



Citadel Of Faith Covenant Church

December 21, 2016

A|Ω
ALPHA AND OMEGA

I don't believe in coincidences! The Bible says that the steps of the righteous are ordered in the Lord. (Ps. 37:23). As we have been doing our verse by verse study through the book of Revelation, we turn our gaze to chapter twelve. And on this Wednesday before Christmas, there could not be a more timely Word from the Word! Let's remember some key things we've noticed in Revelation so far. Chapters 1-3 speak of Jesus' communication to the seven churches. Chapter four gives us a bird's eye view of the throne of God. Chapter 5 let's us see the slain lamb opening the book with its seven seals. Chapter six details the opening of the six seals and the accompanying judgments. Chapter seven let's us know about the sealing of the 144,000 (12,000 from the twelve tribes). Chapters eight and nine mention the Tribulation Trumpets and the seventh seal being opened. Chapter ten tells us about the Mighty Angel with the little book. Chapter eleven describes the two tribulation witnesses, the third woe and the seventh trumpet. We now turn to chapter twelve.

Notice Rev. 12:1 opens with the word "a great sign" appeared in heaven. The Greek word for sign, *sēmeion* literally means a mark or a symbol that carries a special meaning or points to something beyond it. Now we've already established the fact that the entire book of Revelation is filled with both symbolism and signs. However, God saw fit to specifically refer to the series of events playing out in the first few verses of Chapter 12 as a great sign. A sign always points to something greater than the sign itself. (Although this has nothing to do with the lesson directly, it's important to note. The reason that we firmly believe in signs and wonders in our church, we are careful in both their explanation and use, not to grieve nor quench the spirit, but to be mindful of many who make the sign the end and forget what the sign points to and that is Jesus!). The first thing that we notice in this first verse of Rev. 12 is a woman, 1) clothed with the sun, 2) with the moon under her feet and 3) a crown of twelve stars on her head. John's vision points to real people or events in history (both past and future). The woman: There are many thoughts of whom people portray her to be, some have called her a heavenly picture of Mary, some have called her the church. But more logically, this is Israel. The reason for this, is because Jesus came forth from Israel, (the church did not birth Christ, nor would this be a reference to Mary seeing that the authority and power given to her would not be in line with any other scriptural depiction of Mary. The moon (the reflection of the glory of the old Testament, the sun the true splendor of the glory of the New Covenant, the twelve stars being the twelve patriarchs and twelve tribes.



Now we turn our attention to what could only be divine providence for us on this Wednesday eve of Christmas. Let's read Rev. 12:2. We see this woman travailing as she was about to give birth to a child. We know that this is a wider symbolism beyond the birth pains of Mary. However, all of civilization was awaiting for the Son of God to be made manifest. Indeed the chosen people of God were travailing in anticipation for His arrival. As we anticipate Christmas in our season of Advent, it reminds us of the saints of old who waited with prayerful anticipation for the arrival of Christ. We now await his second coming and return. But notice what the next verse states. Vs. three introduces a new character, an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten crowns on it's heads. The tail of the dragon swept a third of the stars of heaven out of the sky and flung them to the earth. Then the scriptures says that the dragon stood on front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was to be born (vs. 4). This is full of symbolism. During the time of Christ's birth, Satan placed one of his puppets, King Herod to try to kill Jesus right as He was born. But verse five tells us that after she gave birth to this male child (who would rule all the nations with an iron scepter (Ps. 2:9), and her child was snatched up to God and to His throne. This speaks of Jesus' ascent to heaven to the right hand of God after his completed work at Calvary. But this also speaks to the church (the body of Christ) which is also spared the dragons wrath by being raptured to the throne of God before the Great Tribulation. Through the Satanic plan to destroy both Christ and all that belongs to Him. (John 10:10), it has been thwarted by the power of God to rescue His people. We remember the birth of Jesus. The joy, the promise and the gift that it was and is to our world and lives. However, we often forget the other sets of characters that were not at all pleased with His arrival. Satan (the enormous red dragon), Herod, the Roman government, the religious sects, the anti-Christ's who exist today and those who are far from God. Not only are their plans halted and will fade away because Christ came, fulfilled His purpose, returned to the throne of God and will soon return again. What is sitting at your "womb" waiting to devour what God is birthing through you? Know that God will not allow it to happen! This is the joy of Christmas, indeed that He came, but also, that he overcame the obstacles that tried to block and hinder his coming. If you indeed are a part of the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27), it means that all that happen to Him happens to those of us in Him. He overcame...so will you! That which you are to deliver to the world will not be aborted by Satan's strategy! Merry Christmas...Jesus overcame and so will you!!!

Questions to Ponder

1. How does the word sign give us a different alert to what is to come in the text?
2. What are other scriptural references which could verify that this woman in Rev. 12 is not Mary?
3. How is this "dragon" in heaven (hint read Job)?
4. How does Satan's attempt to destroy Jesus give you perspective about your own journey?
5. How will you celebrate Christmas differently in lieu of what you've learned?