

LESSON 20

THE LORD'S EVERLIVING CHURCH.



INTRODUCTION: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not

having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish..
(Ephesians 5:25-27)

God loves His Church so much. He protects her as the Husband who protects his wife from danger. Evil may exist, troubles may arise, but the Lord will always have the faithful ones through whom He will work for the salvation of souls. Let's turn to Revelation chapter 12, beginning at verse 1.

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:**

A woman symbolizes the church.(Jer 6:2,GC88 380.3). A pure woman(Rev 12) symbolizes God's true Church, and an apostate woman(Rev 17) symbolizes a false church.

The sun-the light, represents God's word, the

Bible(Ps 119:105), the moon reflects the light(the word of God) of the sun. Thus, the verse shows **the Church of God when it was covered or clothed with the written Bible**, and the moon under her feet **points to the period from creation to Moses**, when there was no written Bible(the sun), when the word was indirectly(not directly as done the sun -the written Bible) transferred to God ' s people. Being under her feet shows that this period was passing.

“During the first twenty-five hundred years of human history, **there was no written revelation**. Those who had been taught of God, communicated their knowledge to others, and **it was handed down from father to son, through successive generations**. The preparation of the written word **began in the time of Moses.**”(GC v.2)

The crowns symbolize “authority” or “rulership”, while the stars are God ' s ministers, messengers or leaders(compare Rev 1:20,GW 13), thus the “crown

of twelve stars” points to the Church leadership or the ministry invested with God’s authority, first the 12 patriarchs, then the 12 apostles, and finally the 12,000 from each tribe making up the 144,000.

Verse 2: “ And she **being with child** cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”

This woman(the church), we see, was ready to bring into the world Christ the Redeemer. (verse 5). Thus she represents the **EVERLIVING Church of God both in the Old and New Testaments**, though at this particular time she points to the Jewish Church in which Christ was born.

Verse 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.**”

The great red dragon is “the Devil, and Satan” (verse 9). The numbers 7 and 10 indicate

“completeness”(AA 585) and “universality”(Dan 2:33) respectively. Since heads represent “**religious bodies**”(Rev 17:9,Isa 56:7) and horns “**civil bodies**”(Dan 7:24), then 7 heads represent the entirety of religious bodies around the time when Christ was about to be born, and 10 horns are all civil powers at that same time. Since these are all on the dragon(Satan) **at the same time**, not one following the other, then it shows that Satan had control over them. And as crowns(civil authority) are on the heads and not on the horns, then it not only shows that the church was using civil arm to enforce her dogmas, but also that she had become the rod of Satan. Thus the whole Jewish Church had apostatized.

Verse 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.**”

Stars here represent the angels who followed Satan, for he “**cast them to the earth.**” By using his tail instead of the head, it shows that **they voluntarily followed him, he never forced them, neither did he forcefully took them from the hand of God.**

“Satan in his rebellion took a third part of the angels. **They turned from the Father and from His Son, and united with the instigator of rebellion.**”(3T 114.2)

When he cast his angels to this earth, his agenda was to prevent the plan of Redemption. So he wanted to kill the “man child” Christ Jesus as soon as he was born. We read, “Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, 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..”(Matthew 2:16)

Since Satan wanted to kill the baby Jesus through

the Roman leader, Herod, then “..while the dragon, primarily, represents Satan, **it is, in a secondary sense, a symbol of pagan Rome.**”(GC88 438.2)

Verse 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.**”

Christ was born, he finished his mission and ascended up to heaven.

Verse 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.**”

It was not until after Christ’s ascension that the Church fled into the wilderness from the vineyard, **for the vineyard is the opposite of the wilderness.** And as the vineyard represents “**the house of Israel**”, Palestine,(Isaiah 5:7), then **the wilderness**

represents the gentile lands away from Palestine. Thus the Christian church run into the gentle lands, there to be fed during the same time when the two witnesses prophesied “...**a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth..**” (Revelation 11:3), yes, it was during the 1260 prophetic days, from 538AD to 1798AD.

Verse 7-9: “ **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..**”

It will be noticed that there are two “castings” of Satan brought to view in this Chapter. The first one in verse 3 and 4 took place **before Christ came into**

the world and the second one of verse 9 took place **after Christ came and went back to heaven.** The latter was as a result of the “war in heaven”. Thus it is safe to conclude that although Satan was first cast out of heaven when he first sinned, **yet he wasn’t completely cast out until just after the death of Christ.** He had opportunity to go to heaven in the Old testament(Job 1:6,2:1), but when he slew the son of God, in company with his angels, then **“neither was their place found any more in heaven.”**(verse 8). We can see this further in the scriptures that follow, referring to what happened just after he was cast out.

Verse 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.** 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..”

“ The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are ‘accepted in the Beloved.’ Ephesians 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified....Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.”(DA 834.3,761.2)

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..”

Thus all sinless beings who dwell in the “heavens” of the unfallen worlds are to rejoice because Satan’s work has been restricted to this earth alone. He can no longer visit heaven or the unfallen worlds. But woe to the inhabitants of this earth, for the earth has become the **homeland** of Satan to execute his plans of deception and destruction. His time is short.

Verse 13: “And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the **woman** which brought forth the man child.”

This also proves that Satan was completely cast down to this earth immediately after the death of Christ, for when “he saw” that he was cast down, then he started persecuting the Church. We read “**And at that time there was a great persecution**

against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.”
(Acts 8:1)

Verse 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.”

Thus, we see that it was because of the persecution at Jerusalem(in the vineyard) that the Church fled(with symbolic eagle’s wings) to the wilderness (the gentle lands), there to be nourished for a time,and times, and half a time, or 1260 years. Verse 6 and verse 14 are referring to the same event and the same time period.

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.”

Having fled into the wilderness, the church wanted to be rescued from Satan. But Satan followed her even in the wilderness, this time not necessarily to “persecute” her by killing her faithful Christians, **but to cause her to be carried away with the flood.** Like the waters, The flood represents “ **peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.**” (Revelation 17:15), and the fact that this flood came **from the devil’s mouth** shows these people were “**unrighteous**”, “**the tares**”. This Satan did because he realized that in persecuting the Christians, he was not achieving his goal of removing the people and truth of God from the earth. The more he killed the Christians, the more they increased in numbers. He understood that “If you can’t beat them, join them”.

“In vain were Satan's efforts to destroy the church of Christ by violence. The great controversy in which the disciples of Jesus yielded up their lives, did not cease when these faithful

standard-bearers fell at their post. **By defeat they conquered. God's workmen were slain, but his work went steadily forward.** The gospel continued to spread, and the number of its adherents to increase...Said a Christian, expostulating with the heathen rulers who were urging forward the persecution: **‘You may torment, afflict, and vex us. Your wickedness puts our weakness to the test, but your cruelty is of no avail. It is but a stronger invitation to bring others to our persuasion. The more we are mowed down, the more we spring up again. The blood of the Christians is seed.’**...Satan therefore laid his plans to war more successfully against the government of God, by planting his banner in the Christian church. If the followers of Christ could be deceived, and led to displease God, then their strength, fortitude, and firmness would fail, and they would fall an easy prey.”(GC88 41,42.2)

Thus he purposed to weaken the spirituality of the church by planting the tares, the unconverted among

the righteous. So “...**while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.**”(Matthew 13:25). It is for this reason that the Church of God has been in a “**lukewarm**” condition, unable to fulfill God’s mission on earth. And,

“If the presence of one Achan was sufficient to weaken the whole camp of Israel, can we be surprised at the little success which attends our efforts when every church and almost every family has its Achan?.”(5T 157.1).

Israel of old failed to conquer a very small city of Ai because they “**sinned...and transgressed**” the Lord’s covenant when Achan took of the accursed thing(Jos 7), and the Israel of today will certainly fail to conquer **if similar sins and people exist in her midst**. But the Lord is faithful and He will do justice to His church by speaking “...comfortably unto her. And 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.”(Hosea 2:14-15)

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.”

Here we are admonished that though the Church has been in this lukewarm condition for many years, there’s **“a door of hope”** given to her, **to have her rescued from her condition.**

Regarding the swallowing up of the flood, the Bible has given a clear explanation of what it means...

“And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: **And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up,** and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit,

and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.. ”

(Numbers 16:31-33, see also Num 26:10, Deut 11:6)

Evidently, then, the swallowing up of the flood is the doing away with the tares, the unconverted in the church.

“And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and **smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house..**”(Ezekiel 9:5-6)

Since these words will be **literally fulfilled**, let none deceive themselves but understand that “Angels keep a faithful record of every man's work, and **as judgment passes upon the house of God**, the sentence of each is recorded by his name, and

the angel is commissioned to spare not the unfaithful servants, but to cut them down at the time of slaughter..”(1T 197.1)

When this “**mighty sifting**” takes place, Then it is that “God will have a people, pure and true.”(5T 80). Then it is that it shall be said of her “ ... **henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean..”(Isaiah 52:1)** and also that “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand **in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.**”(Psalm 1:5)

Verse 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.**”

The Purification of the Church(the woman) will surely make her “ **a burdensome stone for all people.**”(Zech 12:3) and Satan will be defeated for the third time. He was defeated when he failed to

devour the child, he was defeated in the war that took place in heaven, and finally he will be defeated by failing to destroy the woman with the flood, the tares. Having seen that he can no longer war against the church, he will be wroth with her (with those who remain after the purification, the remnants primarily), but he will go to make war with the remnant (the gentiles who are left, yet to be saved) of the woman's seed, and as the final message goes forth proclaiming **“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues..”** (Revelation 18:4) **“From ‘every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people’ there will be some who will gladly respond to the message, ‘Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.’** They will turn from every idol that binds them to earth, and will ‘worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’ They will free themselves from every entanglement and will stand before the world as monuments of God's mercy. **Obedient to the divine**

requirements, they will be recognized by angels and by men as those that have kept ‘ the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’ Revelation 14:6, 7, 12.”(PK 299.3)

Thus, even though the dragon has been warring against the Church of God throughout history, **especially against the Seventh Day Advent Church, the very last or remnant church of the the Christian church**, yet his war will surely culminate in the last great crisis, during the mark of the beast period and while the work of the gospel is heading to its close. It is this act of destroying the tares in the church that will make the church **as a whole to faithfully “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”**

Then it is that **“Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. ‘Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners’ (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the**

world, conquering and to conquer.”(PK 725.2)

**THIS IS HER ONLY STRENGTH, HER ONLY
HOPE AND HER ONLY DELIVERANCE.**