

REVELATION PART SIX - Chapters 12, 13 and 14

Chapter 12 – The Woman and the Dragon

1. Revelation 12:1-2. In this chapter, John saw a pregnant woman “clothed with the Sun” (i.e. very brilliant and bright), and the “Moon was under her feet”, and upon her head was set a crown of 12 stars. The number 12 tells us that it has got something to do with God’s people. This woman was in labour and in pain to give birth to a child.
2. Revelation 12:3-4. The next scene was a great red dragon with 7 heads, 10 horns and 7 crowns upon his heads.
 - a) This dragon was identified as Satan in a later chapter in this book of Revelation. These horns and crowns meant that he ruled the world. This great dragon wanted to devour the child that the pregnant woman was going to give birth to.
 - b) This woman depicts Israel. Jesus Christ was born through the nation of Israel. This woman is also a representation of the spiritual Israel because Israel is God’s people. In summary, the pregnant woman in Revelation 12:2 represented God’s people, started off as Israel, and at a later time, included the Church.
3. Revelation 12:5. The child was to be born to rule the whole world. Matthew recorded how Satan used King Herod to try to kill baby Jesus. So, this child, who was born of the woman, refers to Jesus at birth. Then the verse says that the “child was caught up to God”. This is a telescopic (or compressed timeline) view of all the events that had happened regarding Jesus’ birth, death and resurrection which are already well recorded in the 4 Gospels in the Bible.
4. Revelation 12:6. Then the woman fled to the wilderness, to a place which God had provided and where she would be protected for 1260 days. This likely speaks of God’s people fleeing during the Great Tribulation from the evil one for 1260 days.
5. Revelation 12:7-11. Then the chapter refocuses on John who saw a war in heaven. The war was between Archangel Michael and Satan. John saw that Michael and his angelic army won the war, and Satan and his army were cast down to Earth. Michael is the leader of the good angels while Satan is the leader of the fallen angels. Revelation 12:4 says that Satan’s tail swept 1/3 of the angels down from heaven to Earth. It thus meant that 2/3 of the angels remained loyal to God and 1/3 fell with Satan to Earth.
6. Revelation 12:12-13. Then a song, “Rejoice, O heavens” was sung, because Satan and his demons had been thrown out of heaven. BUT this is woe (a curse) to the Earth because Satan became very angry after being cast out of heaven and he knew that he had only a very short period on Earth to persecute the woman (i.e. God’s people on Earth). Before Satan was cast out of heaven, his army was divided, some were placed in heaven and some on Earth; but now they could focus all their energy on Earth alone.
7. Revelation 12:14-16 state that the woman was given two wings of a great eagle to fly away. This probably means that God will give His people the ability to escape

or flee the persecution when it happens. Satan was so angry that he caused a flood on Earth, but the “Earth opened up and swallowed the water” so that the persecuted people were not drowned. The two wings of the eagle are probably just symbolic of the chance to run; even the opening up of the Earth can be symbolic of God’s protection upon His people. The fleeing of the woman on “wings of the eagle” is probably just an elaboration of how God’s people would flee from the flood caused by Satan. The fleeing of the woman on eagle’s wings in verse 14 probably refers to the same event of the escape from the flood with greater details of how the persecution would take place by flood in verses 15-16.

In summary, Chapter 12 is just telling us that the Devil wants to persecute God’s people, so God’s people must be prepared and be ready for such persecution. YET God’s people must always remember that even in persecution, there is ultimate victory and hope. God does not lose control even in such persecution and will also provide for and protect His people. Thus, there is no necessity to speculate about the flood itself, etc. All we need to know is that God will allow His people to be persecuted and the intensity will increase.

Chapter 13 – The First Beast & the Second Beast

In Chapter 12, we saw the cosmic battle between Archangel Michael and Satan in heaven. It ended with Satan being thrown down to Earth with his army of fallen angels. In this chapter, we would see the scene on Earth. There are two characters in this chapter – the first beast and the second beast. The first beast is the Antichrist and the second beast is the False Prophet.

The First Beast (the Antichrist)

1. Revelation 13:1-2.
 - a) The first beast that John saw had 7 heads, 10 horns and 10 crowns which was similar to the Great Dragon described in Revelation 12:3. But this first beast (also known as Antichrist) had more crowns than Satan which meant that Satan had handed his power over to Antichrist.
 - b) The 7 heads, 10 horns and 10 crowns of Antichrist signify the different types of power. Horns signify power, crowns speak of kingship and 7 heads sound like a federation of political leaders (kings or presidents).
 - c) One of them in the federation would become the head over this political alliance. It was said that the Antichrist was like a leopard and had a mouth of lion, claws of bear. Leopards are commonly associated with speed, lions with ferociousness, and claws of bears with tearing or ripping their victims. This would mean that he was the most powerful of all the leaders in the alliance. On his fore-head were blasphemous names against God.
2. Revelation 13:3-10. How did the Antichrist become so powerful?
 - a) He was mortally wounded but then the rest of the leaders saw his resurrection. Probably, an assassination would take place where he would be shot but he would arise when such an event unfold in future.

- b) Thus everyone respected him and made him chief. This was an imitation of Jesus Christ, but this Antichrist was resurrected by the power of Satan, not God. He might not be truly dead but appeared dead to the world with a mortal wound. Hence, the whole world worshipped him.
 - c) Then the Antichrist blasphemed God but was only allowed to do so for up to 42 months. He was also allowed to persecute Christians during these 42 months or 3½ years and was given authority over the whole world.
 - d) All would worship him except for those who were truly born again and had their names written in the Book of Life of the Lamb because they would refuse to worship Satan.
 - e) Verse 10 is God's call to His saints to have endurance and to stay faithful to Him.
3. Who is this Antichrist?
- a) He was identified in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, and was called the man of lawlessness.
 - b) In 1 John 2:18, he was called the Antichrist but in this chapter, he was referred to as the beast (i.e. the first Beast).
 - c) In Matthew 4:1-11, we saw Satan tempted Jesus to go up to the pinnacle of the temple and jump down from there, and telling Jesus that He would not die and that the whole world would worship Him. Satan was tempting Jesus to crave for political power so that Satan could use Jesus to rule the world for him. Satan's intent has always been to rule the world. Since Jesus refused Satan's temptation in Matthew Chapter 4, Satan then found a false, counterfeit Jesus, and Satan would rule through this Antichrist for 3½ years.
 - d) Amazingly, God allows all these events to take place. When we see what is happening in this current world, it seems like everything is out of control, but all these are part of God's grand plan to work out for His glory eventually.

The Second Beast (The False Prophet)

In Chapter 12, we saw the Devil, Satan. Then we saw Satan's man, the Antichrist on Earth. The next person we will see in Chapter 13 is the second beast.

1. Revelation 13:11-12.
 - a) While the first beast (Antichrist) rose out from the sea, this second beast rose up from the Earth.
 - b) This second beast looked ordinary and had 2 horns like a lamb. He looked harmless but he spoke blasphemous words and was also given power by Satan to make everyone in the world worship the first beast (the Antichrist).
2. Revelation 13:13-18. How did this second beast have the power to make the world worship the Antichrist?
 - a) Satan gave this lamb (the second beast) the power to do miracles, to call down fire from heaven, and to even make an image of the first beast (Antichrist) that was animated to speak like a living being.
 - b) This second beast demanded all to worship the image of Antichrist (i.e. an animated idol able to speak) or else they would be persecuted to death.

3. So who is this lamb?
 - a) He will be a religious figure and a human being.
 - b) He will look harmless but blasphemes God.
 - c) Though he will appear religious, he will not point people to worship God but to worship the image of Antichrist.
 - d) This lamb will make everyone who worships Antichrist, bear a mark either on their forehead or their right hand. This mark is the number of the first beast (Antichrist) which is 666.
 - i. In Deuteronomy 6:4-8, Jews were told that they must only worship God alone and to love Him with all their heart. There is only one Law that summarises the entire Law. This one Law is called the Shema by the Jews. All Jews declare that there is only one God and this Shema is to be written on the forehead or the hand to remember this truth.
 - ii. Our one rule or responsibility as a human being is to worship and glorify only one God. Today, the orthodox Jews actually tie a little box (phylactery) with this verse from Deuteronomy 6:4 on their forehead or as an armband.
 - iii. This lamb will be creating an “anti-Shema” that says that you have to love the first beast (Antichrist) instead of loving God. This, truly, is a mockery to God.
 - iv. This second beast or lamb is also known as the False Prophet. He will be a religious leader who will try to unite the world by his amazing miracles. We must note that not all miracles are from God. Even in Exodus, we saw Pharaoh’s magicians doing miracles to pit against Moses’ miracles. Thus, we are not to be amazed by satanic power. Even unbelievers know that and that is why they are worshipping Satan as he has power. Yet some Christians do not realise that. Satan does have power but is limited, unlike God.
4. Hence, from the descriptions above, we can see the Unholy Trinity.
 - a) The Holy Trinity is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - b) This Unholy Trinity will be Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet.
 - c) Satan will pretend to be like God the Father, and Antichrist will try to imitate Jesus by his resurrection, and the False Prophet will try to imitate the Holy Spirit by performing miracles.
 - d) Satan tries very hard to be like God. So, if you do not know the biblical truths, you will be amazed by his miracles and think that Satan is the real God and worship the counterfeit Christ or Antichrist.
5. All these are not new, but it goes to show how the whole world will go to war with a 200 million strong army described in the earlier chapter. The details appearing here indicate who will be leading and commanding the huge army of 200 million.
 - a) The Antichrist will have everyone under his control due not only to his resurrection but the False Prophet making everyone worship him.
 - b) The False Prophet will use the mark 666 to control the buying and selling of goods. This means that if you do not worship the Antichrist and pledge your

- allegiance to him by having the mark of 666, you will not be permitted to buy or sell.
- c) In this cashless society, names are rarely used now, and increasingly, numbers are used instead to buy and sell goods. In China, no one uses cash anymore, but WeChat, QR code, etc. are commonly used in all transactions. Even beggars in China do not get cash but are given QR code to tap and receive donations. Today's economy is run by those in power and control.
6. What does the number 666 mean?
- a) It does not really matter and there is no need to speculate who it is.
- b) We just need to know the truth that there is an Antichrist and a False Prophet. The mark of 666 will condemn us forever if we are not faithful and pledge allegiance to the Antichrist.
- c) Christians, without doubt, have to suffer great persecutions, but we will finally be rewarded with the New Heaven and New Earth. The Devil can take our physical life but not our eternal inheritance.
7. We can see all the above panning out in the world today, as we see world alliances taking place across religions, economies, etc. in different countries, and ultimately resulting in economic power and control taking place.

Chapter 14 – The Lamb and the 144,000

In Chapter 13, we saw the first beast (Antichrist) with the number 666. We also saw that people were made to worship the image of this first beast, otherwise they would die. To the original recipients of this letter of John, this was not weird because they were forced to worship Caesar (title for Roman emperors) or else suffer persecution to the point of death. They had a foretaste of persecution by means of such forced idol worship, and the book of Revelation was written by Apostle John to warn them not to give in and worship Caesar as god. John reiterated in this book that there is only one God and not multiple gods.

Revelation Chapter 14 is about encouragement to those who will be persecuted or are facing persecution. It begins with a very contrasting scene. In Chapter 13, it was about people bowing down to the image of the first beast to get the number 666 for buying and selling. In Chapter 14, we will see the Lamb standing on Mt Zion with 144,000 people having the name of God on their forehead – the Shema.

1. Revelation 14:1. Who are these 144,000 people?
 - a) These were obviously not the same 144,000 Jews we saw in Revelation Chapter 7.
 - b) It could be a symbol of the gathering of all of God's people because 12 is the number that represents God's people and "thousands" is the biggest number in the Hebrew language.
2. Revelation 14:2-3. They were singing a new song that no one could sing except them. This means that when we stand with Jesus to see the end of the world, we will sing a new song and exercise true worship like never before.

3. Revelation 14:4-5. These 144,000 were not defiled with women.
 - a) It did not mean that they were not married but was a symbolic description that they were not spiritually idolatrous in worshipping other gods.
 - b) True believers who belong to God would not commit the spiritual adultery of worshipping other gods. God is clearly seen in creation, be it in big or small things like an ant, a virus etc. All of God's creation are awesome. Everyone knows that there is a Creator but some choose not to worship Him; because once anyone acknowledges that there is a Creator, he will have to be accountable to Him. If a woman acknowledges that she has a husband, she will have to stay loyal to him.
 - c) In the mouth of these 144,000, there were no lies. The biggest lie in the world is to say that there is no God. Only God does not need to be created and nothing can create itself, so there must be a God. This undefiled group contrasted greatly with the worshippers of the image of the Antichrist.

The Message of the Three Angels

The next scene in this chapter shows three angels proclaiming some messages.

1. Revelation 14:6-7. The first angel proclaimed with a loud voice, "Fear God, worship Him who made the universe".
 - a) This is the universal Gospel.
 - b) Everyone knows that there is a God even if they have not heard the Gospel. All that they needed to do is to fear God and worship Him as Creator. That was why the angel was flying and declaring this eternal Gospel because it was the last chance for people to repent and believe in God who is so merciful and patient.
 - c) God had tried everything besides all the judgements, which included sending 2 witnesses, and finally, he still sent an angel to declare the eternal Gospel so that no one could claim that they have not heard the Gospel.
2. Revelation 14:8. The second angel declared, "Babylon is fallen!"
 - a) The historical Babylon had already fallen a long time ago (when it was conquered by the Medo-Persians) and is now a desert place which no longer exist.
 - b) However, the Babylon from the book of Genesis was where the Tower of Babel was built. Therefore, in general, Babylon represents human rebellion against God, denying that there is a God. Babylon is the symbol that indicates denial of God as the Creator.
 - c) With this declaration by the angel, man can no longer claim that there is no God. No one can claim that they are self-made or that they are the ones who build empires, monuments, etc. It is God who does everything and we are all just little channels through which God works.
 - d) Babylon has made people indulge in immorality and idolatry. Whoever insists that there is no God, and believes in the Theory of Evolution, has

- committed sexual immorality because he has run to other gods and refused to remain loyal to his Creator God.
4. Revelation 14:9-13. The third angel declared that anyone who had the mark of the first beast (the Antichrist) would be tormented with fire forever.
 - a) This is a warning to Christians that we may have to suffer, and all these sufferings are allowed by God, yet it is all worthwhile.
 - b) God allows some martyrdom to produce heroes of faith. Martyrdom is honourable in the eyes of God, and it is not some stroke of bad luck. We do not choose to be martyred, but if we are martyred, then we should behave like heroic soldiers willing to die for Christ.
 5. Revelation 14:14-16. This chapter ends with an image of the Son of Man on a white cloud with a sickle, and He reaped in His people because they were ripe for harvest. It is a picture of God's final gathering of His people.
 6. Revelation 14:17- 20. Another angel also came up with a sharp sickle in this ending scene.
 - a) This time round, it was not the Son of Man.
 - b) The angel gathered the grapes and got them ready for the wine press, which is a picture of God preparing to crush the rebellious men. Christ went to the Garden of Gethsemane (the Olive Press) signifying the squeezing of the olive fruit. Here, it is like squeezing blood out of the grapes which is an expression of God's wrath; and the blood would flow for over 200 miles.
 - c) This might possibly be a picture of the war of Armageddon with 200 million strong army.

What do we see in Revelation Chapter 14?

1. We see the mercy of God.
 - a) He would still sending angel to warn man to heed the eternal Gospel and not to worship the Antichrist.
 - b) God had been sending prophets during the Old Testament time, yet He never quits and still keep calling people to repentance, just like a mother who never gives up on her wayward son.
2. We see a picture of the ending when everything has settled down.
 - a) But the book of Revelation is not described in a sequential way. It is snippets of things happening at the end of the world, giving microscopic pictures of what would be happening on Earth. Hence we should not waste time and try to put them into chronological order and confuse ourselves.
 - b) The key message to us is to be faithful to God and never to pledge allegiance to any false god. Our allegiance is the Shema, to love God and be loyal to Him alone. This gives a good picture to the original readers of John's letter to be circulated to the 7 churches who were persecuted and were tempted to proclaim Caesar as a god. It should also be an encouragement and reminder to us as we may face persecution too, in time to come.