

J. Vernon McGee writes, “When the Pilgrims sailed for America, their pastor at Leyden reminded them, ‘The Lord has more truth yet to break forth from His Holy Word ... Luther and Calvin were great shining lights in their times, yet they penetrated not the whole counsel of God... Be ready to receive whatever truth shall be made known to you from the written word of God.’ The 20th century has witnessed a renewed interest in eschatology (doctrine of last things), especially since World War I. Great strides have been made in the field of prophecy during the past two decades. Indeed new light has fallen upon this phase of Scripture. All of this attention has focused the light of deeper study on the book of Revelation.”¹

Alva J. McClain writes, “in this chapter there is war in heaven: Michael and his angels fighting against Satan and his angels; and the outcome is the casting of Satan out of heaven down to the earth. This action must live in the future, because during the present age of the Church, its members must do battle spiritually against Satan and the hosts of his wicked spirits who are *now* ‘in the heavenly places’ (Eph. 6:10-12, ASV). But in the action described in Revelation 12 Satan’s liberty is reduced to the area of the earth; and when this takes place in harmony with divine prophecy, exactly forty-two months before the end 5), Satan will begin this restricted career on earth with ‘great wrath,’ knowing that he has but ‘a short time’ (12:12) before his imprisonment in the ‘abyss’ of Revelation 20:1 (ASV).”²

(12.1-2) ¹ And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

² And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

1. “The crux of the interpretation of the entire book of Revelation revolves about this point. Who is the woman? The heresy of Rome, which makes the woman represent the Virgin Mary, is well known. Unfortunately, many able expositors in the Protestant tradition did not depart from this method, but made instead the woman to represent the church of all ages. Practically all denominational literature follows this line.”³
2. Several female founders of cults have claimed to be the woman in this passage. Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy, the founder of the Christian Science cult, claimed to be this woman. She also taught that the child that she brought forth was Christian Science.⁴
3. Let me remind you of my presupposition concerning the book of Revelation. I assume, and I am willing to state it to you as an assumption, that symbols and symbolic language in this book, as well as in other books of the Bible where symbolism is used, are used to reveal the truth, not conceal the truth.
4. If God intended to conceal the truth from us through symbols, would it not be easier for Him to make no reference to these things in the Bible, to leave them out, or to make no mention of them? That God resorts to symbols and imagery may mean that literal language cannot successfully convey the truth God wants to provide in the way He wants it offered. Therefore, He resorts to symbols.

¹ J. Vernon McGee, *Reveling Through Revelation, Part II*, (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), page III.

² Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), page 475.

³ McGee., page 1.

⁴ Lehman Strauss, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1963), page 228.

5. In this verse, the first of two great signs is mentioned in Revelation chapter 12. Let us ask some questions: First, where will this first sign appear, and who will witness it? John writes, “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven.” The great wonder will be observed only by those in heaven, not those still living on earth at this future time.
6. Second question: Who are the characters in this great wonder? That is, who do these symbolic figures represent? The main character of the great wonder is, of course, the woman. The minor character in this wonder is the child she is with. Amillennialists and postmillennialism consider this woman the universal, invisible church, with the twelve stars being the twelve apostles and the child representing new converts.⁵ But we have already established that this portion of Revelation does not deal with the Church but the nation of Israel. Consider the woman first.
7. She is “clothed with the sun.” The moon is “under her feet.” On her head is “a crown of twelve stars.” This is a passage loaded with symbolism. No one wears the sun for a dress, uses the moon for sandals or a footstool, or uses stars for a tiara. But a passage in the Old Testament provides a striking clue to identify the woman. Genesis 37.9-11:
 - ⁹ And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.
 - ¹⁰ And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What *is* this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?
 - ¹¹ And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.
8. In this dream of Joseph’s, Jacob recognized the sun and the moon to be him and his wife Leah, Joseph’s mother Rachel, having died in childbirth by this time. The eleven stars were recognized to be Joseph’s brothers. The sun, moon, and twelve stars seem to be an obvious reference to the nation of Israel since Jacob is Israel.
9. What about the minor character in this vision? Who is this child the woman is laboring to deliver? It has to be the Lord Jesus Christ. Recognize this is symbolism; we cannot press the details too far. If we recognize such limitations, we can understand that John is describing a dramatic scene in heaven, a wonder.
10. “The woman as the nation of Israel is seen travailing in birth and awaiting delivery of her child. Frequently in Scripture the nation Israel is pictured in the tribulation time as

⁵ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary* (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com, and Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes’ NT Commentary*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com, and Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary On The Whole Bible*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bi-ble@mail.com

going through great trial and affliction. Though, historically, the nation gave birth to Christ through the Virgin Mary, the implication of verse 2 is that the references are to the sufferings of Israel as a nation rather than to the historic birth of Christ. It may refer to the sufferings of the nation in general over its entire troublesome history. If strictly interpreted, it may signify the travail of Israel at the time of the first coming of Christ as borne out by verses 3 and 4.”⁶

(12.3) And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

1. Remember that “wonder” translates the Greek word *σημείον*, usually translated sign. So, we are not dealing with something literal but something symbolic.
2. This second wonder that appears in heaven is grotesque. Imagine a nightmare where you see a seven-headed red dragon with ten horns and seven crowns, one on each head. Such a nightmare might wake you up in the middle of the night. Allow me to designate this grotesque red dragon as Satan. We will see it clearly as we proceed but indicate now to clear up any doubt you might have.
3. Why is he portrayed as “great”? If he is who I think he is, he is the most powerful of all God’s creatures, with intelligence, capacity, and unimaginable power to you and me. He is not infinite since he is not God. But he is beyond our limited imaginations.
4. Why is he described as “red”? “This is the color of murder and blood.”⁷ According to the Lord Jesus Christ, “He was a murderer from the beginning.”⁸ Want to know where sin and death, and Hell came from? They all came, ultimately, from him.
5. Why is he labeled a “dragon”? “In this is a picture of the hideousness and horror that sin brings... This word is used only in The Revelation, and occurs thirteen times, twelve of these concerning Satan.”⁹
6. “Seven heads”? “The seven heads’ refer to the seven world kingdoms that have existed from Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and the end-time government of Antichrist made up of the ten horns (Dan. 7-8; Rev. 13; 17).”¹⁰
7. “Ten horns”? “Ten horns’ suggests the final division of the Roman Empire which is dominated by Satan and which is his final effort to rule the world... The crowns represent kingly authority and rulership.”¹¹

⁶ John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), page 188.

⁷ William R. Newell, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1935), page 172.

⁸ John 8.44

⁹ Newell, page 173.

¹⁰ See footnote for Revelation 12.3 from *Tim LaHaye Prophecy Study Bible*, (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000), page 1383.

¹¹ McGee, page 155.

8. “and seven crowns upon his heads.” This would refer to Satan’s usurped authority. “Whole governments are in his power, and through them he operates.”¹² Remember, he is “the prince of the power of the air.”¹³ But more importantly, he is “the god of this world.”¹⁴ The authority he wields is illegitimate and unauthorized.

(12.4) And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

1. The first part of this verse gives us a little history of the dragon’s activities in the past. The information satisfies many Bible students’ curiosity about Satan.
2. Job 38.1-7 suggests, if the phrases “morning stars” and “sons of God” are understood to be angels, that angels were created before God created the physical universe we live in and that they shouted for joy at seeing God bring the material creation into existence:

- 1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,
- 2 Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?
- 3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.
- 4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.
- 5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?
- 6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof;
- 7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

3. Ezekiel 28.11-19 is usually taken to be a complex prophecy that begins to speak of a human ruler of the city of Tyre but then expands and deepens to include a history of the creation and fall of Satan, originally known as Lucifer, the most perfect of God’s created beings:¹⁵

- 11 Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
- 12 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
- 13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone *was* thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the

¹² Strauss, page 234.

¹³ Ephesians 2.2

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 4.4

¹⁵ Several clues suggest Ezekiel 28.12-19 refer to an incorporeal being, including his perfect beauty (verse 12), his presence in the Garden of Eden (verse 13), his creation (humans after Adam and Eve are procreated, not created, verses 13-15), and his description as a “covering cherub” (verse 16).

workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

- 14 Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.
- 15 Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.
- 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.
- 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.
- 18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.
- 19 All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never *shalt* thou *be* any more.
4. Though we are not explicitly told in Scripture, it appears Satan was a part of the heavenly host created before the six days of creation in Genesis and observed and shouted for joy as God performed His creative acts. If that is true, then Satan's tragic sin had to occur after the creation of the heaven and the earth, and all that herein is, but before Satan's orchestrated temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden.
5. Precisely what caused Satan to sin against God and be transformed from Lucifer to Satan is found in Isaiah 14.12-15. Notice the five "I wills" in verses 13 and 14. Notice, also, that although Satan's destiny is predicted to be "to hell, to the sides of the pit," he is not yet there:
- 12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!
- 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:
- 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.
- 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.
6. We have a good idea about Lucifer's creation, his sin and fall to become Satan, the reason for it (pride), and his destiny. It is in Revelation 12.4 that we seem to have evidence suggesting just how many holy angels followed Satan in his rebellion against God and what happened to them when Satan was defeated and cast down. One of every three angels sinned against God by choosing to follow after Satan's rebellion.

7. The demons mentioned in the New Testament are believed by some to be the spirits of the hybrids produced by fallen angels who mated with human females and then perished in the Flood, referred to in Genesis 6.1-4:¹⁶

- 1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,
- 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.
- 3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.
- 4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them, the same *became* mighty men which *were* of old, men of renown.

8. The more commonly held view is that Satan, the demons (“the sons of God” mentioned in Genesis chapter 6), the beasts that ascend out of the pit with Apollyon in Revelation chapter 9 ... all of these are beings created as holy angels, but who sinned against God and were cast down.

9. Back to the dragon in Revelation 12.4. These two wonders, these two signs, come together before John. The dragon stood before the woman who was about to deliver to devour her child as soon as it was born. This would remind the Jewish Christians of Herod’s murder of the children two years old and under in Bethlehem in a murderous attempt to assassinate the Christ child. Matthew 2.13-18 informs us of that butchery:

- 13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.
- 14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:
- 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.
- 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.
- 17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,
- 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

¹⁶ Michael S. Heiser, *Demons: What The Bible Really Says About The Powers Of Darkness*, (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020).

(12.5) And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

1. If the woman is a symbolic description of the nation of Israel, the Jewish people, and the dragon can be identified with Satan, then the manchild she brings forth can only be the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Let me substantiate this with two passages illuminating who wields this iron rod. First, turn to Psalm 2, which is a Messianic Psalm that is related to the Lord Jesus Christ as the conquering King, as well as the Savior:

¹ 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.

3. Revelation 19.15-16:

¹⁵ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.
¹⁶ And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

How glorious will be the Second Coming, in power and great glory, of the Lord Jesus Christ! That He will rule with a rod of iron seems to verify that the manchild of Revelation 12.5, “who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron,” does refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Could this manchild possibly be Satan? Some have advanced that view. Valid question, since there are some verses in Daniel chapter 12 that at first glance might seem to refer

to the Lord Jesus, but which turns out to be the antichrist. So, it is good to challenge a position, question it, and thoroughly evaluate it.

5. The conclusive evidence for this being the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of some interloper or fraud posing as the Messiah, is that “her child was caught up to God, and to his throne.” This brief statement jumps from the birth of Christ to the ascension of Christ, to the throne of God, after His crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and post-resurrection ministry. But such are prophetic visions that it is not unusual for certain predictive features to be seen by the prophet with no recognition in his vision or prophecy of essential events in between.
6. Suffice it to say that it is established that the woman is Israel, Jewish people, and the man child is the Lord Jesus Christ.

(12.6) And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

1. This refers to the last three and one-half years of the seven-year tribulation, when the Jews who have been regathered to Israel, here again, seen as the woman, must flee to the wilderness to escape the antichrist’s persecution.
2. In Matthew 24.14-22, the Lord Jesus Christ taught the apostles about this same event from an earthly perspective:

- 14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.
- 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)
- 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:
- 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:
- 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.
- 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!
- 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:
- 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
- 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

The reference to the “gospel of the kingdom” in verse 14, and the “great tribulation” in verse 21, establishes the time frame. The “gospel of the kingdom” suggests the Church is no longer on the scene, but Israel is back in full view as the focus of God’s workings. And “great tribulation” is a phrase used only to describe the last half, the worst half, of the 70th week of Daniel.

Revelation Chapter 12

3. Although it will be horrible, God will preserve the Jewish people from satanic persecution.

(12.7-8) ⁷ And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
⁸ And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

1. This scene in heaven will not be witnessed by the earth's inhabitants when it occurs, some three and one-half years after the Rapture. But try to imagine what kind of warfare it will be. What will warfare between two incorporeal armies be like? What type of conflict can be engaged in between two armies comprised of creatures who are spirits?
2. Consider also the fact that these creatures all know each other. It will not be a war of faceless soldiers. The fight will involve beings created by God, Himself, and who at one time worshipped and served the Lord God Almighty side by side, giving to Him praise and honor and glory that He so richly deserves.
3. Consider also the outcome of this great conflict. What can these creatures do to each other? They cannot kill each other since they are immortal beings. All they can strive for, then, is the mastery of one group over the other.
4. How will it turn out? Michael and his holy angels will prevail over the dragon and unholy host. How can we be sure? Because God has ordained that it be so. Just a glimpse at what is at the disposal of God's servants can be found in Jude 9, where Michael's skirmish with Satan is recorded: "Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."
5. This conflict will not be blood, gore, or brute force and cunning. I imagine this to be a conflict between truth and lies, humility and pride. I am not suggesting that it will not be a real fight with real stakes. I am suggesting that Michael will once again lead his army of angels to adopt the same strategy that he used in a conflict against Satan for the body of Moses. He quoted Scripture, Zechariah 3.2 to be exact: "And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan; even the LORD that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: *is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*"
6. Why would Michael not use this strategy of quoting Scripture? The Lord Jesus Christ did the same when tempted in the wilderness, did He not? Did He not combat Satan's temptations with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God? We should do the same.
7. When the struggle is finished, Satan and his minions will lose access to heaven. But what will that mean? I believe the struggle between Michael's forces and the forces of the dragon will result in the dragon being confined to the earth. No longer will he have the freedom to roam the universe. No longer will he have the opportunity to enjoy any freedom of action. With this step Michael and his angels take, the dragon begins to be hemmed in.

8. At this point, the dragon realizes his time is close. His confinement is imminent. To resist what he knows must happen, he breaks forth in a last-ditch frenzy of thrashing destruction, seeking to do as much damage as possible.

(12.9) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

1. This verse confirms my suspicions about Satan being cast out, including being confined to earth and that of the evil spirits who follow him. The three phrases “was cast out,” “was cast out,” “were cast out,” translate aorist passive indicatives of βάλλω.
2. Take note of something else found in Revelation 12.9. Think back to the Garden of Eden, Genesis chapter 3. Who was it that tempted Eve? It was the serpent, more subtle than any beast of the field.
3. This is the first verse in Scripture that conclusively associates the serpent with Satan. Although it is commonly accepted that the serpent in the Garden of Eden and Lucifer (now Satan) are the same, entries in *Dictionary Of Deities And Demons In The Bible* might suggest otherwise.¹⁷
4. The biographical sketch of Lucifer in Ezekiel 28.11-19 identifies him as a cherub:

¹⁴ Thou *art* the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee *so*: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁶ By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Yet the entry describing cherubim in *Dictionary Of Deities And Demons In The Bible*, pages 189-192, does not suggest cherubs in appearance or function are anything like serpents. The serpent in the Garden of Eden resembles seraphim, both described on pages 742-747 of *Dictionary Of Deities And Demons In The Bible*.

5. I would suggest that as many as four personalities might have been in the Garden of Eden when Eve sinned. Adam and Eve were present. The serpent (a seraph?) that tempted Eve was present. And Satan (the now fallen cherub, Lucifer) might have been distinct from the snake and present in the garden, as indicated in Ezekiel 28.13.
6. How are the piling up of labels to be reconciled with two personalities and not one? The great dragon, the old serpent, the Devil, Satan, and the one who deceives the whole world “is what is often referred to by linguists as ‘overspecification,’ providing more

¹⁷ Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, Pieter W. Van der Horst, editors, *Dictionary Of Deities And Demons In The Bible*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Second Extensively Revised Edition, 1999)

information than is necessary. Here it functions to focus attention on the dragon, and to draw attention to the OT background (Gen 3).”¹⁸

7. Is John describing a single individual with these terms, or might he have gathered into one category the rebellion masterminded by Satan against God and Adam and Eve that was coordinated by two evil personalities in unison?
8. One final observation before we move on to the next verse. John describes this being (or beings) by his names, dragon, that old serpent, the Devil, and Satan, and by the activity, “which deceiveth the whole world.” However many personalities were in the Garden of Eden, the rebellion against God has ever been masterminded by only one, Satan.
9. Be careful of this great enemy. He is the master of deception. He fools everyone, the whole human race, the entire planet. He can fool you. Be careful to know God’s Word and follow God’s will, lest you be led entirely astray and your life ruined.

(12.10) And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

1. The loud voice makes this glorious proclamation when Satan is cast down to the earth. This proclamation has two parts: one deals with salvation, God, and Christ, and the second deals with Satan’s nefarious activities.
2. “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ.” Is this summary of the events related to the crucifixion of Christ, the burial of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and His ascension to the Father’s right hand? Or is this loud proclamation that John hears a declaration that the final events will culminate with the second coming of Christ in power and great glory that is about to commence? I tend to think it is the latter of the two possibilities.
3. Whatever this proclamation means, there is no suggestion that God will be defensive when the antichrist is persecuting the Jewish people. This should remind us that when conclusions are drawn about whether the work of God and the plan of God is advancing, we should not limit our findings to facts related to circumstances that can be seen only but also to the facts associated with events that cannot be seen. Though God’s people will be on the run at this time in the future, God’s plan will be unfolding exactly on schedule.
4. “for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” Let us rejoice, first, in the fact that Satan will be cast down to earth as a prelude to being utterly cast down to the lake of fire at the end of the millennium.

¹⁸ David L. Mathewson, *Revelation: A Handbook On The Greek Text (BHGNT)*, (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2016), page 162.

5. But by way of application, let us take note of the activity Satan engages in right now, before this struggle with Michael and his eventual confinement to earth. At this moment in time, in the past from John's frame of reference in this verse, Satan is the accuser of the brethren. From the Greek word *κατήγορ*, the word "accuser" refers to someone who brings a legal charge against someone. Thus, Satan is the plaintiff against believers.
6. Take note of where Satan's accusations are registered. Satan accuses the brethren night and day before God. That is very important. The main difference between Satan's activities and the Scriptural confrontation of someone who has done wrong is this: When you deal with someone about wrongdoing, you are supposed to deal first with that person and then with others in that person's presence if need be. On the other hand, Satan does not seek to confront you directly for your benefit. Instead, he is the ultimate rat who runs to God with accusations, which are likely true but are voiced to harm you, not help you.
7. In like manner, when you tell another of the wrongdoing of a Christian when you should have told that Christian to their face, you are doing what Satan does. We must not do that. And we cannot allow our children to develop that habit. In our Church's Christian school, I allow kids to tell me things that other kids do only when they are trying to help keep the kid out of trouble or when they are trying to prevent some kid from being injured. The plain old tattle tale is not well received by me. And you would do well to refuse to listen to the younger child who tries to tattle on an older brother or sister when the apparent intent is not to help but to get the sibling into trouble.
8. There is a great deal of Satan-like behavior among people who claim to be Christians. Let us learn to deal with what we observe ourselves rather than running to someone and squealing, as Satan runs to God, just trying to get people in trouble. If the problem is not significant enough for you to muster the personal courage to deal with them, then the problem is not substantial enough to tell anyone else about.
9. By the way, what good does it do Satan to approach God day and night with accusations against those of us who are genuinely saved? No good whatsoever. Romans 8.28-39:
 - 28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.
 - 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
 - 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.
 - 31 What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?
 - 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?
 - 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth.

- 34 Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.
- 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
- 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
- 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.
- 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
- 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I will never know how some people think a genuinely born-again Christian can lose salvation and perish in the lake of fire. If the most powerful created being in all the universe cannot loosen God's grip on you, how can you be lost once you are saved?

(12.11) And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

1. What happens when the brethren can no longer be accused before God day and night? What happens when Satan is cast down to the earth? Such persecution of the brethren who will then be alive on earth as has never before been seen begins.
2. But how will our brothers and sisters respond to the attacks? The same way they have always responded. "And they overcame him." "The word 'they' of verse 11 seems to indicate that this verse has to do with such saints as are still upon the earth; although the verb is in the past tense – 'overcame.'"¹⁹ They will overcome Satan "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."
3. Understand that it will look like our brethren are losing. It always looks like you are losing when you die. But that is the paradox for the child of God, who gains his life by losing it. The martyr never loses by losing his life. Never! He always gains because he gains the martyr's crown, given to those who die for Christ's sake. Revelation 2.10:

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

4. How does the martyr gain? On what ground? Victory is won for us by the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan's accusations were to tarnish us, staining us with sin, pointing out to God that you or I might have a blemish. But what does the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, continually do for the child of God? First John 1.7 reads, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,

¹⁹ Newell, page 179.

and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” So, Satan’s efforts against us are always in vain.

5. When Satan is cast down and intensifies his persecution of the brethren, nothing changes so far as God is concerned. There is still the precious soul-cleansing blood of the Lamb. And there is still “the word of their testimony.”

“The word of their testimony” reveals that they were true martyrs. Those who are Christ’s cannot deny Him. “But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 10:33). There is something that is strengthening in giving a testimony. Don’t misunderstand me—some of the testimonies given today are pretty shallow. Some of them are given by those who ought not to be giving a testimony, because the people close to them know their shoddy living, and it makes them rather cynical and skeptical. The place to give a testimony is not at a nice, well-fed church banquet where all the saints say amen to everything you say. If you have a life to back it up, the place to give your testimony is out yonder in the world, when you are up against that godless, blaspheming crowd. Let them know that you belong to Christ and that you are in Christ. There is something strengthening in that. There is something that makes a man stand tall when he can give a testimony like that. I know of a man in business who is a big, double-fisted fellow. He is an executive in a very hard-hitting concern, and there are a lot of blaspheming folk around him. When he hears someone blaspheming, in a very quiet manner, he will say to that person, “I’d like to tell you what Jesus Christ means to me.” The Lord Jesus says, “If you deny Me before men, I’ll deny you before My Father in heaven.” These are the true martyrs. The word *martus* means witness. These are the ones who witness for Him.²⁰

6. “And they loved not their lives unto death.”
 - a. They will love Jesus more than life and show it by giving up their lives for Him. Thus has it always been for the child of God during terrible persecution. Thus will it always be until Jesus comes.
 - b. Some these days will attempt to draw a parallel between the Muslim suicide bombers willing to die for Allah and the Christian martyrs of the past and those who are presently being martyred for the faith in other parts of the world as I speak. Such a parallel can only be a twisted perversion of reality. Muslim fanatics die as they take the lives of innocent people. They are dying as they commit acts of murder. Christian martyrs, on the other hand, have never died while taking the lives of others but forfeit their lives to their persecutors for Jesus’ sake because of unyielding devotion to Christ and their refusal to silence their mouths for Him.

(12.12) Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

1. The voice from heaven continues. The “therefore” refers back to verses 9 and 10, where we are told that Satan will be cast out of heaven and cast down to the earth.

²⁰ McGee, pages 166-167.

2. The host of holy angels, presumably, are the ones who will have cause to rejoice, while everyone on earth will have reason only to complain.
 3. Pay attention to the phrase “inhabiters of the earth and of the sea.” That is likely a symbolic reference to Israel, termed “the earth,” and the Gentile nations, termed “the sea.”
 4. Why would the Jews and the Gentiles bemoan Satan’s setback? “for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath.” Because Satan’s setback will stir up great wrath on his part, knowing that “he hath but a short time.” Again, we explain the extremely intense persecution that fell upon the Jews during the Great Tribulation. Satan’s insane fury will reach a fever pitch as he realizes, in his mad panic, that the end is coming for him.
 5. But those of us who are now Christians will be in heaven already by then, and we will be rejoicing over the devil’s defeat, along with the host of holy angels. “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.”
- (12.13) And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.
1. John reverts to the great wonder he saw in heaven, the picture of the woman representing the Jewish people.
 2. Satan, described again as the dragon, persecutes the woman who brought forth the child. This word “persecute” refers to hunting and pursuing.²¹ The casting will instigate the last and worst persecution of the Jews mankind has ever known out of the dragon. It will be worse than the holocaust of World War Two, worse than the pogroms the Jews suffered at the hands of the Poles and the Russians in the 19th and early 20th centuries, worse than the oppression brought on in ancient times by the Assyrians and the Babylonians, and worse than the Egyptian’s slaughter of the Jewish firstborn.
 3. from the heavenly perspective, this verse marks the beginning of the Great Tribulation.²² Matthew 24.15-22 presents our Lord’s words showing the beginning of the Great Tribulation from the human perspective:
 - ¹⁵ When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)
 - ¹⁶ Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:
 - ¹⁷ Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:
 - ¹⁸ Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

²¹ Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers, *Linguistic Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1980), pages 839-840.

²² L. Sale-Harrison, *The Remarkable Revelation*, (New York: Sale-Harrison Publications, 1930), page 133.

- ¹⁹ And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!
- ²⁰ But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:
- ²¹ For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
- ²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

4. “The Jew has always been a target for Satan’s bitter attack. There is no nation in history whose people have been hated and persecuted as has been the Jew. When God called Abraham He let it be known that he would be the object of cursing (Genesis 12:3). But why should this be so? For no other reason than that Abraham was chosen by God. When a man answers the call of God and casts his lot on the side of righteousness, he can expect to be hated by the enemies of God. (Read John 17:14-16; 1 John 3:1-2). Israel was chosen by God to be the repository for His Word and the nation through whom God’s Son and the world’s Redeemer should come. Little wonder that Satan hates the Jew. After his final defeat in Heaven his wrath against the Jew will be great, for he knows that he has only three-and-one-half years remaining before he is bound and cast into the abyss.”²³

(12.14) And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

1. The time, times, and half a time, undoubtedly refers to the last three and one half years of the tribulation period, or that period the Lord Jesus referred to as the Great Tribulation.
2. In the wilderness on all points south of Jerusalem, I might remind you again, are caves everywhere. It is thought that this is where the Jewish people will be able to flee from the antichrist to escape death.
3. What are the two wings of an eagle given to the woman that she might fly into the wilderness? “Not actual birds’ wings, but a graphic depiction of God’s providential protection of Israel (cf. Ex. 19:4). Wings often speak of protection (cf. Deut. 32:9-12; Ps. 91:4; Is. 40:31). Eagles—probably vulture-like griffins—were the largest birds known in Palestine.”²⁴
4. Recognizing that the casting down of Satan to earth will precede the antichrist’s act of desecrating the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem immediately, the two wings of an eagle given to the woman may refer to the warning the Lord Jesus Christ gives to the Jewish people in Matthew 24.15-31:

²³ Strauss, page 241.

²⁴ See footnote for Revelation 12.14 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 2009.

- 15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)
- 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:
- 17 Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:
- 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.
- 19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!
- 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:
- 21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
- 22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.
- 23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe it not.
- 24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.
- 25 Behold, I have told you before.
- 26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, *he is* in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.
- 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.
5. Having fled and successfully hidden themselves, I believe the antichrist will attempt to lure Jewish people out of hiding by using false christs. But these Jewish people, still at this time unsaved, will remember the things told them by the young Jewish evangelists who crisscrossed the earth preaching the Gospel during the first three and one-half years of the tribulation.
6. When the real Son of God returns from heaven the Jewish people will know Who He is, because His return will be in response to their pleadings. Hosea 5.15 is a prophetic explanation of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: “I will go *and* return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.”

(12.15) And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

1. Will the devil use some hydroelectric dam to back up water and then try to flood the Jewish people out of the lowlands they are hiding in? I do not think so since the terrain in that region could not be described as lowlands and is likely too porous to hold water behind a dam.
2. I instead think this is a symbolic reference to the devil using Gentiles, sent pouring over the land in search of hidden Jews, to root out those who are in hiding.

(12.16) And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

1. Again, I think we have symbolic language being used here. I believe Matthew 25.31-46, referring to events that will occur after the Lord Jesus Christ's return, will shed light on this verse:

³¹ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

³² And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

³³ And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

⁴¹ Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

⁴² For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

⁴³ I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Revelation Chapter 12

- ⁴⁴ Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?
- ⁴⁵ Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.
- ⁴⁶ And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

2. The Jewish people will not be successful in hiding themselves without a great deal of help. After the Jewish people attempt to hide, many Gentiles will take them in and help them, feeding and clothe them. The Lord Jesus Christ says that some will help His people while others will not. And both will receive their appropriate reward.
3. Revelation 12.16 deals, in a highly symbolic way, with the help that will be given to the Jews by some Gentiles during that time.

(12.17) And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

1. Obviously, Satan is after every Jewish person he could get a hold on during that period.
2. But notice who he is mainly motivated to make war on. Who could be described as the remnant, who keep God's commandments, and who has the testimony of Jesus Christ? Right. The 144,000. He wants them most of all.