Revelation Twenty-Three **11/8/2026**

Hymns: 1 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God 11 How Great Thou Art
38 Fairest Lord Jesus

Scripture: Psalm 2; Psalm 110; Psalm 37:9-17
Big idea: Defeated Foe Surfaces

Today, we enter a section containing some of the most graphic and puzzling imagery in the Bible. But before we do, let's get our bearings by briefly recapping what we've covered so far in the book of Revelation:

The Revelation of Jesus Christ is just that. The apostle John describes events centered around Jesus Christ as He is in glory. The account includes letters from Jesus to seven representative churches encouraging, instructing, and correcting them. Jesus then calls John in the spirit to the place of God's throne in heaven where he sees cherubim, other angels, elders, God the Father, and God the Son.

John describes Jesus as the only one worthy to take a seven-sealed scroll from God the Father and begin to open it. Each seal unleashed a judgment. The first four represented by the white, red, black, and pale horses signifying respectively the conquering Antichrist, war, famine, and death of one-fourth of man and beast. Many who trust the LORD during this time called the Tribulation will be martyred as highlighted with the opening of the fifth seal. The sixth seal unleashed chaos in heaven and earth as God pours out His wrath.

Opening the seventh seal kicks off the trumpet judgments. The first four include – devastating destruction of one-third of sea life, water purity, ships, sun, moon, and stars. The fifth and sixth trumpets unleash demons from the earth which torment and then kill one-third of mankind.

In chapter ten we took a break from the judgments as the apostle John returned to earth and received a commission to pen the second half of the book of Revelation.

Chapter eleven opens with John sizing up the new temple in Jerusalem
and ends with description of another Ark of the Covenant located in a newly revealed temple in heaven. In between, we find the LORD's **two witnesses** – breathing fire and working miracles. Notice the principle it takes **two witnesses** to establish a matter (Deuteronomy 19:15). These witnesses brought plagues upon the earth for three-and-a-half *years*, eventually were killed, and their bodies were displayed for three-and-a-half *days* by the wicked world ruler called the beast. To the shock and horror of evil earth-dwellers, God then resurrected their bodies and took them to heaven. When the seventh and final trumpet of judgment sounded, the elders in heaven broke out in praise to God and Jesus Christ who will take over rule when this time of judgment soon completes.

Which bring us to our passage for today. As we read, see if you can identify:
Who is the great wonder in heaven, the woman?
Who is her child?
Who is another wonder in heaven, the great red dragon?

Revelation 12

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[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:
[2] And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.
[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.
*[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.*
[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.
[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.
[7] And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
*[8] And prevailed not; neither was **their** place found any more in heaven.*
*[9] 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.*

Revelation 12

[1] And

This verse like most of the verses in Revelation starts with the word *And* to indicate a link to what proceeded it. We have just seen the temple in heaven.

there appeared

John continues to faithfully share what he sees.

a great

The Greek word here is *mega.*

wonder

That is, an important symbol.

in heaven;

Which heaven?

The atmosphere,
outer space,
or the place of God's throne?
Let's see.

a woman

We will assume everyone understands the meaning of *woman.*

clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

This phrase is highly symbolic. To understand it, we need to go back to:

Genesis 37

[9] And he [Joseph] *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.

[10] And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, 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?

Joseph's father Jacob understood the dream to represent:

Jacob → sun
Rachel → moon
Brothers → eleven stars

Of course, our verse has twelve stars. The difference being Joseph was the twelfth son. Also recall, God renamed Jacob to *Israel* (Genesis 32:28).

[2] And she

the woman

being with child

that's one of the capabilities that people over the centuries believe marks a woman.

cried,

Why did she cry?

travailing in birth,

She was about to give birth to a child.

and pained to be delivered.

Labor pains accompany birth since the curse (Genesis 3:16).

[3] And there appeared

John proceeds describing in sequence his vision.

another wonder

A second very important symbol.

in heaven;

That is outer space (where the moon and stars are).

and behold

Look what John sees.

a great,

As with the woman, this next thing is also great.

red

The Greek word here *pyrrhos (πυρρός)* refers to a **fiery red** or **flame** color. It's also used in:

Revelation 6

> *[4] And there went out another horse that was **red**:*
> *and power was given to him that sat thereon to*
> ***take peace from the earth**,*
> *and that they should **kill one another**:*
> *and there was given unto him a **great sword**.*

dragon,

a large reptilian beast with legs. This term identifies a particular person in Revelation Who is this person? Sit tight. The Bible gives answer in today's passage.

having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

This also seems highly symbolic with *seven* often referring to completeness. Revelation describes a **very similar** but **not identical** beast in Revelation 13:1 and Revelation 17:3; 8-12. That similarity though allows us to gain insight into their common symbols.

> *Heads* likely symbolize successive Gentile world kingdoms (Revelation 17:10).
> *Horns* likely symbolize kings over those kingdoms (Revelation 17:12).
> *Crowns* may just emphasize the kings' ruling authority.

[4] And his tail

Whose tail? The dragon's tail. But who is this dragon? Let's read on.

drew the third part of the stars of heaven,

Could these be literal stars?
Could they be one-third of the ones in the woman's crown?
Or something else?

*and did **cast** them to the earth:*

This rules out literal stars since one star alone would burn up the earth. Pay attention to that word *cast.* It is a key to link what's described in verses 7–9 to understand the timing of this event.

and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered,

...like a predator waiting and watching it's prey.

for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

The dragon wants to destroy the child of the woman at birth.

*[5] And she brought forth a **man** child,*
She gave birth to a boy.

*who was to rule all nations with **a rod of iron**:*
The following Messianic Psalm tells us who this child is:
Psalm 2
[6] ...I [God] *set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*
[7] I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me,
***Thou art my Son**;*
this day have I begotten thee.
[8] Ask of me,
*and **I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance**,*
and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
*[9] **Thou shalt break them***
***with a rod of iron**;*
thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

This child clearly is the Son of God, the LORD Jesus Christ who came from the seed of David who came from the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel).

and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.
Notice the 33-year jump in time: from birth to resurrection.
After Jesus died on the cross, and was buried, He rose again the third day (I Corinthians 15:4) and went to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19).

[6] And the woman
The one who gave birth to the Messiah was the seed of Israel.

fled into the wilderness,
Matthew 24 Jesus said:
[15] When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation [the Antichrist], *spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, ...*
[16] Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Some speculate this place could be the highly fortified rock-hewn city of Petra about 100 miles southeast of Jerusalem in today's southern Jordan.

[21] For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.
We did not invent the expression *great tribulation.* Jesus coined it right here.

where she hath a place prepared of God,
God will have prepared a place of refuge for these Israelites.

that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

There's that three-and-a-half years number again. Notice how the narrative skipped from the time of Christ on the earth to this future time of the Great Tribulation.

[7] And there was war in heaven:
When did this war occur? Let's see.

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
The scene has Michael and his angels pitted against the dragon and his angels.

[8] And prevailed not;
The dragon and his angels were no match for Michael and his angels.

*neither was **their** place found any more in heaven.*
The dragon and his angels lost their home in heaven.

*[9] And the great dragon was **cast out**,*
He was thrown out of heaven.

that old serpent,
This refers to the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1).

called the Devil,
So the dragon is none other than the devil.

and Satan,
Satan means adversary.

which deceiveth the whole world:
Satan is a deceiver (v. 9). Jesus said, *...he is a liar and the father of lies* (John 8:44).

*he was **cast out***
To where?

into the earth,
He was thrown out of heaven and into the earth.

*and his angels were **cast out** with him.*
These fallen angels now have the name demons.

Let's summarize our findings. The woman is Israel. Her child is Jesus the Savior. The great red dragon is Satan. Michael and his angels (the good guys) fought against Satan and his angels (the bad guys) and won. When Satan was cast out of heaven to the earth, he took one third of the angels of heaven with

him. We call Satan's angels demons.

The other thing to understand here is the chronology. Revelation seems chronological for the bulk of the book. But look at what happens here. Following the seventh trumpet of the future Tribulation in chapter 11, John begins chapter 12 (v. 1) with Israel giving birth to Jesus Christ. That happened over 2000 years ago. Clearly, he shifted the narrative from chronological to **historical/topical**.

Verse 4 describes the dragon's tail casting a third of the stars – a symbol for angels in Revelation 1:20 – from heaven to earth. As we shall see, this event likely happened before the Garden of Eden.

But the latter part of verse 4 returns to Christ's birth to when Satan tried to destroy the Christ child but failed. Recall King Herod ordered all children two years old and younger in the area near Bethlehem killed (Matthew 2:16).

Verse 5 proceeds from Jesus' birth to allude to the time after the Tribulation when Christ will rule all nations. It then returns to Jesus' time on earth to give an account of the final acts of His adult life: rising from the dead in a perfected body and sitting on His throne in heaven.

Verse 6 moves forward again beyond our time to the future Tribulation to when a remnant from Israel will be protected and preserved through the Great Tribulation for 1,260 days.

Then comes verse 7. Most commentators believe time proceeds forward here without a shift and the war in heaven occurs during the time of the Great Tribulaton. That would mean that Satan is still in heaven today!

They argue this from Job 1:6 and 2:1, where Satan appears before God. But notice Satan's own explanation of where he came from: *"From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it"* (Job 1:7; 2:2). He came from the earth! Job never says Satan came down from heaven or was physically residing there. Especially in this day of teleconferencing, it's not hard to envision that appearing before God does not necessarily require physical presence in the third heaven.

Jesus also spoke of the fall of Satan during his earthly ministry, "*I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*" (Luke 10:18). The same passage (Luke 10:17-18) also links demons to Satan. The bottom line, the best timeline for Revelation 12:7-9 jumps backward to before the Garden of Eden to place the fall of Satan and subsequent war in heaven to that early time.

Application
In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, we first met Satan in chapter 3, verse 1. In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, we will not finish hearing of him until the third chapter from the end (Revelation 20:10). In the intervening period, Satan has wreaked havoc on the earth. The good news is God will put an end to all of this evil. A week ago yesterday, we observed another Halloween – a celebration of death. Satan started this death cycle. Jesus will finally end it. We can rejoice He has conquered the grave and given those who simply accept His free gift of grace eternal life with Him.

Benediction

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen (Revelation 22:21).

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