

Read Revelation!

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.” (Revelation 1:3)

Chapter 12-14: Wonders of the Tribulation!

After the seventh trumpet sounds, and before the final plagues are revealed, the Book of Revelation shows us several “wonders” that represent important players in the drama of the Great Tribulation.

I. The Woman Israel.

Revelation 12 opens with the appearance of “*a woman clothed with the sun*,” whom we identify with the nation of Israel. This identification is clear from the “*crown of twelve stars*” she wears (v. 1), representing the twelve tribes of Israel (Remember Chapter 7, verses 1 through 8); her bringing forth of Christ (vs. 2-5); and “*the remnant of her seed*” (vs. 13-17), a common reference to the godly among the Israelites (See Isaiah 10:20-22). The main points that are made in Chapter 12 about the woman Israel are the facts that she gave us the Savior and that the Devil hates her. Christians must always shun and reject anti-Semitism, because it is always Satanic in origin. Organizations and publications that hate Jews often target Christians because Jewry generally rejects Jesus Christ. However, the Bible teaches us to love the Jews. Read Romans 11:25-28.

II. The Dragon Satan.

As we have seen, the books of Genesis and Revelation are in many ways intertwined and connected. For example, Genesis 1-2 tell us *how* God created everything, but it isn’t until Revelation 4:11 that we learn *why* He created it. In Genesis 3 we read about the serpent that tempted Adam and Eve, but it isn’t until Revelation 12 that we learn for sure that Satan was in that serpent (vs. 3-9). See in verses 3 and 4 that he led a third of the angels in a rebellion against God. We think this rebellion is described in Isaiah 14:12-15. See in verses 4 and 5 that Satan’s intention was to destroy Christ before He could redeem mankind. This we can see in the regular assaults on the family line of Christ in the Old Testament, the plot of Herod in Matthew 2, and in several attempts to foil God’s plan of redemption in Christ’s earthly ministry (Study and think about Mark 1:12-13, Luke 4:28-30, John 8:59, and

Matthew 27:39-42, 62-66). In the Great Tribulation, Satan will finally be barred from Heaven (Now he goes there regularly as “*the accuser of our brethren*”!) and will become furiously active on earth (vs. 7-12). He will persecute the Israelite remnant, who will then be the primary witnesses for Christ in the world (See Revelation 7 and 14). God will provide a place for them in “*the wilderness*” to protect them, and will also help them when Satan endangers them with a flood (vs. 6 and 13-17—Note Isaiah 59:18-20).

III. The Child Christ.

Israel brought forth Christ (Revelation 12:2-5). God had promised that she would. See this in Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 28:10-14, Isaiah 9:6, and Micah 5:2. When His mission of redemption was accomplished (on the cross and at the empty tomb), He was *“caught up unto God”* (See Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51, and Acts 1:9). Although physically absent from the earth now and in the Tribulation period, Christ continues to have a powerful effect upon mankind (v. 17). He is our Redeemer!

IV. The Beast Antichrist.

Revelation 13 focuses upon two beasts. The word translated *“beast”* here is different from the Greek noun translated that way in Chapters 4 and 6. That word, which describes the seraphim, means simply an animal or a living creature. This word, which refers to monsters that symbolize certain evil persons, means a wild beast. The first *“beast”* in this chapter comes *“up out of the sea.”* It has seven heads and ten horns, with ten crowns on the horns and *“the name of blasphemy”* upon the heads. The dragon of Chapter 12 also had seven heads and ten horns (12:3), but his crowns were seven, and they were on the heads. This beast from the sea is described with references to a leopard, a bear, and a lion (v. 2), and it is said that his power and authority come from the dragon. One of his heads appears to have been *“wounded to death,”* but *“his deadly wound was healed.”* He is worshiped and admired by *“all the world”* (vs. 3-5), and he rules for 42 months (3½ years). This evil person will be the Antichrist spoken of in I John 2:18, and referred to in II Thessalonians 2:3-10. He plays a key role in the Tribulation period, and is pictured also in the Book of Daniel. Find the *“beasts”* of Daniel 7, and study them in comparison with the first beast of Revelation 13. The lion (vs. 3-4) is the Babylonian empire of ancient times. It is followed by the bear (v. 5) which is the Medo-Persian empire. Then comes the leopard (v. 6), the Greek empire of Alexander the Great. The *“fourth beast”* (vs. 7-8) is *“diverse from all the beasts . . . before it”* and had ten horns. We can see clearly that the beast Antichrist of Revelation is a combination of the empire beasts of Daniel. *“Another little horn”* rises up among the horns of the fourth beast before whom three of the horns are *“plucked up.”* This *“little horn”* (who represents the Antichrist is Daniel) has *“a mouth speaking great things.”* According to Daniel 7:25,

“He shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

The fourth beast of Daniel 7 is the Roman empire, and the horns represent ten nations that will seek to reestablish it under the Antichrist. Horns in Bible prophecy picture rule and authority, kings and kingdoms. Now compare the words of Revelation 17:9-12 with what we have seen in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13. See the significance of seven and ten, and of the deadly wound that was healed. Probably the Antichrist will claim to have risen from the dead in his quest for power and authority!

V. The Beast False Prophet.

The second beast of Revelation 13 is called in Revelation 19:20 *“the false prophet”* (Look up this verse). He is a religious leader with

supernatural powers that persuades multitudes of unsaved people to worship the first beast, Antichrist (vs. 11-15). *“He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.”* Of course, in Revelation, the Lamb is Jesus Christ and the Dragon is the Devil. He looks like Christ, but he talks like the Devil! The people are dazzled by the miracles that he does, and they obey him because of them. We all must beware of miracle-working prophets. There are *two* supernatural powers at work in the world: that of God and that of Satan. Don’t be deceived! The False Prophet will be given authority over the world’s economics (vs. 16-18), and he will use that authority to force people to *“receive a mark on their right hand, or in their foreheads”* symbolizing their worship of the Antichrist. That mark is *“the number of his name”*: 666. This number is called *“the number of a man,”* and therefore its meaning is clear. From the first pages of the Bible, 7 has been the number of perfection, and 6 has been the number of man. 666 indicates that man will be at the height of his glory and power under the rule of Antichrist, but that he will still be short of perfection!

Revelation 14 should be compared with Revelation 7 in the light of Revelation 13. It shows us (1) 144,000 dedicated witnesses spreading the Gospel to the whole world, (2) the fall of the city of Babylon, (3) the damnation of the worshipers of Antichrist, (4) the blessed rest of martyrs, and (5) the carnage of the last great battle. All of these events will take place in the Great Tribulation in connection with the five wonders we have just seen: the converted Israelites, the Devil, the Lord Jesus, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet.