

REVELATION 12: A BIG PICTURE OVERVIEW OF ISRAEL

Revelation 12 presents some of the CORE issues that are behind all that we find happening in the book of Revelation and in redemptive history. It relates to the age-old tension between God and Satan, with Israel right in the middle. That is what is being depicted, and it is brought to a CLIMAX. It unveils the activity of Satan and his angels in regard to Israel.

Revelation 12 uses symbolism that is rooted in the OT Scriptures or is defined by the surrounding context. There are three main characters in the chapter.

1. **The Woman** = Israel (cf. Rev. 12:1-2, 6, 13-16).
2. **The Dragon** = Satan (cf. 12:3-4, 9, 12-13).
3. **The Male Child** = Christ (cf. 12:2, 5).

Revelation 12:1-2 summarizes the history of Israel, leading up to the birth of Christ.

Revelation 12:1–2 (NKJV)

- 1 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.
2 Then being with child, **she cried out in labor and in pain** to give birth.

Jewish history involved a long and difficult struggle, moving to the point where finally the Messiah came forth from Israel (the woman).

Revelation 12:3–4 (NKJV)

- 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red **dragon** having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.
4 His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the **dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.**

The dragon is Satan, who through Herod attempted to kill the Christ Child upon His birth (cf. Matt. 2).

Revelation 12:5 (NKJV)

- 5 She bore a male Child who was **to rule** all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was **caught up** to God and His throne.

The ultimate destiny of the male Child (Christ) is to rule over all the nations.

When Christ came the first time, He was presented as the King of Israel; but they rejected Him, resulting in His crucifixion. However, this did not thwart the plan of God because He arose from the dead and then ascended to heaven. This is what is in view in the Child being CAUGHT UP to God and His throne.

Mention is made of His birth and then His ascension, bypassing His entire life and death. The reason for this is because the point of the passage is Satan's intention to destroy the Christ failed. This is seen in the foiled attempt of Herod to murder Him and again to stop Him at the crucifixion. Ascension is proof of Satan's failure and of Christ's victory.

John now skips ahead to a future time when Satan will again intensely try to destroy Israel in the Tribulation Period.

Note that the entire Church Age is bypassed, because the point of this discussion is showing Satan's attempt down through the ages to destroy Israel and the Christ. The subject matter is inherently related to Israel, who produced the Christ Child.

Satan hates the Christ and Israel who bore Him (humanly speaking). The remainder of Rev. 12 shows how Satan is going to desperately try to destroy Israel during the Tribulation Period, but God will preserve her.

Rev. 12 serves to show the central place that Israel has in God's plan of redemption and Satan's hatred of Israel because of it. If Satan could sever the Messiah's relationship to Israel, then he would win. But alas, he cannot.

From Genesis to Revelation, Israel is shown to be central in God's great plan of redemption. Israelology may be the missing link in many systematic theology books; but in God's book, Israel is shown to be a most important link. Essentially, every aspect of redemptive history directly intersects with Israel in one fashion or another. The only exception to this is the Church, which is distinct from Israel; but yet even the Church builds on and is partaker of the spiritual things which are ROOTED in Israel (Rom. 11).

Always remember that Israel is CENTRAL to God's redemptive program because of her relationship to the Messiah. And Israel is CENTRAL to God's prophetic program, which is yet to be fulfilled. Indeed, Israel is a MOST IMPORTANT link in the grand scheme of God's redemptive program.

And because of this, it's still true that God blesses those who bless Israel, and He curses those who curse her (cf. Gen. 12:3).

Israel is God's special chosen witness nation. Whether in blessing or in discipline, Israel is God's witness nation. Israel is God's main program presented in the Old Testament. Israel failed in her mission, and so God has temporarily set Israel aside. However, God will yet ultimately restore Israel and fulfill all of His covenant promises to her. As such, the Church is a "parenthesis" program in which God is calling out of the nations a forever-family for His Name.

When the Church is complete, God will again resume and complete His program with Israel. At His Second Coming, Christ will restore the nation of Israel where she will be prominent in the kingdom, while the Church glorified will reign with Christ (cf. Isa. 4:1-6, 43:1-12, Ezek. 39:25-29, Gen. 12:1-3, 17:7-9, Jer. 31:31-37, Joel 3:1-2, Zech. 14, Malachi 3:6, Acts 15:14-16, Rom. 11:1-2, 25-26, 2 Tim. 2:12, Rev. 3:21).

Voltaire was a French "Enlightenment" writer (1694-1778). He was a God-hater and an infidel. He once sarcastically asked: ***"Why should the world be made to rotate around the insignificant pimple of Jewry?"***

The reason is because the Sovereign God of the Bible has decreed it. Israel is significant because of God's sovereign plan which cannot be thwarted.

Romans 11:36 (NKJV)

36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.