

Revelation 12: The Woman, the Dragon, and the Seven Kingdoms

Revelation 12:1–6 | Sunday, March 19 | Revelation Series

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OVERVIEW

Hal comes back to Revelation 12 to identify its two characters before he does anything else with the chapter. The woman is read out of Genesis 37, where Jacob interprets his son's dream for us — the sun is the father, the moon the mother, the eleven stars the brothers — so the woman crowned with twelve stars is Israel, and not the Church, since the Church did not give birth to Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ gave birth to the Church. Her labor and pain are the nation suffering to remain a nation at all. The dragon the chapter identifies for itself. Then Hal takes the long way round to the dragon's seven heads, turning to Revelation 17 and the harlot who sits on seven mountains — Rome, he says, the one city that was reigning when John wrote — and to the seven kingdoms behind those heads: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, media Persia, Greece, Rome, and a revived Rome he calls Roman Empire, phase two. He closes back in chapter 12 with the dragon's tail, a third of the stars, and the woman's 1,260 days.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 12:1–2 — The great sign: the woman clothed with the sun, in labor to give birth

Revelation 12:3–4 — Another sign: the great red dragon; his tail sweeps away a third of the stars

Revelation 12:5–6 — The male child caught up to God; the woman nourished for 1,260 days

Revelation 12:9 — The dragon identified — the serpent of old, called the devil and Satan

Genesis 37:9–11 — Joseph's dream, and Jacob's own interpretation of the sun, moon and stars

Revelation 17:7–9 — The mystery of the woman and the beast; the seven heads are seven mountains

Revelation 17:18 — The woman is the great city which is reigning over the kings of the earth

Isaiah 14:12–16 — Where Hal sends the group to read about the fall of Lucifer

Ezekiel 28 — The other passage on the fall of Lucifer

KEY TERMS

Interlude — one of the chapters that steps out of the chronological sections to give the background and the future of the main players

Allos — another of the same kind — the Greek word behind the second sign

Heteros — another of a different kind

Mystery Babylon — the harlot of Revelation 17, the great mother of harlots, whom Hal identifies as Rome

The seven mountains — the seven hills the woman sits on — in John's day, one city only

Roman Empire, phase one — Hal's name for the historical Roman Empire — the sixth kingdom, the one that "is" when John writes

Roman Empire, phase two — the revived Roman Empire of ten nations — the seventh kingdom, which remains only a little while

A biblical year — a lunar year of 360 days, which makes 1,260 days three and a half years

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer from the message itself. Every answer is in the teaching.

1. Why does Hal say the book of Revelation was deliberately written in symbols?

2. What is Hal's method for decoding the symbols?

3. How does Genesis 37 identify the woman?

4. Why does Hal reject the reading that makes the woman the Church?

5. What are the woman's labor and pain a picture of?

6. Who is the great red dragon, and where does the chapter say so?

7. Why, in Hal's account, are people so easily deceived?

8. Which city is the woman of Revelation 17, and what is Hal's reason?

9. How did Hal first see this himself?

10. What are the seven kingdoms, and what do they have in common?

11. In John's day, where in that list was the sixth kingdom, and what is the seventh?

12. How long are the 1,260 days, and where do they fall?

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Hal says the symbols were written so that only sincere Christians could read them. What does that suggest about how this book should be studied?

2. The woman's labor is a nation suffering simply to remain a nation. Where have you seen God's purposes carried by people who were only enduring?

3. "The Church did not give birth to Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ gave birth to the Church." Why does the order matter?

4. Hal says a person without spiritual life simply cannot perceive spiritual things, and that this has nothing to do with intelligence. How should that change the way you talk with someone who does not believe?

5. He remembers a travel poster in a window answering a question he had been chewing on all week. Has an answer ever arrived for you like that?

6. Six kingdoms have come and gone and a seventh remains only a little while. What does that do to how permanent the present order feels?

MEMORY VERSE

"A great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."

— Revelation 12:1, as Hal reads it in this message