

BOOK OF REVELATION, WEEK 6
CHAPTERS 12 AND 13

As we come to the midpoint of the Book of Revelation, the action takes a dramatic turn as the battle moves from Heaven to earth. The Church, in the figure of the woman, becomes the target of the Dragon's ferocity and his two witnesses, the two beasts do all in their power to lure humanity away from Christ.

THE 5 FIGURES OF REVELATION

God, the Lamb, the Church, Inhabitants of the Earth, and the Dragon

The cosmic battle of creation and salvation is primarily between God and Satan (the Dragon). Between these two opponents, Revelation depicts three key figures, or groups of people, who are largely identified and defined by their relationship either God or the Dragon: the *Lamb*, who serves to restore the union between heaven and earth; the *Church* that is the representation of those who follow God on earth; the *Inhabitants of the Earth* who deny God and so ally themselves with the Dragon in opposition to God.

CHAPTER 12:

The Woman:

The Mother of God

The Church:

Methodius points out that since the Book of the Apocalypse is about what is soon to come, and not about past events, the woman would not be giving birth to Christ in the incarnation, since that had already occurred, but it must indicate something different, and therefore suggests she is the Church and the male child represents the birth of the faithful.

Birth Pangs: The presence of birth pangs should immediately alert us to something different than the birth of Christ, as Mary, free of original sin and therefore free of the curse that came from original sin, did not experience birth pangs. The Church, however, was in the midst of extreme pangs in persecution.

“Clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet” and “a crown of twelve stars”

Gn. 37:7-10: The image draws us to one of Joseph's dreams, in which the celestial bodies were interpreted to represent his father, mother, brothers, the patriarchs, and the tribes of Israel. In this light, the Church is robed and surrounded by the faithful. We may also be given over to think of the stars that are mentioned later in the chapter, as also being a representation of part of the Church, or the faithful. When the tail of the Drago sweeps a third of the stars from the sky, this may describe members of the faithful who are lost from their heavenly reward due to temptation and the work of the Dragon. We could also consider that if the stars posses a place of leadership in the heavens, it's possible that they represent also the priests of the Church, such that in this battle between heaven and earth, the Dragon and the Church, that there are those even among the brightest lights, who will succumb to the deceptions and power of the Dragon.

The Desert: Represents the earthly pilgrimage of the Church

Gn 3:15: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers.

Male Child:

Jesus Christ: Andrew of Caesarea also describes how the Church continues to give birth to Christ through the faithful

The Faithful: Who have received birth by the Church in baptism, which is the second birth. As he is **caught up to heaven**, the faithful, whose names are written in the book of life, will be caught up to heaven.

Dragon:

The Dragon, as is clear in verse 12, is the devil, cast down to the earth.

Seven Heads: The seven most evil powers and spirits (i.e. the seven deadly sins).

Ten Horns: The 10 primary, most significant offenses, which are the opposite of the 10 Commandments ; also signifies great divisiveness, which is the desire of the Opposer

Two Wings: The Old and the New Testament

Torrent of Water: Chaos, a flood of lies, onslaught of opposition of ungodly men and demons. This final interpretation is enhanced by the **opening of the earth** which swallows the torrent as the opening of the earth is a common sign of the destruction of sinners (Ex. 15:12; Nm 16:30; Dt 11:6).

THE BATTLEGROUND MOVES FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH

While previous events described the effects that heavenly realities had on earth, and featured heavenly beings given authority to effect things on earth, Chapter 12 marks a significant turn when the action moves from heaven to the earth. The woman clothed in majestic lights flees to the desert; the dragon is cast down from heaven and pursues the woman. We can actually look at the preceding chapters and see a progressive movement, drawing heaven and earth closer:

- 1--In the beginning of Revelation, the earth and Heaven are completely separated. John is raptured into Heaven.
- 2--The earth reflects what happens in Heaven, where the true reality takes place
- 3--There begins and interchange, as Heavenly beings are sent down to earth to carry out God’s judgment and actions.
- 4--The earth is directly effected by events that take place in Heaven
- 5--The earth become the battle ground of Heaven

CHAPTER 13:

The First Beast: Idolatry

Considerable parallels with the Four Beasts described in Daniel:

Daniel 7	Revelation 13
1st Beast: Lion	“mouth like a lion”
2nd Beast: Bear	“feet like a bear’s”
3rd Beast: Leopard	“like a leopard”
4th Beast: Had 10 horns	“with 10 horns”

Leopard: Signifies primarily Idolatry

Mortal Wound: Imitates the work of Christ: carries features similar to Christ so as to convince some that to worship the beast is similar to worshipping Christ. This may also lend toward a suggestion of other religions that posses some truth, but lack the fullness of truth. Believers may be persuaded to follow them due to promises of wealth, pride, strength and power (lion, bear, leopard and horns).

Proud boasts and blasphemies: Promises greater things and attacks the weakness and false promises of God through the Lamb.

The Second Beast: Political Power

The Mark of the Beast:

GEMATRIA

The study of the mathematical representation of letters and words in Hebrew

When translated, the word for beast in Greek, therion, computes to 666

Some names that calculate to 666:

Caesar Nero: Caesar at the time of the writing of Revelation

Adolf Hitler, Henry Kissinger, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, Barack Obama

**Since many names can

Horns like a lamb, speaks like a dragon: The beast uses the appearance of the lamb in order to draw followers to it, yet its speech is full of lies and deceit.

The Second Beast indicates a choice between life on earth over life in heaven

A disposition to follow the owner of the mark

Represents an attitude of following the Beast, that is, following world government over God

The sanctions placed on those who do not bear the mark of the beast represent an attitude and disposition: The followers of the Beast, cannot bear the followers of God so much that they will not allow them to join in basic activities. It is a sign of distinction and voluntary separation and gives a distinctive difference between the followers of the Beast (the Dragon) and the followers of God. While God continues to offer by free choice--repentance is always an option--the Beast influences by coercion and threat. Ultimately, the Mark of the Beast reveals who its followers are by the actions and dispositions they take up toward others, especially the Church and the People of God.