

"The Significant Characters of the Tribulation"

Revelation 12-14

Introduction: In our study of Revelation last week we looked at Revelation 11:14-19 and in those verses, we could see the preview of the 7th Trumpet Judgment. Today we come to Revelation 12 and while we may expect to see the details of the 7th Trumpet that is not what we find. In chapter 12-14 we shall see those who will play very significant roles during the Tribulation. We shall see:

1. Israel
2. Satan
3. Jesus Christ
4. The Saved of the Tribulation
5. The Fallen Angels
6. The Righteous Angels
7. The Anti-Christ
8. The False Prophet
9. The 144,000 Jewish Men
10. The Earth Dwellers.

These are the characters which will play major roles in the 7-year Tribulation and we shall see their parts as we move through the next couple of chapters.

Now as we move into chapter 12 we will gain some very valuable insight into the events which will take place during the Tribulation. We will see events in the following chapters which we will be able to connect with Daniel's prophecies as well as other Old Testament prophecies.

I. **The Spiritual War**

A. **The Woman**

Notice Revelation 12:1

There is a word here that is very important for us to notice. It is the word "wonder". It could also be translated "SIGN". This tells us that what we are about to see here is NOT LITERAL but it is SYMBOLIC. This is important to note because many want to see the entire book of Revelation as SYMBOLIC but in this section, we can see that God will let us know when something is to be SYMBOLIC.

Notice Revelation 12:1-2

This verse is so very important. John sees a woman in heaven and she is clothed with the sun and she is supported by the moon and she has on her head a crown of 12 stars. She is seen while she is experiencing birth pangs.

Now the question at the front of our minds here should be, "Who does this woman represent?" Let me start by telling you who she does not represent. She is NOT the CHURCH as many teach. She is NOT MARY as the Roman Catholics teach.

The WOMAN who is in labor here represents the Nation of Israel. As we already know the Nation of Israel plays a major role in the Tribulation because it is in the Tribulation after the Church is raptured away that God will again work with His chosen people.

The child which she will bring forth is Jesus Christ. The fact that no father is mentioned here is a picture of the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ.

But what about the sun and the moon and the stars? What is the significance of each of them? The sun and the moon here in this text are very important for they point to 2 of the promises of God. Let me take you on a short journey in the Bible to help us to see what is being said here.

Genesis 1:14-18

*¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and **let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:***

¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

¹⁶ And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

¹⁷ And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

¹⁸ And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

¹⁹ And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Here on the 4th day of creation God made the sun the moon and the stars and He tells us they would be for SIGNS. The word "SIGNS" here in Genesis 1:14 is the very same word used concerning the mark which God placed upon Cain.

Genesis 4:15

¹⁵ And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

The MARK placed on Cain was visible to all to show God's protection upon him. The MARK upon Cain could be seen as a memorial. In the same way the sun and the moon are MEMORIALS concerning Israel. The RAINBOW is the very same thing.

But the question then is, "In what way is the sun and the moon and the stars a MEMORIAL or a SIGN to all the world concerning Israel?" The the SUN AND THE MOON and the STARS are witnesses for God of something very significant. Let me show you what they are witnesses of:

- A. **They are witnesses of God's unconditional promise to forever preserve the Nation of Israel.**

Jeremiah 31:35-37

³⁵ Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name:

³⁶ If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.

³⁷ Thus saith the LORD; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD.

The Jews will continue as a Nation as long as the sun and the moon and the stars exist in the sky! There is no people group that will ever be able to exterminate the Jewish people.

On man said this, "If the enemies of Israel understood this they would do better to reprogram their missiles and their nuclear weapons to take out the sun and the moon first, for as long as they exist so will the Nation of Israel.

But there is yet another witness which the sun and the moon and the stars have.

- B. **They are witnesses of God's promises that the throne of David shall continue before Him and there will be Levities to minister to Him**

Jeremiah 23:20-22

²⁰ *Thus saith the LORD; If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season;*

²¹ *Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites the priests, my ministers.*

²² *As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured: so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me.*

Now you need to grasp what I am about to say. These promises are the very reason why Satan will continue to persecute the Nation of Israel unto the end of the Tribulation. If the Nation of Israel can be destroyed then there will be no Kingdom of Jesus Christ and Satan will not be locked upon for 1000 years and eventually destroyed because Jesus will not return to this earth if Israel can be exterminated. Now let me show you something very interesting.

Matthew 24:27-31

²⁷ *For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

²⁸ *For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*

²⁹ *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:*

³⁰ *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

³¹ *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

I show you these verses for you to see that before Jesus returns to the earth the SUN IS DARKENED, THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE HER LIGHT AND THE STARS FALL FROM HEAVEN.

This makes me wonder if this is an attack by Satan on the heavenly bodies because he knows that as long as they exist so will Israel which means Jesus will return?

Now let us get back to Revelation 12:1-2 again. The woman is CLOTHED with the sun and she has the moon at her feet. There is yet something else here for us to see. The sun as her clothing speaks of God's protection.

Psalm 11:9-11

⁹ *Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*

¹⁰ *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.*

¹¹ *For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory:*

God has been the protection of Israel since she came under the attack of Satan and He will continue to protect her through the Tribulation.

The moon under her feet speaks of SUPPORT and it has been God who has and who will support her even to the end of the Tribulation.

The crown of 12 stars represents the 12 Tribes of Israel.

2. The Dragon

Notice Revelation 12:3-4

This dragon is none other than Satan himself. He does not look like a dragon but the "red dragon" description here describes his character.

We will get to the 7 heads and the 10 horns later but for now I want you to see that when Satan fell he took with him one-third of the angels. These are the fallen angels and there are multitudes/which would be too many for us to number.

When he fell his mission was to devour the child that would be born of the woman. This would be Jesus Christ. This verse takes us the entire way back to the creation of the angels and the fall of man.

Genesis 3:14-15

¹⁴ And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

This was the very first prophecy of the coming Redeemer who would eventually crush the head of Satan. This started the spiritual war and from this promise forward Satan has been on a mission to defeat God's promise. Let me give you a list of obvious attacks.

1. Cain killed his brother Abel.
2. The world's population became wicked and corrupt during the days of Noah.
3. Esau desired to kill his brother Jacob.
4. Pharaoh gave the command to kill all Jewish male babies.
5. Haman in Esther issued the decree to kill the Jews.
6. Herod had the babies 2 years old and younger killed when Jesus was born.

These as well as many other events were Satanic attacks upon the Promise of God in an attempt to devour the child which would come from Israel. Satan did not know who the Redeemer would be but he knew he would be a man from the woman.

Notice Revelation 12:5

This verse takes us from the birth of Jesus Christ then right to His accession. In the middle of this verse we are told that the Child was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

This verse connects to Psalm 2.

Psalm 2:

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?

² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

³ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

⁴ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision.

⁵ Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

⁶ Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

⁷ I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

⁹ Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

¹⁰ Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

When Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation He will come and pour out His wrath upon the unsaved who are alive and then He will establish His Kingdom. It will be in that Kingdom that He will execute PERFECT JUDGMENT AND JUSTICE. He will rule with the ROD OF IRON.

Conclusion:

What can we learn from all of this?

GOD IS TRUE TO HIS WORD. When He makes a promise, there is nothing or no one who can stop His promise from being fulfilled.

Matthew 5:17-18

¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

¹⁸ For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.