

## Lesson Fifteen

### Interlude: The Dragon, the Woman, and Her Child Revelation 12:1-17

This interlude leads Believers to place events of the End in the context of cosmic spiritual battle. John describes some of the most significant spiritual conflicts throughout the history of mankind.

12:1-2.

Leading characters of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- The identification of the pregnant woman is Israel. Israel is described in great brilliance because of the significance of her role. “Crown of 12 stars” maybe symbolic of the patriarchs or the 12 tribes of Israel.
- The child is Jesus, the Messiah.

Leading events of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- The promise of the Messiah comes through Israel. This is the reason Israel is the object of such cosmic spiritual warfare (cp. Isaiah 26:17; 66:7-8; Micah 4:10; 5:3).

12:3-4.

Leading characters of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- The great red dragon is Satan (v.9). Here we see apocalyptic symbolism of a monster beast to describe Satan. Red signifies warfare (cp. 6:3-4). He has seven heads because he desires to be God.

- He has 10 horns because he desires complete or total power. He has seven diadems because he desires to wear the crown of a king.

Leading events of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- Satan and 1/3 of stars from heaven are cast down. Here is a picture of a primeval war in which Satan leads 1/3 of the angels in heaven to fall (cp. Daniel 8:10; Isaiah 14:12-15). When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Satan attempted to use Herod to destroy Jesus but was unable to do so (Matthew 2:1-15).

12:5-6.

Leading characters of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- The birth of Messiah is the center point of cosmic spiritual warfare. Jesus was “caught up to God” in the resurrection and ascension. This is the center point of cosmic spiritual warfare.

Leading events of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- Israel flees to the wilderness for 3 ½ years. Persecution befell Israel in the Jewish War of AD 66-70 and Jews fled from Jerusalem and hid at Pella. The dragon was unsuccessful in destroying Messiah so he turned on Messiah’s mother, Israel.

12:7-12.

Leading characters of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- Michael is the guardian angel of Israel (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1).

- Christians is the most likely identification of “our brethren” (v.10b). The “loud voice” (v.10a) heard from heaven is most likely Christian martyrs.

Leading events of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- Spiritual war in heaven occurs and Satan is banished from heaven (vs.7-8). Spiritual warfare is intense on earth (v.9). Satan “deceives the whole world.” Salvation is the greatest event of cosmic spiritual warfare in the life of Believers (v.10). Daily cosmic spiritual warfare occurs in the lives of Believers. They overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (v.11). Their testimony is substantiated by the victory of martyrdom. Satan is aware his time is short (v.12). While there is rejoicing in heaven because Satan is a defeated foe, the inhabitants of the earth are to live amidst his attacks.

12:13-16

Leading characters of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- John returns to Satan’s persecution of the mother of promise.

Leading events of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- Verses 13-14 repeat verses 5-6. Verses 15-16 assume the ongoing effort of Satan to persecute and kill Israel. Anti-Semitism has a long history on earth. God uses the earth to come to the rescue of Israel.

12:17

Leading characters of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- “The rest of her children” is a clear reference to Christians. Her children keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Leading events of cosmic spiritual warfare:

- Satan makes war with Christians. This denotes continual spiritual warfare from the time of Christ until his Return.

It is imperative for Believers to know that the struggle with the Antichrist is the culmination of cosmic spiritual warfare that has been existent for thousands of years. While times are difficult, the ultimate victory has already been won! This is an essential message before John describes the beast and his assaults in detail.