted to devour the child that this pregnant woman gave birth to.

Who is this pregnant woman? I think it speaks of Israel. Of course, Christ was born through the nation of Israel. It could also represent spiritual Israel. Later on, it also includes spiritual Israel because it's God's people. So the pregnant woman is God's people, starting with Israel, later the church.

Jesus came from Israel. We know that in Matthew. They tried to use King Herod to kill the baby. And then they said this child that was to be born would rule all the world and I believe this is Jesus. So it's talking about Jesus' birth, and then immediately it says, this child was born and caught up to God. I think this is telescoping all the events. This child was born and the devil wanted to destroy him.

And then he goes on to say, this woman fled to the wilderness where she was protected and provided for 1,260 days. I think this speaks of God's people fleeing during this Great Tribulation from the evil one, from satan. And God will protect and provide for them during these 1,260 days of Great Tribulation.

And then it switches gears and says, John saw a war in heaven. Michael, the Archangel fighting against the dragon. Finally, Michael and his angels win, and the dragon and his angels were cast down to the earth. Michael

is the Archangel, the leader of the good angels, and Satan or Lucifer, or the Great Dragon is the leader of the fallen angels. Actually, in Revelation 12 verse 4 it says his tail swept one-third of the angels from heaven onto earth. So probably two-thirds of the Angels are loyal to God. One-third was deceived and led by Satan and they were all swept down at this time to the earth.

And then a song is sung-rejoicing in heaven because Satan and his demons are thrown out of heaven, but woe to the earth. Because Satan is now angry and he knows he only has a short period on earth to persecute the woman, meaning to persecute God's people. So woe to the earth because now Satan and his demons are thrown out and they will focus their energy on persecuting God's people. Presumably, before this, they had their battle half up there, half down here, but now they're all down here focusing on persecuting God's people on earth.

And then in Revelation 12, it says this woman was given two wings of an eagle to fly away. I don't know what it means, maybe God gives them the ability to escape from the persecution or flee from the persecution. And then it says that the demon was so angry, he caused a flood, hoping to drown them. But the earth opened up and swallowed up the water, so that people were not persecuted or drowned. I have no idea what these are. It maybe just symbolic of God protecting the persecuted believers on earth at this time.

So here we see this picture which is confusing. In the early part it describes the dragon wanting to devour the woman and then how she fled into the wilderness. Later it says she was given wings to flee. Is this describing the same thing? I think so. The first part speaks of her fleeing into the wilderness. The second part speaks of her fleeing on wings of eagles, so to speak. The first part says the demon was going to persecute them but the second part says the dragon is going to persecute her with a floodwater.

So maybe more details were given in the second part of Revelation 12, and it's actually describing the same thing. Basically, this chapter is about the devil wanting to persecute God's people. In other words, God's people must be prepared for great persecution. Basically that's what I believe this whole book of Revelation is about-that God's people will have to be ready for persecution, but yet in the midst of persecution, remember, there's a hope. Ultimately, the victory is on our side. And even in a time of

persecution, God has not lost control. God is also protecting and providing for us.

We've come to Revelation Chapter 13. In the previous chapter, we saw the cosmic battle between Archangel Michael and Satan. And Satan is thrown to earth with his army of fallen angels. In Revelation 13, we see the scene on earth. Earlier, we saw the scene in heaven in Chapter 12. In Chapter 13, you will see two characters. One called the beast or shall we say the first beast. Then the second character, we can call him the second beast. Who is the first beast? The first beast is what we call the Antichrist; the second beast is the False Prophet.

Let's look at the first beast. In Revelation 13, this first beast had 7 heads, 10 horns, and 10 crowns -sounds almost like the red dragon in Revelation 12:3, except this antichrist has got more crowns than Satan. So in other words, Satan handed him his power. Who is this antichrist with 7 heads, 10 horns, and 10 crowns? What are these 7 heads, 10 horns, 10 crowns? Every horn signifies power, crown-like a king, 7 heads sound like the federation of political leaders, kings, presidents, and then one of them becomes the head. So he is the one that is head over these 7, over this political alliance, so to speak.

Then it says he was like a leopard with the mouth of a lion, the claws of a bear. What does it mean? The lion's mouth is very ferocious, the claws of a bear rip you up. So, in other words, he is very powerful. And he has blasphemous names against God on his heads. And Revelation 13 tells us he gets power from Satan and how does he get his power? This antichrist appears to have been mortally wounded, looks dead. But then he resurrected and then all the other leaders respect him, and then he's made the chief. I hope you get the picture here of a political alliance. All these kings of the world are controlling the world through their alliances, treaties, but one of them suddenly gets the attention because he seems to rise from the dead. Can you see the type, the imitation of Jesus Christ, he rises from the dead, given power from Satan to rise from the dead, maybe not dead, but appear to the world to be dead, seeming to have a mortal wound. And then the whole world looks up to him and worships him, saying, "Who is like the beast."

So he gets the attention from the world, and he blasphemes God, but God only allows him for 42 months. And he's allowed to persecute the Christians during these 42 months, three and a half years. And he's given authority

over the whole world during these months and the whole world worships him. The Bible makes it very clear in Revelation 13, all will worship him except those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life. And then there's a line in Revelation 13 which says, endure, be faithful. So here everybody is worshipping this Antichrist, not the real Christ.

Now let's just back up a little bit. Who is this antichrist? Has he been identified before? Yes - in 2 Thessalonians Chapter 2:3-4, called the man of lawlessness; and in 1 John Chapter 2:18 he is called the antichrist. Here he's called the beast.

Now, remember when Jesus was being tempted by satan in Matthew Chapter 4 verses 1 to 11, Satan said you go up to the pinnacle of the temple and jump down, you won't die, and then all the world will worship you. You appear to be mortally wounded but not, and then the world will worship you. Satan was tempting Jesus to have political power over the world so that Satan could use Jesus. Satan's goal is always to rule, to be like God. But since Jesus refused satan in Matthew Chapter 4, now he has found a counterfeit Jesus through whom satan will rule the world, through this Antichrist, for three and a half years only. God allows all these things. It looks like God is out of control. Oh, no, it's all part of this grand plan of God, which will all work out for His glory in the end. So in Chapter 12, we see a spiritual being, satan, and we see his man on earth, the antichrist.

Now we see the next person in Revelation Chapter 13 called the second beast. Now the first beast rose up from the sea, the second beast rises out of the earth. This one looks totally different, like a lamb. There are two horns, ordinary looking, as opposed to the first beast which has 7 heads, 10 horns, 10 crowns. This one is like a lamb-2 horns, and looks like a lamb-harmless. But this lamb speaks blasphemous words. And this lamb too is given power by satan to make everyone in the world worship the first beast, the antichrist. How does he have the power to make the whole world worship the antichrist? Very simple, satan gives this lamb power to do miracles - to call down fire from heaven, to even tell the world to make an image of the beast and the lamb can give breath to the image of the beast to look alive and speak like a living being. In other words, make an idol (the world loves idols) but this idol is not a dead idol. This idol is an animated idol, it can talk, and those who would not worship the image of the beast would be slain.

Who is this lamb? Another human, a religious figure looking very harmless but speaking blasphemous words, meaning speaking against God. Though he looks like a religious figure, he brings people to worship not God, but this image of the beast and he animates this image of the beast. So the whole world comes to worship this image of the beast or die. But that's not all, his real power is not only making everyone worship that image of the beast, but also to have the mark of the name of the beast or the number of the beast on his forehead, on his right hand.

What in the world is this? This is a kind of bizarre already. No, no. If you go back to Deuteronomy Chapter 6:4-8, you will find that the Jews were told that they must worship God and God alone, and love Him with all their heart. That's the law of God. So the law of God is summarized in this-there's one God-Jehovah; love Him with all your heart. That's all! All the rest of the law is summarized in this. And Jews will say these words, they called it the Shema. This is what all Jews declare. And this Shema is supposed to be written on the forehead and the arm of every Jew. I think it meant figuratively. In other words, you must always remember this truth-one God. My role as a human being created by this God is to worship and love this God. So it's put on my forearm and my forehead to remind me all the time.

Today, if you go to Israel, you can see ultra-orthodox Jews follow everything in the Torah. They actually tie these verses, Deuteronomy Chapter 6 verses 4 and 8, written in a little scroll and put it in a phylactery on the foreheads. It's bound by a leather strap on their foreheads, and on a leather armband on their forearm. You can see this in Israel today. That is the Shema. But now, this is the antishema. Instead of loving God in heaven, you love this beast, antichrist. So it's a mockery.

So who is this false prophet, the second beast that comes up of the earth? Some religious leader who unites the world by his amazing miracles, given by satan. Remember satan can also do miracles. Please do not be impressed that if it's a miracle, it must be from God. Early in the Bible in Exodus, remember Pharaoh? When Moses did a miracle, Pharaoh's magicians did a miracle. Moses did a miracle, Pharaoh's magicians did another miracle. So he has satanic power. Every non-believer knows that, sometimes Christians don't even know that. So that's why people worship satan. He has power, but limited, not unlimited like God.

So what are we seeing here? We're seeing the unholy trinity, not the Holy Trinity. The Holy Trinity is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The unholy trinity is

satan, antichrist, and false prophet. Satan is pretending to be like God the Father, antichrist is like Jesus the Son. The antichrist is trying to be like Jesus resurrected from the dead. And then the false prophet is like the Holy Spirit, can do miracles. So we see here, satan really imitates God as much as he can. And if you don't know the truth, you'll be amazed. So many people in those days said this must be the real God. They heard of Jesus, the resurrection, they heard of the miracles of Jesus, the Holy Spirit. And they heard of millions worshipping Christ and now they worship this "false Christ," imitation Christ, antichrist, counterfeit Christ. So that is what this chapter is all about. You see here, this is not a new thing, but this is just filling up the 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls. It starts off with a generalization, then greater detail. How did such a huge army come about? How did the whole world go against it? The details are coming out here, being fleshed out. How did the army of 200 million come about? Who leads an army of 200 million? Who can command this? Well, there we have it. The antichrist, he's got everyone under him, he is controlling the whole world because he's resurrected from the dead. And the whole world worships him because the false prophet makes everybody worship him. And you see the power of the false prophet is not in worship, it's in this mark of the beast. And it says here in Revelation 13, nobody can buy or sell without the mark of the beast. In other words, if you don't worship the beast, you don't go into allegiance with the antichrist, then you don't get a number, and you cannot buy or sell.

Now, in the past, people had no clue what all that meant. If you got money, you can buy whatever you want. But we're moving into a cashless society where you have no more name, you are just a number. Many countries are already beginning to be like that. In China, hardly anyone uses cash. When I was in China I tried to use cash and people looked at me like 'where the world did you come from?' Everybody just tap, tap, tap, QRS code. Even beggars don't take cash. They have a QRS code on the beggar's bowl.

So the power of this antichrist is in economic power. You can't buy, you can't sell unless you worship the beast, then you get a number. So I hope you are seeing the things panning out. What does 666 mean? It says it's the number of this beast. I don't know. Everyone speculates something different. Does it really matter who it is? Are we in the curiosity business or you want the truth? Truth is when you know that's an antichrist, that's a false prophet, stand strong, endure, be faithful. You don't want that mark which will condemn you forever. You may have to suffer, Christians, but you will have eternal life and a new heaven and a new earth. The devil can take your life, he cannot take your eternal inheritance away. So you can

actually see this panning out in world alliances, and then finally the mark of the beast to buy and sell.

We come to Revelation 14. Remember in the previous chapter, we saw the mark, we saw the image of the beast, antichrist, people made to worship the antichrist or else starved or be persecuted to death. Of course, this was very meaningful for the original readers. They were asked to worship Caesar, or suffer persecution. So they were already having a foretaste of it, and this is written to them to tell them not to worship Caesar and say Caesar is god. There is only one God, not multiple gods. So that was a warning in Revelation 13. Revelation 14 is encouragement. And let's see the encouragement given to the original readers and to us who one day may face persecution, or who are already facing persecution.

So Revelation 14 begins with a very contrasting scene to Revelation 13. Revelation 13 shows people bowing down to the image of the beast so that they could get a number on their forehead or hand. In Revelation 14, we see a different picture. We see the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with 144,000 of His people who have the name of God on their forehead, the Shema. Who are these 144,000? I really don't know. Obviously, it's not the same 144,000 that were the Jews that we saw-12,000 from each tribe. That looks like a different group of people. But these are the redeemed, so the number 12×12 is 144, thousand is the biggest number, so it could be a symbol of the gathering of all God's people. 12 is the number for God's people, thousand is the biggest number. Then we see here they were singing a new song. I think when you stand there with the Lamb on Mount Zion and see the end of this wicked world, and the beginning of the new, you will sing a new song in a new way like never before. I always lament at singing in church, it never really sounds right to me, the so-called worship of God is so lame, the so-called praise of God is so lame. But one day we'll really sing as if we are really worshipping this awesome God and the awesome things He has done for us like never before.

And he says these 144,000 have not defiled themselves with women. What does it mean? You mean these people who didn't get married. No, no, I believe symbolically, idolatry was always termed as spiritual adultery in the Bible. We belong to God, just like a woman belongs to a husband. But knowing she belongs to her husband, she runs off with another guy. That is adultery. Spiritual adultery-we all know there is a creator God because in Romans, it tells us from the creation of the world, God is clearly seen. Anything that God creates is awesome. You know there is a creator, yet

you choose not to worship the creator who made you but you worship a little idol because you prefer the idol. Because if you acknowledge you are created, then you have to be obedient to your creator. If you have acknowledged your husband, then you must be loyal to your husband. So this is adultery. They have not defiled themselves with women doesn't mean they're celibate. I don't think that is the meaning. They have always worshipped God, not idols.

And in the mouth of these 144,000 were no lies, no blasphemy. The biggest lie is there is no God, that is the biggest lie in the world. Anybody who says there's no God, no creator God is a liar. Can things make themselves? Obviously not, somebody had to make it. Somebody we call God, because only God doesn't need to be created, everything else has to be created. So no lies, never defiled themselves with women. This is a contrasting picture as opposed to the other group, bowing to this statue that can talk, as god. 3D animation can do that!

The next part of Revelation 14 is a scene of three angels proclaiming some messages. Angel number 1 comes out and proclaims the eternal gospel - Fear God, worship Him who made the universe. That's the eternal gospel. Why is this angel flying in the sky declaring this eternal gospel? This is the last chance for all the world to hear the gospel. You know, the mercy and patience of God is unbelievable. Finally, He sends an angel to declare the gospel so that no one can say, I didn't hear it.

A second angel declares, 'Babylon is fallen! Babylon is fallen!' What is Babylon? It has already fallen long ago. It doesn't even exist. (Somewhere in Iraq). It's just desert now, the ruins can hardly be seen at all. Babylon from Genesis 11 represents, like the Tower of Babel, (that's where the name first came from) humanity's rebellion against God. Babylon is the symbol of man's denial that there is a God, a Creator God. That Babylon is over. Nobody will ever say again that there is no God. Man thought he made himself, became self-made men by their own efforts, built monuments, built empires - no more already. It's God, God does everything.

Babylon is said has made people drunk with sexual immorality. Again what I think is -idolatry. People who know there's a God, and yet Babylon, this humanistic rebellion against God, says, 'There is no God, it's evolution, we evolved over time' - that is sexual immorality because deep in the heart of

every man he knows there is a God, but he runs off to other 'gods,' and refuses to be loyal to His creator God.

And then the third Angel declares, 'If anyone who worships the beast, he will be tormented with fire.' Warning again-warning to the original readers, warning to all of us. We may have to suffer, but it's worth it all. God allows us to suffer. In fact, God allows some to suffer as heroes of the faith. Martyrdom is not bad luck. Martyrdom is a mark of honour in the eyes of God. We don't choose to be martyrs, but if we are martyred for the faith, then it's a mark of honour. Like soldiers dying for their country, willing to die for their country, martyrs are soldiers of Christ willing to die for Christ. Chapter 14 ends with the Son of Man seated on a white cloud with a sharp sickle and he reaps in the harvest - a picture of the final gathering of His people.

And then another angel comes out from heaven with a sharp sickle. This time it's not the Son of God, not Christ. Another angel comes down and with the sharp sickle to gather the clusters of grapes that are ripe for the winepress of the wrath of God. That's the picture of the wrath of God crushing rebellious mankind.

Christ went to Gethsemane the night before he was crucified. Gethsemane means olive press-squeezing oil out of the olive fruit. This one is squeezing blood out of grapes. And it says, these were gathered, crushed under the wrath of God's anger for the rebellion, and blood will flow for over 200 miles, knee-high. Is this a kind of detail of the battle of Armageddon to follow? Maybe, I don't know, looks like it. 200 million soldiers, horses, the blood just flowing and flowing.

So what do we see in Revelation Chapter 14? We see the mercy of God still sending angels to warn - telling people Babylon is finished, telling people don't worship the beast or you will be tormented. God still warns and warns throughout history. He sends prophets, and more prophets, even when people are resistant. Never quits, love endures. This is the love of God.

And finally, in Revelation Chapter 14, we see a picture of the end when everything is settled. Again, as I say, it's not sequential, it's not chronological. These are snippets to fill up details of the war, the famine, the suffering on earth. This gives a micro picture of what is happening. I

hope you don't try to put it into chronological order as some people have tried, and nobody seems to have succeeded.

The key thing is to know WE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO GOD. Don't ever put allegiance to a false god. Our allegiance is the name of our God, the Shema, which God told His people in Deuteronomy, right at the beginning of the Bible. And at the end, He says Keep the mark there, not physically, but know 'I am loyal only to my Creator and no fake.' So I hope this gives you a very good picture as it did to the original readers in the seven churches who were tempted to say, Caesar is lord, Christ is not Lord.

So God bless you with this encouragement, as we may face persecution in the time to come.