

**The Twitter Commentary on Revelation**  
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**Revelation Chapter 12**

**Rev 12 Introduction–**

Revelation 12 introduces a cartoon-like parable using animals to describe major turns in human history.

The chapter portrays a cosmic battle worked out in the ministry of Jesus and the church after Him (Rev 12:5-6, 14).

The sanctuary stage setting for chapter 12-14 is found in Rev 11:19.

In a literary sense, the chapter divides into three parts: 1) 1-6, 2) 7-13, and 3) 14-17.

**Rev 12:1–**

“Sign” seems to indicate that from here on Rev focuses on the last days of earth’s history (13:13-14; 15:1; 16:14).

“Appeared” is an unusual word that connects chapter 12 with 11:19. Major turning point in Rev.

Whenever a new character appears in Rev, the author starts with a visual and historical description.

Sun, moon and 12 stars suggest the woman represents the people of God, beginning with OT Israel.

The earthly battles the people of God face are the fallout of a cosmic war between Christ and Satan.

**Rev 12:2–**

The intensity of the woman’s pain is due to the dragon’s attempt to destroy her child as soon as he is born (12:4).

**Rev 12:3–**

A new character, the dragon, is here introduced, reminding readers of the conflict in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:1-15).

“Dragon” in the ancient world refers to large mythological creatures (Job 41:1; Isa 27:1).

The red color here is the Greek word for fire (*purros*), which connects most closely with Rev 6:4.

The seven heads and ten horns of the dragon allude to the four beasts of Daniel 7.

The dragon wears royal crowns (*diadêmata*) on his heads in contrast to the beast from the sea.

**Rev 12:3-5–**

The dragon’s actions also allude to Herod’s attempt to destroy the baby Jesus (Matt 2:12-18).

**Rev 12:4–**

The “tail” recalls Rev 9:3,10 and Isa 9:14-15. It represents persuasion through lies.

The dragon “drags” a third of the stars (angels and/or followers of God, see Rev 1:20) from heaven to earth.

Allusion to Dan 8:10, where little horn casts stars to earth and tramples them.

There is an allusion to Gen 12:3 in the dragon’s hostility toward the male child of the woman.

**Rev 12:5–**

The male child is introduced in terms of his future, to ascend to heaven and rule the world.

There are allusions to Psa 2:7-9 and possibly Mic 5:2-4, the male child is the future Davidic king.

The male child is Jesus Christ whose earthly rule is shared with His people (Rev 2:27-28).

This verse implies the entirety of Jesus’ ministry in heaven and on earth. He was born to die and to rule.

**Rev 12:1-5 Summary–**

Woman, serpent and child recall the Garden of Eden and Genesis 3:15.

This passage introduces the three main actors at the center of the drama in the rest of the book.

This cartoon fantasy implies that we are all part of a much bigger story that changes everything.

**Rev 12:6-16 Introduction–**

Beginning with verse 6 this chapter moves to a double stage on earth and heaven.

The woman of this passage parallels prostitute Babylon in Rev 17:3-5.

**Rev 12:6–**

This verse moves the narrative from Eden imagery (12:1-5; Gen 3:15) to Exodus imagery (1 Cor 10:1-6).

Verse 6 is paralleled by verse 14, with both verses providing important elements for understanding the woman’s experience.

“1260 days” refers to God’s side of the conflict, “42 months” to the powers of evil in the world.

The desolation of the Sinai experience illustrates God’s spiritual nourishment of His people.

**Rev 12:7-12 Introduction–**

Strong parallels between verses 6 and 14 make this an interlude within the dragon’s pursuit of the woman.

**Rev 12:7–**

The battle between the dragon and the male child is resumed in heaven with Michael and the dragon.

Michael means “who is like God?” In Daniel he wages cosmic war on behalf of God’s people.

Michael is another term for Jesus Christ, the commander of heaven’s army.

The dragon appears in every scene of Rev 12, providing an apocalyptic sequence of events.

This language of this verse points back to the beginning of the cosmic conflict, well before the time of Christ.

The battle here echos an earlier battle in which a third of the angel’s lost their place in heaven (Rev 12:4; 13:8).

**Rev 12:8–**

The dragon and his angels are not strong enough, a theme implied throughout chapter 12.

**Rev 12:9–**

The “thrown down” is an exact parallel to verse 10 and a passive in contrast to the active use of the same word in verse 4.

The dragon is further defined as the ancient serpent, devil and Satan. Allusion to Zech 3.

The language of “ancient serpent” creates an allusion to Genesis 3.

**Rev 12:10–**

“Loud voices” occur frequently in Revelation at decisive points in the narrative.

The word “now” ties the events of this verse with those of verse 9.

This verse occurs at the same time as 12:9 and is parallel to John 12:31-33.

The casting down of Satan must be understood in light of the accusations of Satan against Job in Job 1-12.

Satan is cast out of heaven physically in 12:4 and spiritually in 12:9-10.

The reference to “day and night” is in contrast to Rev 4:8 and 7:15, where God is served and praised.

**Rev 12:7-10 Summary–**

This passage occurs at the ascension of the male child, but contains echos (verses 7-8) of a much earlier battle.

There are strong parallels between the scenes of conflict in Rev 12-13 and the throne scene of 4-5.

The very concept of “throne” concerns the right to rule the universe. (Rev 5:1-14; 12:5; 13:2).

**Rev 12:11–**

The theme of “overcoming” is elaborated here in terms of how the believer is meant to overcome.

A major point of this verse is that a faith that is not worth dying for is not worth living

for either.

At the cross Satan's true character was revealed, he is a liar and a murderer (John 8:44).

**Rev 12:10-11 Summary–**

God chooses to resolve the conflict in the universe through the free response of his creatures rather than by force.

*Desires of Ages, 758-764. Really, really good!*

At the cross it has become clear in heaven that God is not only right but that he has the right to rule.

The preaching of the gospel clarifies on earth what has already been made clear in heaven.

**Rev 12:12–**

As a pair, earth and sea represent the worldwide scope of the dragon's intentions.

Major transition. The decisive battle has been won in heaven. But the war continues on earth.

**Rev 12:7-12 Summary–**

The war in heaven is a war of words (Rev 12:4, 7-12 in light of Isa 9:15, Gen 3, Job 1 and 2 and Zech 3).

**T Rev 12:7-12– (spiritual lessons)**

1) This passage underlines the centrality of the cross in the cosmic conflict.

2) The gift of the gospel frees us from the accusations of Satan in our own hearts as well as in heaven.

3) Questions about the character of God imply a rejection of obedience to His laws.

**Rev 12:13–**

This verse picks up the story of the dragon's attack on the male child and the woman's flight in verses 5-6.

**Rev 12:14–**

The flight of the woman recalls Israel's experience in the desert during the Exodus (Exod 19:4).

In the original, the wings belong to “the” great eagle, probably an awkward but specific pointer to Exod 19:4.

“Time, times and half a time” is the same period as the 1260 days (Rev 11:3; 12:6) and the 42 months (11:2; 13:5).

“Time, times and half a time” is a clear allusion to Dan 7:25 and 12:7, where the “saints” are oppressed.

The allusion to Dan 7 here brings Dan 7:9-14 to mind, a heavenly scene like the one of Rev 12:7-12.

A basic understanding of Daniel 7 is helpful to the interpretation of this verse.

Most interpreters through the 19<sup>th</sup> Century used the “year-day principle” to understand the time period in this verse.

#### **Rev 12:14– (Excursus on Year-Day Principle)**

The “Year-Day Principle” is not based on a direct statement in the Bible, but on larger theological reasoning.

If God knows the future and reveals history in advance, a “year-day principle” is quite conceivable.

God knows the future and in apocalyptic predicts a comprehensive sequence of historical events.

The OT and the ancient world exhibit “year-day” correspondences or “year-day” thinking.

The 70-“weeks” prophecy of Daniel 9 may be an example of year-day thinking in the Bible.

There is a possible year-day correspondence between the time periods of Dan 8:13-14 and 9:24-27.

Outside the Bible the clearest example of year-day thinking occurred in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In Rev numbers are symbolic, particularly strange numbers like 1260 days and 42 months.

The full sequence from John's day to the end can only be filled by seeing the 1260 as years rather than days.

The year-day principle is a theological insight rather than an exegetical one.

The 1260 years fit best into history from the 500s AD through the French Revolution.

The best specific dates for the 1260-year period run from 538 AD to 1798 AD.

The most positive side of the church's slide into apostasy was the collection of the New Testament.

**Rev 12:15–**

The mouth of the serpent alludes to Satan's deceptive words in the Garden of Eden.

Water is used in three ways in Rev: nourishment, cleansing and destructive flooding.

Flooding waters in the Old Testament can represent military invasions and persecution, but also ridicule and deception.

**Rev 12:15-16–**

Water here represents flooding that is absorbed by a desert.

In the ancient world, flooding rivers and dragons with wings are parallel images.

The serpent's attack is twofold: deception and force.

The Exodus motif lies behind this passage, particularly Exod 15:12.

**Rev 12:16–**

"Earth" foretells historical developments that ended broad persecution and elevated the Scriptures.

In the end-time crisis prayer is a powerful protection (Ps 32:6-7).

**Rev 12:12-16– (spiritual lessons)**

(1) The rulership of Christ is effective in crisis for those who trust in Him.

(2) Revelation reveals a cosmic conflict behind earthly conflicts.

**Rev 12:17–**

The dragon is angry over repeated failures in the course of history (verses 4-5, 8, 14-16).

The dragon “went away” to gather allies for the final conflict with the remnant (see chapter 13).

The term remnant can be used for positively and negatively in Rev for people groups.

The root meaning of “remnant” is survivors of a disaster. The spiritual equivalent is the faithful among the apostate.

The “remnant” have a number of identifying marks in Revelation, chapters 10-14.

In the OT the term “remnant” could be used in three ways; historical, faithful, and eschatological.

The remnant of the woman’s offspring are the true followers of the male child (12:5) at the very end of time.

The focus on the commandments of God is characteristic of the whole section (11:19; 12:17; 14:12, etc.).

The “testimony of Jesus” is a visionary, prophetic gift like the one John had (see Rev 1:2; 19:10; 22:8-9).

The verse as a whole is an allusion to the enmity between Eve and the serpent in Gen 3:15.

### **Rev 12:1-17 Conclusion–**

Covers from beginning of the cosmic war to the close of human history.

From this point on in Rev, the focus is almost entirely on the closing events of earth’s history.

This chapter brings together the three major actors in the drama of Revelation; Jesus, the church and Satan.

The entire chapter is an apocalyptic interpretation of Genesis 3, particularly verses 14 and 15.

### **Rev 12:1-17– (spiritual lessons)**

(1) Christ’s rule on this earth is effective only for those who acknowledge Him.

(2) Behind all earthly conflicts is a cosmic conflict.

(3) The primary characteristic of Satan in this chapter is “the accuser of the brothers.”

(4) When we are critical of others we may speak of God but exhibit the spirit of Satan.

(5) Believers have never been stronger (12:11) yet they have never been more vulnerable (12:12).

(6) The cross is the greatest revelation of the character of God.