

Advent is also about a woman, a child and a dragon!

Revelation 12 introduces us to two characters: a woman and a dragon.

John says to us: "A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman ..." Who is this woman? Listen to her description. "Clothed with the sun" - she is glorious. "With the moon under her feet" - this implies dominion and rule. "A crown of twelve stars on her head" - twelve is John's expression for the people of God.

What else are we told about the woman? "She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth" (vs 3). "She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre" (vs 5). The "iron sceptre" image comes from Psalm 2. There, the One who rules the nations is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the child to be born is the Messiah.

She and her male-Child is threatened by the devil and fled into the desert where she was protected by God. Who is this woman? Who else fled into the desert, to a place prepared for her by God? Israel. Remember the twelve stars in her crown? Twelve, John's number for the people of God. How does the Old Testament describe the faithful people of God? As a woman in labour (Is 54:1-5; 66:7-8). It is obvious. The woman is Mother Israel; we are talking about the seed of the woman from whom the Messiah comes; the woman is the church of God, elect and glorious. This woman, this mother, is gloriously clothed with the sun, moon, and stars. We must always exalt the church - in our love, our talk and our thoughts.

(Rev 12:4) 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.

Do you see what the Devil is doing? The Devil is trying to stop the Messiah's coming. Does he succeed? Of course not! The dragon's dangerous plot is blocked with instant haste. Listen to how John puts this:

(Rev 12:5) She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.

The life, suffering, and exaltation of Christ are summarized in this one verse: born, snatched up to God and shares his throne.

The dragon was there waiting for the baby to be born, like a lion waiting to leap on its prey. But before it could act, Christ saved his people and was glorified with divine power in heaven. The dragon looks so powerful and frightening, but he is pathetic and helpless. He can do nothing to the Child. Satan has no power over the Messiah.

Once the Messiah was born, Satan tried to stop his work:

-Who can forget wicked King Herod and all the slaughtered baby boys of Bethlehem? But baby Jesus was kept safe from Satan's attack.

-When Jesus started his ministry, he came to Jesus in the wilderness and tempted Jesus to gain a Kingdom without the cross.

-Satan came to Jesus in the darkness and loneliness of Gethsemane and his goal was to stop the Messiah's work.

Evil was at work throughout the history of salvation. There is hostility between the seed of the woman (Jesus) and the evil one. Again and again Satan tries to stop God's salvation plan through Israel's Christ - our Saviour.

Again and again, Satan tries to prevent the Messiah's work.

Again and again and again, Satan is blocked.

Today the woman - the Church of Jesus, is still under attack.

The Christ is in authority in heaven under the protection of the glorious power of God's very throne. Yet we experience the brunt of evil's frustration and of his hatred.

And again he will be stopped.

Everyday Jesus remains victorious. And on his day of return his iron sceptre will shatter his enemies like pottery.

Again and again the enemy will attack!

And again and again the enemy will fail!

Again and again the enemies of the church and of our Lord will be judged and purged.

Rev 12 : 10 11:

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.

*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony.*