

FROM DANIEL TO REVELATION

The main purpose of this independent website is to interpret Daniel and Revelation.

2017-06-24 BY ANDRIES VAN NIEKERK

Who are the woman, the dragon, the child and what is the war in heaven?

Revelation 12 describes a war in heaven between two groups of angels. What did they fight about and what weapons did they use?

This is an article in [the series on Revelation 12](#). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotes are from the NASB translation.

SUMMARY

Male Child – The “*male child*” ([Rev 12:5](#)) is Jesus. He was “*caught up to God and to His throne.*” This is His ascension. This verse covers the entire time from Christ’s birth to His ascension to heaven.

The woman, who is “*clothed with the sun*” ([Rev 12:1](#)), symbolizes God’s people on earth. At first, she is presented as pregnant; expecting the Messiah ([Rev 12:2](#)). In this phase, she represents all believers in the time before Christ that were looking forward to God’s Messiah. After Jesus was “*caught up to God,*” she remains on earth ([Rev 12:6](#)). Now she represents God’s New Testament people.

The dragon is “*the devil and Satan*” ([Rev 12:9](#)). It “*stood before the woman ... so that when she gave birth he might devour her child*” ([Rev 12:4](#)). Ever since God told the serpent that the seed of the woman “*shall bruise you on the head*” ([Gen 3:15](#)) Satan stood ready to thwart Christ’s mission. But Jesus was “*caught up to God and to His throne*” ([Rev 12:5](#)). This means that Satan failed in his purpose.

The dragon has heads and horns ([Rev 12:3](#)) which symbolize kingdoms ([Rev 17:9-10](#), [12](#)). The dragon, therefore, also represents the earthly kingdoms through which Satan persecutes God’s people. For a more specific identification of the dragon, see [The seven-headed beasts of Revelation](#).

War in Heaven – The leader of God’s angels is the archangel Michael. His enemy is Satan and his angels, for Satan has deceived a large number of God’s beautiful angels to side with him. Satan’s weapons are deception ([Rev 12:9](#)) and accusations ([Rev 12:10](#)). He deceives angels and people into sin and then accuses them before God.

This crisis in heaven, described as a “war in heaven” ([Rev 12:7](#)), is described by Rev 5 as “*a book ... sealed up with seven seals*” ([Rev 5:1](#)) which “*no one in heaven ... was able to open*” ([Rev 5:3](#)). In both these chapters, Christ’s death solved the crisis in heaven. See [The seven seals verse of Revelation](#) for a discussion.

– END OF SUMMARY –

THE MALE CHILD (REV 12:5)

This verse is a useful place to start this discussion of this chapter because it points to a specific point in history:

*“She gave birth to a son, a male child,
who is to **rule all the nations with a rod of iron**;
and her child was **caught up to God and to His throne**”
([Rev 12:5](#)).*

THE ROD OF IRON

Revelation 19:11-21, describing Christ's return, presents Jesus as the One using the rod of iron. He sits on "a white horse" (Rev 19:11). "The armies which are in heaven ... were following Him on white horses" (Rev 19:14). "He will rule them (the nations) with a **rod of iron**" (Rev 19:15). "His name is called **The Word of God**" (Rev 19:13). John—the author of Revelation—also wrote the gospel of John. In it, he refers to Jesus as "the Word" (John 1:1). Since the male child will "rule all the nations with a rod of iron," He is Jesus Christ.

He will use the rod of iron when He returns. Then "the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him (Jesus) ... and all the birds were filled with their flesh" (Rev 19:20). It will be a time of extreme sorrow for believers. They have been praying so much for their loved ones. Now their loved ones are killed. But the pain of the believers will be nothing compared to the sorrow in God's heart.

HE WAS CAUGHT UP TO GOD.

The male child "was caught up to God and to His throne" (Rev 12:5). This is His ascension to heaven. Mark 16:19 reads, "the Lord Jesus ... was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God." Verse 5, therefore, covers the entire period from Christ's birth to His ascension.

THE WOMAN (REV 12:1-2)

We are now able to identify the woman in verses 1 and 2:

"A great sign appeared **in heaven**:
a woman clothed with the **sun**,
and the **moon** under her feet,
and on her head a crown of twelve **stars**;
and she was **with child**;

*and she cried out,
being in labor and in pain to give birth.” (Rev 12:1-2)*

THE WOMAN BEFORE CHRIST

Since the child she carries is Jesus Christ, she is a symbol of all people in the time before Christ expected the Messiah. She is beautiful in God’s sight, for she is *“clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.”* Because she is beautiful, and because literal Israel was not always that beautiful, we should not identify her as literal Israel, but as all believers in the time before Christ, both inside and outside Israel, and also before the time of Israel.

THE WOMAN AFTER CHRIST

After Jesus was *“caught up to God and to His throne,”* His mother remains on earth and flees to the wilderness (Rev 12:6, 13-14). *“The rest of her children”* (children other than Christ) *“keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus”* (Rev 12:17). Now she represents God’s New Testament people.

BOTH ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

The mother, therefore, represents **God’s people of all ages**. She is later associated with the New Jerusalem (Rev 21:9-10), which has *“the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel”* on its *“gates twelve”* (Rev 21:14) and the names of *“the twelve apostles of the Lamb”* on its *“twelve foundation stones”* (Rev 21:14). See the discussion of the 24 elders for how Revelation merges the church into the things of Israel.

SHE IS ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN.

In Rev 12:1, John saw her in heaven. Later the woman flees to the wilderness (Rev 12:14). Here she is presented as on earth. In other words, she is literally

on earth, but in a sense, she (God's people) is also in heaven. Compare with [Rev 15:2](#), where "those who had been victorious over the beast" are represented as "standing on the sea of glass," which is before God's throne ([Rev 4:6](#)).

THE DRAGON (REV 12:3-4)

"Then another sign appeared in heaven:

*and behold, a **great red dragon***

*having **seven heads and ten horns** ...*

His tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.

The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child."

([Rev 12:3-4](#))

THE DRAGON IS SATAN.

[Rev 12:9](#) identifies the dragon as "the devil and Satan." It "stood before the woman ... so that when she gave birth he might devour her child" ([Rev 12:4](#)).

Ever since God told the serpent that the seed of the woman "shall bruise you on the head" ([Gen 3:15](#)), Satan has been watching, expecting the Messiah, and standing ready to thwart His mission.

THE DRAGON'S SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS

But the dragon has seven heads and ten horns, just like the beast from the sea in [Rev 13:1](#) and the scarlet beast in [Rev 17:3](#). "The seven heads are ... seven kings" ([Rev 17:9-10](#)) and "the ten horns which you saw are ten kings" ([Rev 17:12](#)). The dragon, therefore, also represents the earthly kingdoms through which Satan persecutes God's people. (For specific identification, see [The Seven-Headed Beasts of Revelation](#).)

JESUS WAS CAUGHT UP TO GOD.

Satan stood ready to devour her child as soon as He was born ([Rev 12:4](#)), but Jesus was “*caught up to God and to His throne*” ([Rev 12:5](#)). This means that Satan was defeated and that Christ won the victory when He came to this earth.

WAR IN HEAVEN

[Rev 12:7](#) mentions the war in heaven briefly:

*“And there was **war in heaven**,
Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon.
The dragon and his angels waged war”*

MICHAEL; THE ARCHANGEL

It is a war between two groups of angels. The name of the leader of God’s angels is “*Michael*” ([Rev 12:7](#)). This name means “who is like God.” He is mentioned four times in the Bible; mostly resisting evil angels, for example:

Michael is “*the archangel*” and he argues with the devil “*about the body of Moses*” ([Jude 1:9](#)).

Daniel wrote that, when he saw the angel whom God sent to him with a message, “*no strength was left in me, for my natural color turned to a deathly pallor, and I retained no strength*” ([Dan 10:8](#)). This, therefore, was a mighty angel, but he was delayed for three weeks by “*these forces*” ([Dan 10:13](#)). “*These forces*,” therefore, are powerful supernatural forces. And the angel said that Michael is the only one “*who stands firmly with me against these forces*” ([Dan 10:13](#); cf. [12:1](#)).

SATAN AND HIS ANGELS

Michael and his angels wage war against Satan and his angels. This means that Satan has deceived a large number of God's beautiful angels to his side.

MICHAEL'S VICTORY

While [Rev 12:7](#) mentions the war in heaven, verses 8 to 12 describe Michael's victory.

SATANS' WEAPONS

With what weapons are the war in heaven waged? The dragon is identified as:

*"the **serpent** of old who is called the **devil** and **Satan**, who **deceives** the whole world" ([Rev 12:9](#))*

*"the **accuser** of our brethren ...*

he who accuses them before our God day and night" ([Rev 12:10](#)).

Serpent – *"The serpent ... said to the woman" ([Gen 3:1](#)).* The "serpent," therefore, refers to Satan's deception of Eve.

Satan – The name Satan means adversary (opponent). He is God's adversary, but also of all angels and people who side with God.

Deceives – He *"deceives the whole world" ([Rev 12:9](#)).* Deception is one of his key strategies. In other words, he tells lies to get people and angels to do and say the things he wants them to do and say. Jesus said of him, *"Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" ([John 8:44](#)).*

Accuser – He is *"the accuser of our brethren:"* He *"accuses them before our God day and night."* Zechariah 3 shows Satan accusing Joshua the high priest of iniquity. Another example is when Satan said that Job fears God only because God protects him (Job) on all sides, but if all of Job's possessions are taken away, then Job would curse God ([Job 1:10-11](#)).

Devil – His role as the accuser is also reflected in the name “*devil*” (diabolos). This Greek word means “slanderer; false accuser; unjustly criticizing to hurt (malign) and condemn.” The NASB, in a few places, also translates this word as “*malicious gossips*.”

Satan’s weapons are therefore not physical. He deceives and accuses. See [The seven seals verse of Revelation](#) for a discussion.

ARTICLES IN THE SERIES ON REVELATION 12

- [The woman, the dragon, the child, and the war in heaven](#)
- [WHEN did the war in heaven begin and WHEN did it end?](#)
- [HOW did Christ’s death win the victory in the war in heaven?](#)
- [They overcame Satan by the word of their testimony. \(Rev 12:11\)](#)
- [Why did God not make an end to evil after the Cross?](#)

OTHER RELEVANT ARTICLES

- [The identity of the seven-headed beasts of Revelation.](#)
- [The beast in Revelation is the mainstream church.](#)
- [The seven seals \(Rev 4:1-8:1\)](#)
- [List of all articles on this website](#)

REVELATION 12

ACCUSER OF OUR BRETHREN, GREAT RED DRAGON, MICHAEL, REVELATION 12, ROD OF IRON, SATAN, WAR IN HEAVEN, WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN

8 Replies to “Who are the woman, the dragon, the child and what is the war in heaven?”



Joseph

2019-02-25 AT 12:07 PM

Hi. Am Joseph and after going through your artical i can't understand why satan is so important to God that he even tortured His own begotten Son (Jesus Christ) just for satan's sanctification.

Why can God just kill satan and save humanity?

I also have a confusion on whether satan had already eaten from the forbidden tree of life and that's why he can't die.



Andries van Niekerk

2019-02-26 AT 9:46 AM

Dear Joseph

Firstly, God did not torture His only begotten Son. What horrible un-Biblical thought! Where on earth did you get that from?! God allowed Satan to torture His Son. God did that because He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten ([John 3:16](#)).

Secondly, to kill Satan would not solve the problem; God has to kill all of Satan's followers as well. And that would only cause further resistance. Please see the Origin of evil articles.

With respect to Satan, we read, "you will cease to be forever" ([Ez. 28:19](#)).



helen tlali

2018-07-25 AT 10:35 PM

please lets do the work of our God and stay blessed,thank you my God



Mathapelo

2018-03-17 AT 11:43 AM

Thank you sooooo much. I agree, God keep and bless you with more revelation. I'm humbled.



Seboka Damaseb

2018-02-19 AT 1:13 PM

This was eye opening. It really sparked an intensity to serve the Lord more. May the Holy Spirit reveal all that we need to know and understand the schemes of our enemy. God Bless.



okey nnebolise (The Lord's messenger)

2018-01-27 AT 12:42 PM

I pray that all Christians shall key into these understandings. May the Holy Spirit continue to reveal these insights to you for the benefit of humanity in Jesus mighty name. Remain in His service. From okey nnebolise. (The Lord's messenger)



smilee gonsalves

2018-01-22 AT 11:23 AM

i didn't know all these things. Thank you for revealing us the truth.



Mr. Justin A. Mukatuka

2017-12-31 AT 1:14 PM

This is really important to have such an educative biblical site which reveals the real truth, keep up the good work.....