

## Revelation 12.1-17

## “Christmas Conflict”

Time of Great Joy > OTHERS Time of Loneliness, Drunkenness, and Despair  
 Time we Celebrate BIRTH of Savior > MANY a Time of DEATH by SUICIDE

Ch 11 > Top of Spiral Staircase > Vision of Last Day > 7<sup>th</sup> Trumpet Sounds > End  
 Ch 12 > FLASHBACK > *What is behind the Struggle between Church and World?*

Going UP & AROUND Couple More Times > 7 Bowls of Wrath to be Poured Out  
 Chs 12-15 = Scorecard > KEY PLAYERS of Final Battle > 2 Ultimate Enemies

1. Conflict of Christmas 2. Christ of Christmas 3. Confidence of Christmas

## 1. The Conflict of Christmas

Day to EXALT CHRIST > Day to ENRAGE ANTI-CHRIST > “the spirit of the  
 antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world”

1 John 4.3

a. Satan the Accuser – Original Grinch trying to STEAL Christmas

v. 9 “ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray”

v. 10 “accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night”

Devil is Constantly ACTIVE > Day and Night > ‘devil’ (diabolos) = ‘Slanderer’  
 Accused Job- Deceived Eve- Tempted David- Corrupted Saul- Entered Judas Heart

“This name for the evil one would have made a specially strong impact in the first  
 century, for there was a well-known and well-hated figure called the *delator*, the  
 paid informer. He made his living by accusing people before the authorities.”

Leon Morris

## 1) Colossal

vs. 3 & 4 “Then another sign appeared in heaven: *an enormous red dragon*...His  
*tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky* and flung them to the earth.”

Dragon > NATURALLY FRIGHTENING

ENORMOUS > Tail Knocks Stars out of the Sky // RED > Color of DEATH

“Horse...*a fiery red one*. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men *slay each other*” Revelation 6.4

LIKE TERRIFYING BEAST DANIEL SAW “...there before me was a fourth beast--terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.” Daniel 7.7

2) Counterfeit > v. 3 “seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads”  
7 Heads > 7 Crowns > 7 Divine Number > god of Apostate Mankind

“The *god of this age* has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” 2 Corinthians 4.4

“locusts came down upon the earth and were given power like that of scorpions... they have as *king over them the angel of the abyss*” Revelation 9.3,11

10 horns = Strength, Power > Very HARD to KILL > Appears in MANY PLACES

“The Dragon has seven heads, increasing his hideousness...multiple heads symbolize multiple manifestations of a single kingdom. In the same way, Satan manifests his power through multiple channels and in multiple institutions and events. Seven, the number of completeness, suggests the Dragon has extensive power and many manifestations. He aspires blasphemously to imitate the completeness of God.” Vern S. Poythress

v. 7 “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon”

“Michael, the great prince who protects your people” Daniel 12.1  
Michael = “*who is like God?*” > certainly NOT Satan – tho he desperately TRIED

b. Saints under Attack he can’t TOUCH God > so he TROUBLES God’s People

v. 7 “And there was war in heaven.” COSMIC > not Merely Global

1) Past – Old Story > Started in the Garden of Eden > v. 9 “that ancient serpent”

“...the devil...He was a *murderer from the beginning*, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the *father of lies*.” John 8.44

v. 4 “His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth.”

ATTACK ON THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS > Explained by Daniel

“suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between his eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground...It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it *threw some of the starry host down to the earth* and trampled on them.” Daniel 8.5,10

WHAT ARE THESE STARS? THEY ARE GOD’S RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE

“Those who are *wise will shine* like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, *like the stars* for ever and ever.” Daniel 12.3

2) Present > Ancient Spiritual Warfare is an ON-GOING BATTLE

v. 10 “For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.”

Because Satan Lost Crucial Battle > Now launches One Last Assault on Church

v. 13 “When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.”

“Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” 1 Peter 5.8

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy” John 10.10

“the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will” 2 Timothy 2.26

REAL BATTLE > REAL ENEMY > REAL DANGER > Only Refuge is JESUS

3) Future > New Desperation brings a New Intensity

v. 12 “Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that *his time is short.*”

Tired Little Child > Particularly Bad Mood > Rages till FALLS FAST ASLEEP

DANGER of ENEMY > Not because he will WIN > BECAUSE HE LOST!

Jesus tells Disciples > “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.” Luke 10.18,19

## 2. The Christ of Christmas

a. Motherland vs. 1 & 2 “A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant...”

SIGN > word used often in John’s Gospel > SIGNIFICANT PERSON

Who is this Woman? > Obvious Special Distinction and Importance

‘clothed with sun’ = resplendent beauty / ‘moon under her feet’ = authority  
‘crown of 12 stars’ = royal status

“The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” Isaiah 7.14

“As a woman with child and about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in your presence, O LORD.” Isaiah 26.17

"Before she goes into labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she delivers a son. Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is *Zion in labor* than *she gives birth to her children*. Do I bring to the moment of birth and not give delivery?" says the LORD." Isaiah 66.7-9

"But you, Bethlehem...out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. Therefore Israel will be abandoned until *the time when she who is in labor gives birth*...He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD" Micah 5.2-4

Mary? Yes! Sarah? Yes! Eve? Yes! Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob! Peter & Paul TOO!

“She comes standing upon the Old Testament revelation of reflected light and clothed with the New Testament revelation which is as the sun shining in his strength.” Thomas F. Torrance

ONE People of God > Old Testament Israel becomes New Testament Church

“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.” Revelation 21.3

b. Mission > John Telescopes Mission of Jesus into one Phrase

v. 5 “She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.”

From FEEDING TROUGH to THRONE > Annunciation to the Ascension  
CERTAIN VICTORY > Born a King > Mission WILL BE Accomplished

“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; *he is Christ the Lord.*”  
Luke 2.11

Biblical References to Christ’s Work is Unified > Lord Jesus Christ > ALL He Did  
“in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” Colossians 2.9

2-fold Purpose of His Incarnation: Destruction and Deliverance

First: “The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.”  
1 John 3.8

Second: “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”  
Hebrews 2.14,15

DESTROY our Enemy > DELIVER US from FEAR of that ENEMY

v. 4 “The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.”

DESPERATE to DESTROY this Child > Christ’s Birth signaled Satan’s Death

Man named LEGION > "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"  
Mark 5.7

Satan’s Efforts to ‘*devour the child*’ BEGAN right away IN BETHLEHEM  
“Herod... was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under”  
Matthew 2.16

“At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being *tempted by Satan*. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.”  
Mark 1.12,13

“When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him *until an opportune time.*”  
Luke 4.13

ENTIRE LIFE OF JESUS was SATANIC ATTACK

“Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot...”  
Luke 22.3

DEATH was no Foe to HIM WHO HOLDS A ROD OF IRON  
He said to me, "You are my Son ; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter ; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."  
Psalm 2.7-9

ch 12 Theological Heart of Book > In Christ God engages Satan in Holy War

### 3. The Confidence of Christmas

a. Prepared No Creature can Frustrate God’s Eternal Plan of Salvation

v. 6 “The woman fled into the desert to *a place prepared for her by God*, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.”

Enabled to Escape > Sustained by God > PROTECTION & PROVISION  
Wilderness > Place of DELIGHT not DESOLATION > Mt. Sinai HONEYMOON

“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; *make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.*"  
Isaiah 40.1-3

Even PRECISE TIME is Prepared by God > 1260 days > 3 ½ Years > 42 Months  
42 Months > Israelites made 42 Stops as they WANDERED in WILDERNESS  
Symbol for Time BETWEEN First and Second ADVENTS > Church Era

v. 14 “The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the *place prepared for her in the desert*, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.”

GOD FULLY PREPARED THE TRANSPORT > Great Eagle Airlines

10 Plagues of EGYPT never touched People of God: “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how *I carried you on eagles' wings* and brought you to myself.” Exodus 19.4

“those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will *soar on wings like eagles*” Isaiah 40.31

GOD Transported HOLY FAMILY > Woman with Child carrying Son of God Nazareth to Bethlehem> Donkey? Camel? Walk? Eagle’s Wings? Bible SILENT

“when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman” Galatians 4.4

You’re PART of MAGNIFICENT WOMAN > GLORIOUS BRIDE > The Church EVERYTHING is PREPARED for YOU in CHRIST > You Belong to Him

“...the wilderness will rejoice and blossom... say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert...And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it...But only the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.” Isaiah 35.1-10

b. Power > God is ABLE to ACCOMPLISH All He has PREPARED

DRAGON’S SINISTER PLAN THWARTED BY A POWER FAILURE

v. 8 “But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.”

v. 10 “Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come *the salvation and the power and the kingdom* of our God, and the authority of his Christ.”

LOUD, JOYFUL SHOUT > 24 Elders? Mighty Angel? Living Creatures?  
Heaven’s Happy Campers > Lord is on the Throne > Lamb won Victory

ONE LAST DANGEROUS SPEW > An Ordeal through Water

v.15, 16 “Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.”

“Obviously, John uses metaphorical language (the earth has no ‘mouth’), but the truths he communicates through symbols are as real as if they had been told in nonmetaphorical terms.” Bruce Metzger

As Israelites escaped from EGYPT > Water was GREAT DANGER to them  
God who opened Red Sea > Able to Protect and Preserve threatened Church

Near City of Colosse was a RIVER that Plunged BENEATH the Earth

“If the LORD had not been on our side...the raging waters would have swept us away...Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.”

Psalm 124.1,5,8

Troubles on EARTH are TEMPORARY & TRANSIENT > We’re Passing Thru  
Satan is Doing all HARM he can > WHILE HE CAN > UNTIL Final Day Comes

BELIEVERS in EARLY CHURCH Understood This as they PRAYED...

“...Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. *They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.* Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness”

Acts 4.27-29

Christians LIVE OUT the VICTORY that has ALREADY been ACHIEVED  
“his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was *declared with power to be the Son of God* by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 1.3,4

c. Pain > God’s Plan & Power often received THROUGH PAIN

TRIUMPH of the LAMB > Often Achieved through TRAGEDY in His Church  
2 Witnesses – ch 11 > Picture of Church > Faithful unto Death > NO ESCAPE

v. 1 “she *cried out in pain* as she was about to give birth”

Strong Words about the PAIN of this Childbirth > Word for TORTURE is Used  
ANGRY, DEFEATED DRAGON ATTACKS CHURCH

“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are *the beginning of birth pains...*” Matthew 24.6-8

CLOSER and MORE INTENSE PAIN > End is at Hand > Joy of Birth Near

“A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. *So with you:* Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.” John 16.21,22

Christ had Painful DELIVERY > to Achieve a Painful DELIVERANCE

v. 11 “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”

Victory > Not Achieved by our Strength or Goodness > by Blood of the Lamb

“The evil one has been cast out of heaven. His power on earth is terrifyingly real to believers. But it is not because he is triumphant. It is because he knows he is beaten and has but a short time. Let the church take heart. She will have her martyrs, but ultimately triumph is sure.” Leon Morris

“our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed” Romans 13.11

v. 17 “Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring--those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

Even a Huge, Angry Dragon / is NO DANGER to an OBEDIENT CHURCH  
 “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” Romans 8.31-37

## Revelation 12

1. A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.
2. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.
3. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.
4. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.
5. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.
6. The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.
7. And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.
8. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.
9. The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.
10. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.
11. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.
12. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."
13. When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.
14. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.
15. Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.
16. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.
17. Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring--those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.