

The Woman Clothed With the Sun

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Revelation: How It All Ends

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Bible Text: Revelation 12

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I know you probably have Revelation 12 and I do want you to hold that but I also want you to go to Genesis 37 and learn a thing or two before we get to Revelation 12. Look at verse 1, “Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.” Who was Jacob's father? Isaac. I heard one and I wanted to get a few more involved. Thank you.

“These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old.” Joseph is 17 years old when this story begins here. “He was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives,” and so now later in the story, they are known as his wives. That's a cultural anomaly that we could talk about at some length but “Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.” So, he came to his dad and said, “My brothers are not acting right.”

Verse 3, “Now Israel loved Joseph.” Israel was the new name for who? Jacob's name was changed to Israel, good. “Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age.” What does that mean? He had him when he was an old man, that's right. So he loved him “because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed.” I don't think he's read any self-help books because this is not what you do when you know a group of people hate you. Right?

Verse 7, “For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf.” It sounds like a VeggieTales movie. “And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren,” okay that worked out well, let's do it again. I know there's no explicit sin recorded of Joseph but I'm not sure that we can say that we have nothing but wisdom exemplified by this guy. In any case, “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.” So, we could guess what that means or we could let his dad tell us.

Verse 10, “And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him,” so Jacob rebuked Joseph and said, “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? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.” He said, “I wonder if there's anything to this?” So, according to Jacob, who are the sun, the moon and the eleven stars? Jacob, Rachel and the eleven brothers of Joseph, right?

We're going to make sure that we have this understood here. Sun is Jacob. There is more to it so just hold tight. The moon is Rachel. The eleven stars are Joseph's brothers.

One of Exodus, chapter 19. “In the third month when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt the same day came they unto the wilderness of Sinai.” So, they came out of Egypt and went where? Sinai. Not just Sinai, the wilderness of Sinai. So, in the wilderness of Sinai there is a mountain known as Mount Sinai.

Verse 2, “For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai,” so it says it twice: wilderness of Sinai, desert of Sinai, “and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel,” look here, “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.”

So, in Exodus 19 we find out two things: we find out 1. they went from Egypt to the wilderness and there is a second thing that I want you to see, they also did it on eagles' wings. Good question for you here: what do you think was meant by that? On eagle's wings? Because I read a commentator who said that what we're about to read later today in Revelation is talking about the Jews fleeing on DC10s, that it was really old language that they didn't know what airplanes were. Okay, so, let's use the same rule: Exodus 19, do you suppose that the Israelites left Egypt on C17s, DC10s? Okay, probably not, right? So, figurative for what? Speed, strength, stealth. Right. Swift. Good.

Look at Jeremiah 46:6, “Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape; they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates.” That's not so much where I want you to notice as much as verse 7, “Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt,” look here, “riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.” Alright, a little help: what is the flood? Someone tell me, what is the flood a picture of in this Scripture? (...) Very good, so the flood in Jeremiah 46 equals the army of Egypt or armies of Egypt. That's interesting. I'm telling you, when you get this stuff when we get to Revelation 12, you're going to say, “Okay, I got this.” So, we're doing this on purpose.

Let's look at Hosea. That's a book you probably read this morning in your devotions. Hosea 2. If you're in Jeremiah, it's Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea. Hosea has 14 chapters. I always thought it was weird that Daniel has 12 and is known as a major prophet, Hosea has 14 and is known as a minor prophet. Not sure I get the whole major/minor distinction there but hey, how could all the people be wrong, right?

Hosea 2. I tell you what, we want to know who we're talking about here so look at chapter 1:10, "Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel."

Look at chapter 2. There are some things that I want you to see there. We're talking about Israel in the context. Please stay with me. Look at verse 12 of chapter 2, "I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them." Here's God speaking again to Israel. "And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim," or multiple gods, Baalim is plural for many Baals, "wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgot me, saith the LORD. Therefore," look here, "I will allure her." Who are we talking about in the context? Israel. "I'm going to draw her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her." When are you going to do this? "I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." When are you going to draw her into the wilderness like you did in the days of Egypt? Well, chapter 1, when Israel and Judah have one king over them again. When will that happen? Yeah, when Jesus comes. That's right.

In Hosea 2, we find out that Israel is going to, around the time of the Second Coming, go into the wilderness. Israel drawn into the wilderness by God. Let's rehearse: just like he did in the days of Egypt, yes? And how did they come out in the days of Egypt? (...) Good. I just wanted you to see that John whether knowingly or unknowingly, I would say knowingly in some levels, was using old material.

Now look at Matthew 24. This is our last stop before we get to Revelation 12. Matthew 24. We'll probably spend two weeks in Revelation 12, one week talking about the woman, the other week talking about the dragon. So, we're going to get to the woman today. Matthew 24 and we're going to be looking at verse 15 should work. Here's an event that happens half way through the future period of seven years known as the tribulation period. "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:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains." Let me say that again: when you see this thing take place in the middle of the tribulation period. How do we know it

happens in the middle of the tribulation period? Because Daniel talks about it. It says it right there, verse 15, the one Daniel talks about? Daniel says it happens, chapter 9, in the midst of the week. Remember that? So, in the middle of the week and it sounds like that could be any time in the 3rd or 4th year but it's not quite that imprecise because of numbers that are used in Revelation. What kind of numbers? 1,260 days, 42 months, a time, times and half a time. I think 3-4 ways in which he says 3 ½ and 3 ½.

So, when you see this thing that Daniel talks about, then verse 16, “let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains.” Get up and leave. Do you see that? Does everyone see that? Who? Well, those who see this take place in Jerusalem are supposed to leave Judea immediately. Judea is the surrounding area of Jerusalem. Do you all see that? I'm going to put that up here so that we don't forget. Those in Judea flee to the mountains. By the way, where did the Israelites flee to? The wilderness. And what was in the wilderness? A mountain range and one of the mountains was Sinai. So, those in Judea flee into the mountains which Hosea 2 says we should expect that to be in the wilderness.

Let's talk through our lesson for today in Revelation: the woman. Now, these are visions that John has of seven different people in the book of Revelation. There are seven different visions in the book of Revelation. So, let's get to reading and we're going to learn some things about the woman today. The woman. We're going to talk about six things that Revelation 12 says about the woman. Look at verse 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:” Now, I suppose that if you wanted to, you could guess who that is and your guess might be right. But, I don't think that is an exact science. I don't think that's good Bible study. I think we're probably better off to go to the preceding 65 books of the Bible and find out what the sun, moon and stars means.

Joseph, if he had 11 brothers who are 11 stars, what would that make Joseph? The 12th star. So, in Revelation 12, we have a woman who has at least, it seems like it's saying, her origin is with Jacob, Rachel and the 12 sons of Jacob. So, who is the woman? Well, we have a few options. Let me give them to you: it could be Mary. How could it be Mary? Let's just say it's Mary. The Catholics say it's Mary. So, let's imagine if it is Mary for a minute. Let's look at a verse, if we could, in verse 14, “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness,” so we're talking about a literal woman. I'm talking about a literal human being, then she should probably have literal wings. Is that getting zany quick? And she's going to go and hide in the wilderness in verse 14 and we're going to find out that she is there for 3 ½ years. Okay, that's weird. I've got to find a place somewhere in the life of Mary where after she had Jesus, went and hid in the desert somewhere for 3 ½ years. I don't think that's a good guess. Are you all with me?

There is another guess and the truth is that these are guesses. They come from commentaries. These are people that make their money teaching theology, folks, writing books, teaching college. Are you all hearing me? The second guess is: Eve. That's weird. Why would it be Eve? Well, I don't know but the freaky thing about that is that you have

Eve who is enthroned with Jacob, Rachel and the 12 sons of Jacob. I don't know, that doesn't make any sense.

There is a third guess that is pretty well known among commentators. Remember, these are professionals. You know what a professional is? It's someone who gets paid to do what you do for fun, right? So, the church is the third guess. Well, we have a problem because you might notice in verse 5, "She brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations." Well, I have a real problem saying the church brought Christ instead of Christ bringing the church. So that doesn't make any sense.

So, I think that my best guess and I think it's a good best guess, is that the woman is the nation of Israel herself. Now, why? Because I have Genesis telling me that we have the sun, moon and the stars identified and we have a forecast here that God is going to recall Israel out of Israel proper, out of the geographical Israel into the wilderness. I have no reason to believe that John is giving us brand new material. So, number one about the woman: she is identified with Jacob, Rachel and their sons and not just their sons but all of the sons of Jacob.

Look at verses 2-5. Let's find out the second thing about this woman. "She," and we're going to identify her as Israel, "She," Israel, "being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 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. 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. 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." Do we need help identifying who that child is? It's Jesus.

In case you're not convinced, hold your place here and look at chapter 2 and look at verse 26-27. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works," who is speaking? Christ is. How do you know? Because it's written in red. "He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father." So, he says, "The Father has given me the kingdom and I will rule with a rod of iron." He already identified who the man-child was for us ten chapters ago.

So, look at chapter 12 again and I will tell you that this woman who appears to be the result of the sun, moon and stars and is foretold to be Israel drawn into the wilderness, I'm going to say it seems like number two: that this nation of Israel is identified as the human source for Jesus. So, the nation of Israel, the non-Jewish women in the genealogy notwithstanding, the Jewish Israel brought forth Jesus who is to rule all nations.

Now, look at verse 6, "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her," that they should feed her there. Look there, "That they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

There is going to be somebody, a third party, who is going to feed this nation of Israel when she flees into the wilderness and she'll be there a thousand two hundred and threescore days or 3 ½ years. Well, this is okay. Look how easy this synchronizes, folks. Matthew 24, middle of the tribulation period, middle of the week, those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Hosea 2, towards the coming of Christ when Judah and Israel have one king, Israel will be drawn into the wilderness. Okay, is everyone with me so far? I mean, it seems like this is coming together pretty well.

If you look at verse 14, “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle.” We should probably assume that that's aircraft. No, we shouldn't. We should assume that it has something to do with the first time it's found when she fled into the wilderness. Now, let me give you something even crazier, can I do that? Alright, look at the previous chapter. Remember the two witnesses? Let's find out where they died. What city did they die in? (Jerusalem.) Look at verse 8, “And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” This is getting crazy. Wait a minute, so Israel half the way through the tribulation period is going to flee Jerusalem which is known as what? (...) Oh, so at the end of time, Israel is going to leave Egypt again for the wilderness.

So, contextually it seems like but you'd have to get them from Jerusalem to the wilderness somehow. The “they” could be the two witnesses that are feeding them. It could also be, maybe, the 144,000 that could be feeding the nation of Israel in the wilderness. I don't know. But certainly if they are alive in Jerusalem, spiritual Egypt and they're preaching truth and if they're doing Mosaic things like turning water into blood, then they could also do Mosaic things like drop manna on them in the wilderness.

So, she flies into the wilderness. She's leaving Egypt again at the end of time, spiritual Egypt, and going into the wilderness. Probably eastward and we could sit here and talk, “Well, you know in Petra there....” Okay, I got it. I already know there are little cities etched in the cliffs eastward of Israel proper. They are described as fleeing for 3 ½ years into the wilderness so the woman is identified and seems to be the nation of Israel. She is identified as the source of Jesus, the Jewish nation. Of course, Jesus is Jewish. There's no getting around that so it's really hard to be pro-Christian and anti-Jew. Described as fleeing for 3 ½ years into the wilderness.

Now, number next. Look at verses 10-11. “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.” Now, we have a loud voice saying in heaven. We're going to talk a little bit about who that is but whoever it is says that he has brethren that have been accused before the throne. So this is not the woman, it's his brethren. Are you all with me?

Verse 11, “And they,” the brethren, “overcame him,” who? The accuser of the brethren. “They overcame the accuser of the brethren by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” So, why are we reading these verses? Well, why are we reading? Look at verse 7, “And there was war in heaven:

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 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.” That’s interesting right there, isn’t it? We’re going to have a lot to talk about next week.

So, he’s cast out and in the next verse, verse 10, he’s called the accuser of the brethren. I don’t know the connection, maybe it’s just a time connection but we have about the time that the woman flees into the wilderness, the devil is cast out of heaven and so he’s free to do something. Look at verse 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. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman,” he persecuted the Jewish nation, “which brought forth the Christ. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle,” we already read this but I’m going to read it again for context, flow of thought, “that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time,” so 3 ½ years. It says it in two ways: 1,260 days, time, times and half a time. And the serpent was cast out. We’ll stop there for just a moment. We’ll talk here and we’ll just say that the woman is different from the saints. Mike, do you have a question? (...)

Look at verse 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.” Alright, folks, what is Jerusalem known as? Spiritually speaking? Egypt. And the dragon is apparently in some way, chasing the people of Israel out of Egypt. All of them? We’ll talk about that next week. There is apparently a remnant of Jews that flee Egypt for the wilderness again and they do it halfway through the tribulation period and it’s because the dragon is chasing them. The dragon is doing something. What’s happening in Jerusalem where they feel like they have to leave? Matthew 24, the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet.

So, we have this dragon persecuting the woman and he does so with a flood. Okay, where is the dragon about this time? Yeah, he’s on the earth but something is happening in Israel or Judea that’s causing the woman to flee to the wilderness. (..) Yeah, we’re going to talk about it. There is no question that we’re going to talk about what the dragon is doing but know this, the dragon is involved in a place known as Jerusalem also known as spiritual Egypt and he casts out of his mouth a flood. Okay, so we have a flood coming from Egypt. Well, look there, we have old material. Jeremiah 46, the floods of Egypt or the armies of Egypt. Are they really the armies of Egypt? Are they coming from the real Egypt or are they coming from spiritual Egypt? Spiritual. So, we have the armies of the dragon or the armies of a personality that we still have to meet known as the beast, chasing the woman out into the wilderness from Egypt and apparently there are armies involved because coming out of Egypt are armies or a flood. Jeremiah 46 says that it’s the armies of Egypt. I don’t think Jeremiah knew he was going to be talking or prophesying about a far term occurrence that takes place from a spiritual Egypt but, after all, I’ve said probably just about every week in here that prophecy is not transparent in its fulfillment

until it's happening, until it's occurring. Most of the time it's translucent and we're left with best guesses.

Apparently there are armies pursuing the nation of Israel, the people, as they leave their homeland once again, half way through the tribulation period. So, persecuted by the dragon. Lastly, verse 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.” What does that sound like? An earthquake. Have we seen that before? Yes, we have. Let me show you. Look at the end of the witness' testimony. Look at verse 12, “And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither and they ascended up to heaven in a cloud and their enemies beheld them. In the same hour was there a great earthquake and a tenth part of the city fell and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand and the remnant were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven.” Same earthquake? Um, I don't know but I do know that earthquakes happen during this time period and I would be tempted to find out which earthquake mentioned elsewhere in Revelation is quite probably the destroying earthquake of these armies of the antichrist or the armies of the dragon. I'd be interested to know.

Furthermore, I would be interested to know if these angels that are cast out with him in verse 7 and verse 9, his angels are cast out with him and I'd be interested to know if it were human armies or angelic armies or a mix of possessed armies.

Then, verse 17, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed,” so we not only have the woman of the people of Israel but you also have this other body of people. Are you all with me? And I'm saying that I think that this seed, this remnant of her seed, are believers in Christ because she brought the Christ, why not bring the believers into Christ? 144,000 Jews are evangelizing supposedly, right? Two Jewish witnesses are evangelizing, right? It seems like that these are believers in Christ and it's probable that these are also the brethren that are being accused in verses 10-11. I think there are so many parallels that I can with confidence say that somehow there's going to be manna dropping from the sky for them and the people that have a hard time believing that are the same knuckleheads that had a hard time believing it when it was happening in Egypt 3,500 years ago. That's all the blanks you get filled in today.