

## REVELATION 12 – ACT I

### 12:1-6 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> And 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. <sup>2</sup> She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

<sup>3</sup> And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. <sup>4</sup> His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

<sup>5</sup> She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule<sup>[a]</sup> all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

<sup>6</sup> and 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 12:1-6

In our previous session we examined the STRUCTURE of Revelation 12 and discovered that it consists of a drama with three main ACTS.

**ACT 1:** Revelation 12:1-6.

**ACT 2:** Revelation 12:7-12

**ACT 3:** Revelation 12:13-17

In this session we will focus our attention on Act 1.

The FIRST STEP is to trace out the dramatic story line of verses 1-6 by identifying the main actors and their activities.

### I. THE ACTIONS OF THE ACTORS INITIATED IN ACT I. (Revelation 12:1-6)

As outlined above, FIRST we READ the verses under study in order to **IDENTIFY** the **MAIN SYMBOLS** and **the ACTIONS** associated with them:

#### Revelation 12:1-2 (ESV)

And 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. <sup>2</sup>She was **pregnant** and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of **giving birth**.

In verses 1-2 John is shown “a woman” who is “pregnant” and on the point of “giving birth”. So, he sees a WOMAN expecting the BIRTH OF HER CHILD.

#### Revelation 12:3-4a (ESV)

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

In verses 3-4a a second “sign” appears: A DRAGON. The fact that his tail sweeps down a third of the stars in heaven will be explained in the parenthesis.

The two signs in Revelation 12:1 and 3 have both appeared in the same arena:

“And a great sign appeared **in heaven**. . .” (v.1)

“And another sign appeared **in heaven**. . .” (v3)

Now in vv.4b-6 we get the two signs interacting:

#### Revelation 12:4b (ESV)

<sup>4b</sup>. . . And **the dragon** stood before **the woman** who was about to give birth, **so that when she bore her child, he might devour it**.

The Dragon’s intention is to “devour” (i.e. destroy) the child at birth. Like a dog that wags its tail while waiting to be fed, so too the tail of the dragon wags and catches “a third of the stars of heaven and casts the to the earth”.

**Revelation 12:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule<sup>[a]</sup> all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

In verse 5 it is revealed that the child escapes. As she gives birth, before the dragon can pounce, the child is caught up to God. The Greek word translated “caught up” is variously translated:

- “*caught up*” – WEB, WNT, WBT, ERV, DBT, ASV, AKJV, NASB, NHEB, HCSB, KJV, NKJV, BLB, BSB, ESV, NLT,
- “*suddenly caught up*” – NET Bible,
- “*caught away*” – YLT,
- “*snatched away*” – GWT, ISV, GNT, CEV,
- “*snatched up*” – NIV

It means “properly, seize by force; *snatch* up, suddenly and decisively – like someone seizing bounty (spoil, a prize); to take by an *open display* of force (i.e. *not* covertly or secretly).<sup>1</sup>

So John is shown the child being “decisively and suddenly” snatched up or seized by force. The picture is of a dramatic and decisive action that delivers the child from destruction by the Dragon.

The verb is passive so the subject is the recipient of the action.

The next action that follows the birth and snatching up for the child in v.5 is the flight of the woman into the wilderness where she, like the child, will be protected by God (v.6).

**Revelation 12:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> and 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.

**II. REVELATION 12:1-6 OUTLINED:**

We can now summarize the initial act in the dramatic story of Revelation 12 and identify its main actors and their actions:

Verses 1-2	Verses 3-4	Verse 5	Verse 6
A <b>WOMAN</b> expecting the birth of a <b>CHILD</b>	The <b>DRAGON</b> waiting to destroy the <b>CHILD</b> at birth.	The <b>WOMAN</b> brings forth a male <b>CHILD</b> who is caught up to God and His throne	The <b>WOMAN</b> flees into <b>the wilderness</b> for 1260 <b>DAYS</b>

The First Act therefore covers a confrontation between **a woman** and **the dragon** over the birth of a child. This comes into greater focus with the following verses:

**Revelation 12:9a (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And the great **dragon** was thrown down, **that ancient serpent**, who is called the devil and Satan . . .”

<sup>1</sup> Helps Word-studies #726 ἀπράζω <https://biblehub.com/text/revelation/12-5.htm>

**Revelation 12:14** (ESV)

<sup>14</sup> But **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.

<sup>15</sup> **The serpent** poured water like a river out of his mouth after **the woman**, to sweep her away with a flood.

The confrontation between “the woman” and the “dragon” therefore becomes a confrontation between “the ancient serpent” and “the woman”. This is an allusion to

**Genesis 3:14-15** (ESV)

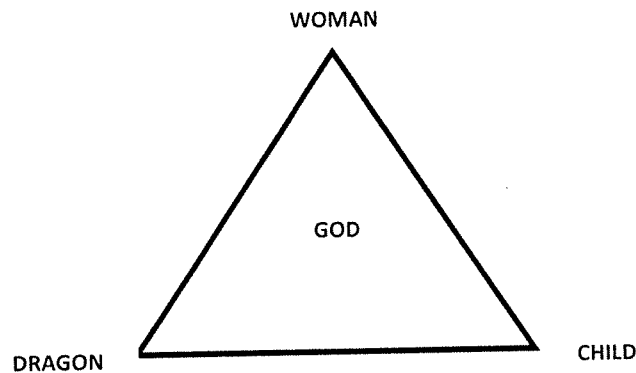
<sup>14</sup> The LORD God said to **the serpent**,  
“Because you have done this,  
cursed are you . . .

<sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and **the woman**,  
and between your offspring<sup>[e]</sup> and **her offspring**;  
he shall bruise your head,  
and you shall bruise his heel.”

It is in the context of this setting that Revelation 12:1-6 is to be understood. We can now immediately move to the uncovering of the meaning encoded in its symbols.

**III. REVELATION 12:1-2 INTERPRETED**

The four key actors in Genesis 3 are



The same actors are present in Revelation 12:1-6. We will now explore the EXPLANATION of each of these symbols. In some instances, the meaning is explicitly given. For example,

**Symbol 1: The DRAGON.**

John explicitly ties the first act in Revelation 12 into Genesis 3 in two places in Revelation:

**Revelation 12:9** (ESV)

<sup>9</sup> And the great **dragon** was thrown down, **that ancient serpent**, who is called **the devil** and **Satan**, the deceiver of the whole world . . .

**Revelation 20:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup>And he seized the *dragon, that ancient serpent*, who is the *devil* and *Satan*, and bound him for a thousand years,

Revelation itself identifies the Dragon as a symbol and interprets this for us. The Dragon is a symbol for the DEVIL and SATAN.

**Symbol 2: THE WOMAN.**

The woman is an example of a living symbol, the meaning of which as commonly understood by the church of John's time. Therefore, John did not need to interpret it. Insights into its meaning is gained by exploring the way in which the symbol is used in both Old and New Testament times.

In both the Old and the New Testaments, the woman is commonly used as a metaphor for the church. For example, Paul's second letter to the Church in Corinth contains the following statement:

**2 Corinthians 11:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup>For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since *I betrothed you to one husband*, to present you as *a pure virgin to Christ*.

The pronoun "I" refers to Paul, as the writer and "you" refers to the church at Corinth as the recipients. Here Paul likens the Church to a "pure virgin". The metaphor of "a woman" is being used for "the church".

He uses the same metaphor in his letter to the Ephesians:

**Ephesians 5:22-32 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup>Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For *the husband* is the head of *the wife* even *as Christ* is the head of *the church*, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup>Now as *the church* submits to *Christ*, so also *wives* should submit in everything to *their husbands*.

<sup>25</sup>*Husbands*, love *your wives*, as *Christ* loved *the church* and gave himself up for her

...

Likewise, the Prophets Isaiah and Hosea use the metaphor of a woman for the Old Testament Church of God:

**Isaiah 54:5-7 (ESV)**

For your Maker is *your husband*,  
the LORD of hosts is his name;  
and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer,  
the God of the whole earth he is called.

<sup>6</sup>For the LORD has called you  
*like a wife* deserted and grieved in spirit,  
*like a wife* of youth when she is cast off,  
says your God.

<sup>7</sup>For a brief moment I deserted you,  
but with great compassion I will gather you.

<sup>8</sup>In overflowing anger for a moment  
I hid my face from you,

but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you,”  
says the LORD, your Redeemer.

**Hosea 2:16, 19-20 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup>“And in that day, declares the LORD, ***you will call me ‘My Husband,’*** . . . <sup>19</sup>And I will ***betroth you to me*** forever. ***I will betroth you to me*** in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. <sup>20</sup>***I will betroth you to me*** in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD.

The same metaphor lies behind the following statements in Revelation:

**Revelation 19:7-8 (ESV)**

Let us rejoice and exult  
and give him the glory,  
for ***the marriage of the Lamb*** has come,  
and ***his Bride*** has made herself ready;  
<sup>8</sup>it was granted her to clothe herself  
with fine linen, bright and pure”—  
for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of ***the saints***.

**Revelation 21:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, ***new Jerusalem***, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as ***a bride adorned for her husband***.

So the metaphor of a WOMAN was consistently used in Biblical Times as a symbol of THE CHURCH - those “called out” of the world to serve God. In the Old Testament it was ISRAEL. In the New Testament it is the CHURCH. Paul emphasizes the continuity of the two in Romans 11:1-17 where Israel is pictured as being pruned of its unfruitful branches and the gentiles as being grafted in. So also in Revelation 21 where “the Bride” of the Lamb – “the New Jerusalem” incorporates both the 12 sons of Jacob and the 12 apostles:

**Revelation 21:12-14 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup>It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of ***the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel*** were inscribed . . .  
<sup>14</sup>And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were ***the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb***.

***In the light of the Messianic prophecy in Genesis 3:15 the “woman” expecting “the birth of a child” is the Church awaiting the birth of the Messiah.*** This is confirmed by an investigation of the symbol of the child.

**Symbol 3: The MALE CHILD:**

Three main points with respect to the child the woman brings forth are given:

**Revelation 12:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup>She gave birth to ***a male*** child, one who is ***to rule<sup>[a]</sup> all the nations with a rod of iron***, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne . . .

The points made are re-ordered as follows

- a. The child would “*rule all nations with a rod of iron*”. This characteristic resurfaces in Revelation 19:

**Revelation 19:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule<sup>[c]</sup> them with a rod of iron. . .”

“He” is a pronoun and refers back to a preceding noun. The preceding noun and its following pronoun agree in person and number. They will both be third person singular. Consider the preceding context of verse 15:

**Revelation 19:13-15 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> **He** is clothed in a robe dipped in<sup>[b]</sup> blood, and the name by which **he** is called is **The Word of God**. <sup>14</sup> And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following **him** on white horses. <sup>15</sup> From **his** mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and **he** will rule<sup>[c]</sup> them with a rod of iron. . .”

The preceding noun is “***The Word of God***” so it is The Word of God who is the One who will “rule all nations with a rod of iron”. The Word of God is therefore the child of Revelation 12:5.

The same John who wrote The Revelation also wrote the Gospel of John. In the prologue John records:

**John 1:1,14 (ESV)**

In the beginning was ***the Word***, and ***the Word*** was with God, and ***the Word*** was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God . . . <sup>14</sup> And ***the Word became flesh and dwelt among us***, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son<sup>[d]</sup> from the Father, full of grace and truth.

So the Word who became flesh is none other than Jesus. So the Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron in Revelation 12:5 is non other than the Messiah.

Readers of Revelation who were familiar with the Old Testament would immediately recognize the allusion in 12:5 to Psalm 2 which is a Coronation Psalm with strong Messianic Overtones:

**Psalm 2:2-3 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth set themselves,  
and the rulers take counsel together,  
against the LORD and against ***his Anointed***, saying,  
<sup>3</sup> “Let us burst their bonds apart  
and cast away their cords from us.”

The word “Messiah” means “Anointed One”. In this Psalm the Messiah is clearly associated with a “rod of iron”.

**Psalm 2:8-9 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,  
and the ends of the earth your possession.

<sup>9</sup>You shall break<sup>[b]</sup> them with **a rod of iron** and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

The expression "rule all nations with a rod of iron" confirms that the child is the MESSIAH.

<b>Verses 1-2</b>
A <b>WOMAN</b> expecting the birth of a <b>CHILD</b>
The <b>CHURCH</b> expecting the birth of <b>the MESSIAH</b>

#### HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT:

The church of the Old Testament was a community that was expecting the Advent of the Messiah. We read of several people in New Testament times who were waiting for the birth of the Messiah.

#### **Luke 2:25-32** (ESV)

<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was **Simeon**, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And **it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.** <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,  
<sup>29</sup> "Lord, now you are letting your servant<sup>[e]</sup> depart in peace,  
according to your word;  
<sup>30</sup> for **my eyes have seen your salvation . . .**"

#### **Luke 2:36-38** (ESV)

<sup>36</sup> And there was a **prophetess, Anna**, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. . . <sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him **to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem**

Both identified the promised Messiah as Jesus of Nazareth.

#### IV. REVELATION 12:3-4 INTERPRETED

The second SIGN in introduced in verse 3 with the words "And another sign appeared in heaven". This is the same arena that the woman appeared in.

#### **Revelation 12:3** (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red **dragon**, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

The second sign is "a great . . . dragon" who has already been interpreted as "the ancient serpent, called the devil and Satan" (12:9; 20:2).

In verse 4a **the first impact of his appearance in heaven** is given:



**Revelation 12:4a (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> His tail swept down a third of *the stars* of heaven and cast them to the earth. . .

The fact that his tail sweeps down a third of the stars in heaven is explained in Act 2:

**Revelation 12:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And the great dragon was thrown down. . . to the earth, and *his angels* were thrown down with him.”

In verse 4b *the second impact of his appearance in heaven* is given. Both “signs” have appeared in the same arena – heaven. Now the interaction between the two.

**Revelation 12:4b (ESV)**

<sup>4b</sup> . . . And *the dragon stood before the woman* who was about to give birth, *so that when she bore her child, he might devour it.*

<b>Verses 3-4</b>
The <b>DRAGON</b> waiting to destroy the <b>CHILD</b> at birth.

The Dragon’s intention is to “devour” (i.e. destroy) the child at birth. Like a dog that wags its tail while waiting to be fed, so too the tail of the dragon wags and catches “a third of the stars of heaven and casts the to the earth”.

<b>Verses 3-4</b>
The <b>DRAGON</b> waiting to destroy the <b>CHILD</b> at birth.
<b>SATAN</b> was waiting to destroy <b>the MESSIAH</b> at birth

**HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT:**

Satan was also expecting the Messiah and was ready to destroy him at birth. There was the incident at the birth of Jesus when Herod killed all of the children in Bethlehem [Matt.2:16-18] in an effort to destroy the Messiah. Numerous other incidents occurred during his ministry and these culminated in the cross.

**V. REVELATION 12:5 INTERPRETED**

**Revelation 12:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule<sup>[a]</sup> all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

<b>Verse 5</b>
The <b>WOMAN</b> brings forth a male <b>CHILD</b> who is caught up to God and His throne

The focus now falls on the MALE CHILD – the one referred to as “the off-spring of the woman” (Genesis 3:15). Three aspects are covered

- a. The BIRTH of a “male child” who has already been identified as the Messiah. In Revelation the title (Greek: “Christos”/Hebrew “Massiah”/English “Messiah”) is three times attached to the personal name “Jesus”

**Revelation 1:1 (ESV)**

“The revelation of *Jesus Christ*. . .”

See also 1:2, 5.

- b. The Child would be “*caught up to God and to His throne*”. The ASCENSION and ENTHRONEMENT of the child is stated. This is described in Acts 1:

**Acts 1:8 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup> Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, *He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.* <sup>10</sup> And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, <sup>11</sup> who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was *taken up from you into heaven*, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

The three characteristics given in Revelation 12:5 all point toward the Messiah and were fulfilled in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

- c. The male child was destined “*to rule<sup>[a]</sup> all the nations with a rod of iron*”. The footnote “to rule” reads “Revelation 12:5 Greek *shepherd*.”

The context of this statement is given in Revelation 19 where ‘The Word of God’ (v.13) rides forth to make ‘war’ (v.11) against ‘the nations’(v.15). He is accompanied by “the armies of heaven” (v.14).

‘The nations’, under the leadership of Satan, have assembled in rebellion against His rule:

**Revelation 19:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.

The expression, “shall rule all nations with a rod of iron” occurs in Revelation in this context of rebellion against the rule of God’s Anointed:

**Revelation 19:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule<sup>[c]</sup> them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

It is not a reference to the nature of His rule on the New Earth but a reference to His putting down of rebellion in order to establish that rule over the new earth.

Such an understanding of the Hebrew Idiom fits perfectly with its original context in Psalm 2.

Psalm 2:9 (ESV)

You shall **break them** with a rod of iron  
and **dash them in pieces** like a potter's vessel."

In verse 9 we have an example of the Hebrew use of parallelism: two lines expressing the same thought. "break them" in Line 1 is equivalent to "dash them to pieces" in line 2.

"**dash them**" (NKJV, KJV, NHEB, ASV, DBT, ERV, WBT, WEB) in line 2 is also translated as "**shatter them**" (BSB, CSB, CEV, GNT, ISV, HCSB, ISV), "**smash them**" (NET Bible, GWT) or "**crush them**" (YLT).

In Psalm 2 the idiom "you shall Break all nations with a rod of iron" occurs in the context of the crushing of rebellion by the kings of the earth against "the Lord and His anointed" (in this instance, David) (v.2) who are saying "Let us break their bonds in pieces" (v.3).

The Lord speaks to the King (v.7) and states "You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel".

Thus, the Lord assures David that the destruction of his enemies was certain. He would put down the rebellion against his ule.

In Revelation 19:11 this is applied to the returning Messiah who faces the rebellious armies of the Dragon, Beast and false prophet (See Revelation 19:19-21). Thus the ruling with a Rod of Iron is to seen in context and is a reference to the ending of rebellion against God's rule.

Even the immediate context of the idiom in Revelation 19 reflects this:

**Revelation 19:15** (ESV)

From his mouth comes **a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations**, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. **He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.**

"The sharp sword" is a weapon of war and is in this instance directed against "the nations", It is against the nations that the "fury of the wrath of God" is unleashed.

The supremacy of the rule of the Messiah is assured for He is "King of Kings"

**Revelation 19:16** (ESV)

<sup>16</sup>On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, **King of kings** and **Lord of lords.**

<b>Verse 5</b>
The <b>WOMAN</b> brings forth a male <b>CHILD</b> who is caught up to God and His throne

The MESSIAH  
escaped and was  
caught up to God  
and to His throne.

## VI. REVELATION 12:6 INTERPRETED

### Revelation 12:6 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> and 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.

<p><u>Verse 6</u> The <u>WOMAN</u> flees into <u>THE</u> <u>WILDERNESS</u> for 1260 <u>DAYS</u></p>
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Three new symbols appear:

- a. *"the wilderness"*
- b. *"days"*
- c. *"1260 days"*

**Symbol 4: THE WILDERNESS** is the designation of the destination of the woman

The Greek word translated "wilderness" is an adjective that properly refers to "an uncultivated, unpopulated place".<sup>2</sup> Here it is used as a noun.

It is used in the Old Testament in Exodus 25 times of the area where the Israelites found refuge from Egypt for 42 years. (Exodus 16:3, 10 etc). There they were fed and protected by God. The term therefore has EXODUS connections.

The Imagery in Revelation 12:6 is specifically related to Elijah's experience (see below) and is descriptive of the Judean Wilderness.

In both instances "the wilderness" is "an uncultivated, unpopulated place" that offered a refuge for God's people during times of danger.

**Symbol 5: THE 1260 DAYS.** The "1260 days" (12:6) are equivalent to the "time, times and half a time in 12:14). The imagery of this time period draws heavily on the Old Testament. It in effect ALLUDES to two Old Testament passages:

#### 1. *Old Testament Allusion #1: ELIJAH IN THE WILDERNESS.*

##### 1 Kings 17:1-6 (ESV)

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe<sup>[a]</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup> And the word of the LORD came to him:<sup>3</sup> "Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan."<sup>4</sup> You shall

<sup>2</sup> Strong's Concordance #2048 - ἔρημος, ov <https://biblehub.com/greek/2048.htm>

drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”<sup>5</sup> So 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.<sup>6</sup> And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Notice the following parallels:

- a. As Elijah fled into the wilderness so did the woman:

**1 Kings 17:3** (ESV)

<sup>3</sup>“Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the **brook Cherith**, which is east of the Jordan.”

Cherith is in the hills of the Trans-Jordan, part of the wilderness area.

- b. As God had prepared a place for Elijah in the wilderness and fed Him there so he would also do for the church.

**1 Kings 17:5,6** (ESV)

<sup>5</sup>So 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.<sup>6</sup> And **the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening**, and he drank from the brook.

- c. As Elijah was in the wilderness for three and a half years so too the woman would be in the wilderness for “1260 days” (Rev. 12:6) or “times time and half a time” (Rev.12:14).

**James 5:17** (ESV)

<sup>17</sup>Elijah 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.

By paralleling the experience of the Church after the first Advent of the Messiah and His ascension, Revelation is indicating that ahead of the church lay a time of persecution during which God would nourish and protect her even as He had done for Elijah.

## 2. *Old Testament Allusion #2: THE TIME OF THE LITTLE HORN IN DANIEL 7.*

**Daniel 7:21, 25** (ESV)

<sup>21</sup>As I looked, this horn made **war with the saints** and **prevailed over them** . . . <sup>25</sup>He shall speak words against the Most High, and **shall wear out the saints** of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and **they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.**

Thus the historical three and a half year period of Elijah becomes the prophetic period of Daniel 7:25 where the little horn power "**seeks to wear out the saints of the Most High**" and they are given into his hand for "**a time, times and half a time**". Revelation 12<sup>6,14</sup> not only alludes to Daniel 7<sup>25</sup> but is identical to it.

So the 1260 days were foreshadowed in the experience and circumstances of Elijah, and were foretold in the prophecies of Daniel 7 as the period in which the little horn would be warring against the church. Thus Revelation is telling the church that the experience of Elijah will be the experience of the church during that time. Counterfeit religion will rule and reign. As Jezebel sought the destruction of the prophets of God and the faithful remnant in Israel so this other Jezebel (the Little Horn of Daniel 7/ the First Beast of Revelation 13) will seek the destruction of the faithful to God.

That is why the woman flees - she is fleeing to escape from the persecution which has resulted from the faithfulness of her witness.

**Symbol 6: DAYS IN PROPHECY.**

In prophetic time one day is equivalent to a LITERAL YEAR:

**Numbers 14:34 (ESV)**

<sup>34</sup> According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, **a year for each day**, you shall bear your iniquity forty years, and you shall know my displeasure.'

**Ezekiel 4:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> And when you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side, and bear the punishment of the house of Judah. Forty days I assign you, **a day for each year**.

The 1260 days of the Revelation 12 would therefore represent 1260 years.

<b>Verse 6</b>
The <b><u>WOMAN</u></b> flees into <b><u>THE WILDERNESS</u></b> for 1260 <b><u>DAYS</u></b>
The <b><u>CHURCH</u></b> flees into <b><u>UNCULTIVATED,</u></b> <b><u>UNPOLULATED</u></b> <b><u>AREAS THAT</u></b> <b><u>OFFER IT REFUGE</u></b> for 1260 <b><u>YEARS</u></b>

**HISTORICAL FULFILLMENT:**

The period of the apostles lasted until about 100 A.D. - a time during which the church grew and expanded through all levels of society. The growing church came into conflict with the other religions of the empire, especially emperor worship. The refusal of the church to become involved in pagan rites resulted in persecution. Many lost their lives. This persecution however, failed to destroy

the church - instead the purity of the church was maintained and as a consequence the church continued to expand.

By 313 A.D. the church had become the largest, single unifying factor in the Roman Empire which was at that stage in danger of collapse. The emperors therefore changed their policy - persecution ceased and the church was elevated to a position of high standing. Many in the church began to compromise as favours were extended. Many people, still pagan at heart, flowed into the church.

The church now faced opposition from three nations who ascribed to a different view on the nature of Christ. The last of these was defeated in 538 AD. The 1260-year period of the ascendancy of the Little Horn in religious affairs and growing influence over the political affairs now commenced. It was to end exactly 1260 years later when the French forces of Napoleon invaded Italy and put an end to the influence of the Vatican over political affairs.

During the period of the reign of the Little Horn persecutions broke out against those who disagreed with the direction that the church was heading and who wished to maintain the purity of their faith. They, like Elijah, were then subjected to persecution and had to withdraw from the centres of civilization - the church had indeed fled into the wilderness and was to remain there for 1260 years [538 A.D. – 1798 A.D.]

## VII. REVIEW OF REVELATION 12:1-6

We have examined the first act of Revelation 12, identified and interpreted the symbols it contains. This process has unlocked its message. It covers the first part of the history of the church which extends from the First Advent of the Messiah to the First Period of Persecution during which the church found relative safety by withdrawing to relatively unpopulated and secluded areas. A study of the Albigenses and the Waldenses will fill in detail of the experience of the Church in the Wilderness during this period. See Great Controversy ch. 3-4.

<i>Verses 1-2</i>	<i>Verses 3-4</i>	<i>Verse 5</i>	<i>Verse 6</i>
A <u>WOMAN</u> expecting the birth of a <u>CHILD</u>	The <u>DRAGON</u> waiting to destroy the <u>CHILD</u> at birth.	The <u>WOMAN</u> brings forth a male <u>CHILD</u> who is caught up to God and His throne	The <u>WOMAN</u> flees into <u>THE WILDERNESS</u> for 1260 <u>DAYS</u>
The <u>CHURCH</u> expecting the birth of <u>the MESSIAH</u>	<u>SATAN</u> was waiting to destroy <u>the MESSIAH</u> at birth	<u>The MESSIAH</u> escaped and was caught up to God and to His throne.	The <u>CHURCH</u> flees into <u>UNCULTIVATED, UNPOLULATED AREAS THAT OFFER IT REFUGE</u> for 1260 YEARS

WE have now begun our journey into a clearer understanding of “the things that must soon take place” (1:1) which is the purpose for which the Revelation was given.