

OUTLINE OF REVELATION 12

ACT I: Revelation 12:1-6.

¹And **a great sign** appeared in heaven: **a woman** clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ²She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

³And **another sign** appeared in heaven: behold, **a great red dragon**, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. ^{4a}His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. . .

^{4b}And **the dragon** stood before **the woman** who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. ⁵She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule^[a] all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, ⁶and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

ACT II: Revelation 12:7-12.

⁷Now **war arose in heaven**, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

⁹And **the great dragon was thrown down**, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

¹⁰And **I heard a loud voice in heaven**, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers^[b] has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ¹²Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

ACT III: Revelation 12:13-17.

¹³And when **the dragon** saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued **the woman** who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

¹⁵The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. ¹⁶But **the earth came to the help of the woman**, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.

¹⁷Then the dragon became furious with **the woman** and went off to make war on **the rest of her offspring**, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood^[c] on the sand of the sea.

THE STRUCTURE OF REVELATION 12.

There are two ways we can arrive at an understanding of the way the material presented in Revelation 12 is organized:

1. Revelation 12:6 & 14 cover exactly the same event:

Revelation 12:6 (ESV)

⁶and ***the woman***
fled into the wilderness,
where she has ***a place*** prepared by God,
in which ***she is to be nourished***
for ***1,260 days.***

Revelation 12:13, 14 (ESV)

¹³And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.
¹⁴But ***the woman***
was given ***the two wings of the great eagle*** so that she might ***fly*** from the serpent ***into the wilderness,***
to the place
where ***she is to be nourished***
for ***a time, and times, and half a time.***

So the SAME woman FLEES to the SAME place – the WILDERNESS – for the SAME purpose: to be “nourished by God”.

Though the time period is expressed in different terms, it is one and the same. The 1260 days (v.6) is the “time, times and half a time” (v.14).

Both verses allude to the experience of Elijah who, after delivering his message to Ahab and Jezebel, fled into the wilderness where his daily bread was provided by God via ravens:

1 Kings 17:1-6 (ESV)

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe^[a] in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.” ²And the word of the LORD came to him: ³“Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. ⁴You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.” ⁵So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. ⁶And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

As Elijah fled to the wilderness to escape persecution and was fed there by God, so also the woman flees to escape the persecution of the Dragon in Revelation 12.

Further, the time period associated with Elijah is the same as the woman in Revelation 12

James 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for ***three years and six months*** it did not rain on the earth.

So the “three years and six months” of Elijah are alluded to in Revelation 12:6 as “1260 days” or “time, times and half a time” in Revelation 12:14.

2. Further, we note there is a disjunction between Revelation 12:6 and 12:7

Revelation 12:6-7 (ESV)

⁶and the woman fled into *the wilderness* . . . ⁷Now war arose *in heaven*, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. . .

Revelation suddenly jumps from the woman fleeing into the wilderness to war in heaven between Michael and the Dragon. The Dragon is defeated:

Revelation 12:8a (ESV)

⁸but he was defeated . . .

and is cast to the earth:

Revelation 12:8b-9 (ESV)

^{8b}. . . and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹And the great dragon was thrown down . . . he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Knowing, that his time is short, the Dragon who has failed to destroy the Child turns his attention on the woman who flees into the wilderness:

Revelation 12:13-14 (ESV)

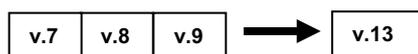
¹³And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, *he pursued the woman* who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that *she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness,*

Revelation 12:7-12 form a PARENTHESIS that explains WHY the woman flees into the wilderness in verse 6. Now in verse 13 the CONSEQUENCE of the casting down of Satan to the earth is given. In great fury he now pursues the woman as the child is now beyond his reach. Thus verses 13-14 picks up the story where it was left in verse 6 and continues it to verse 17.

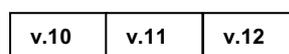
The uninterrupted story line therefore flows from vv.1-6 to vv.13-17.



It is also noted that the story line of vv.7-9 within the parenthesis flows directly to v.13.



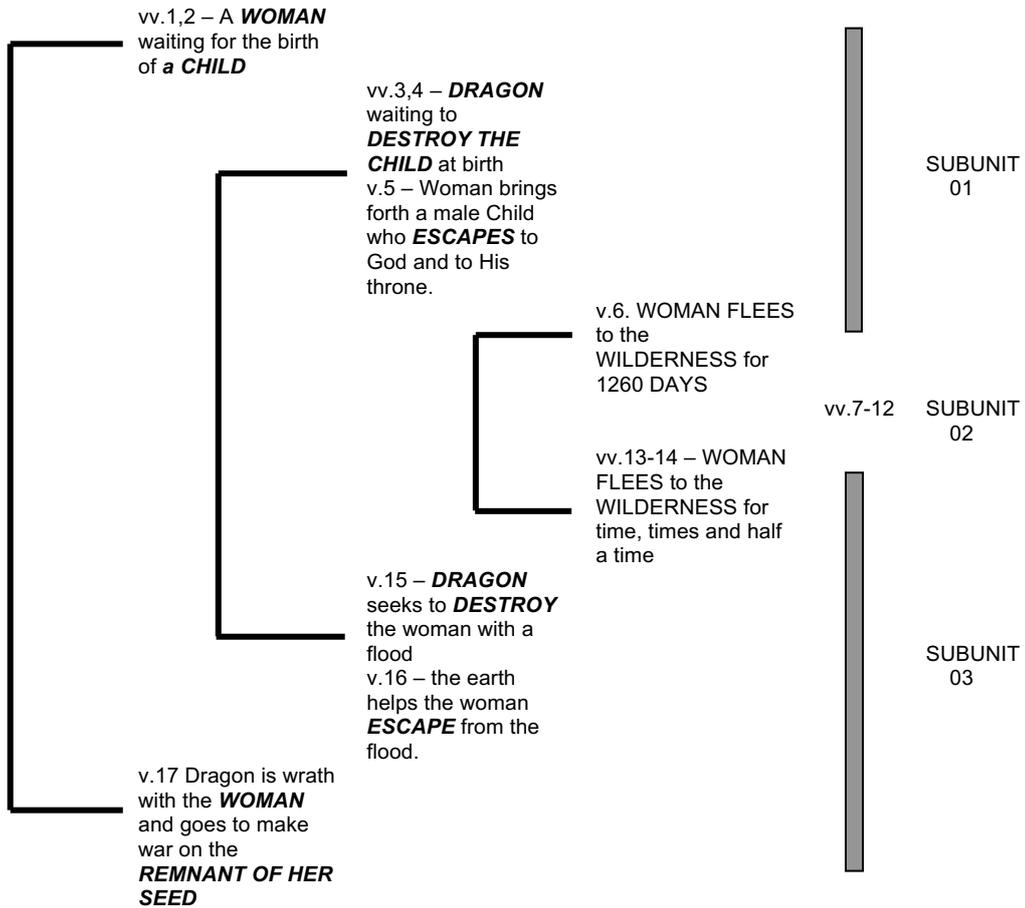
Verses 10-12 consist of a Song of Rejoicing to those who dwell in the heavens and a song of Woe to those who dwell on the earth.



3. Revelation 12 therefore has three basic sub-sections to it.

- a. SUBSECTION 1: Revelation 12:1-6
- b. SUBSECTION 2: Revelation 12:7-12
- c. SUBSECTION 3: Revelation 12:13-17

4. The following Chart outlines the CHIASM that is present in Revelation 12.



The Central element of the Chiasm is the Parenthesis of Revelation 12:7-12. This provides the focus of the chapter. Details will be considered in our study of Revelation 12.

The two subsections on either side are mirror images of each other:

vv.1-2 introduce THE WOMAN and her CHILD while v.17 focuses on THE WOMAN and THE REST OF HER OFFSPRING

vv.3-4: the DRAGON seeks to DESTROY THE CHILD while in vv.15-16 the same DRAGON seeks to DESTROY THE WOMAN. In both attempts he FAILS

vv.6 and 13-14: the WOMAN flees to the wilderness where she is nourished by God for 1260 days/ 3 ½ times.

REVELATION 12 (NKJV)

12 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

2 Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

5 She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

7 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought.

8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

11 "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

12 "Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.

14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

15 So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.⁴