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Revelation Today / Prophecy / Revelation 12

Who does the enemy hate and persecute today? How is the remnant of God described?

A frozen ship

In 1775 a three-masted English trading ship called the Octavius, was discovered by the whaler Herald drifting among the icebergs west of Greenland in the remote North Arctic Ocean. Believed to be a derelict ship, the five-man boarding party found the entire crew of 28 below deck: dead, frozen, and almost perfectly preserved. The captain was found frozen in position at his desk pen in hand as he was making his last entry in the logbook. Evidently, the Octavius had left England for the Orient in 1761, and successfully arrived at its destination the following year. The captain gambled on a return through the treacherous and then little-known Northwest Passage, with the unfortunate result of trapping the vessel in sea ice north of Alaska. Ironically, the Octavius had made the Northwest Passage posthumously. The crew was all found, some in their hammocks and some in the cabin frozen to death. Incredibly, the last date entered in in the logbook showed that that vessel had been moving among the icepack for thirteen years. “a drifting sepulchre, manned by a frozen crew.” **This is not very different from many churches out there today. Everyone stuck in position on a cold ship going nowhere.**

[Matthew 24:11-14](#) And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 **But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.**

Q: How does Jesus through John the revelator, present to us the true, faithful church of God in the last days?

The Woman as a symbol of God's people

Until revelation 12, the revelator had been shown the history of the church, from his time to the time of the end. He saw that the church would go through many challenges. However, from Revelation chapter 12 on wards, we are shown the final events pertaining to the church in the last days of earth's history. The curtain is drawn back. And now, the church of God, the true church is given a special focus.

Q: What will the last scene of earth's history look like for God's people.

Revelation 12:1-2 NKJV

¹ Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. ² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

Revelation 12:5 NKJV

⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

- John was not actually looking at a woman, but rather a symbol for something.
- *In Bible prophecy, God's church is symbolized by a pure woman ([Jeremiah 6:2](#)). [Eph. 5:25](#); [Isaiah 54:5](#). Furthermore, this woman is pure and beautiful - like Solomon's wife [Song. 6:10](#).*
- ***This woman cannot be Mary - because this is a persecuted woman, she flees in the desert and is nourished there for 1,260 years (v.9)***
- *In [Revelation 12](#), this woman is clothed with the sun, moon, and stars--Jesus told the church, "Ye are the light of the world." [Matthew 5:14](#). We reflect the greater light (Jesus' light).*
- *The sun represents the light of Jesus ([Psalms 84:11](#) "11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly;" [Malachi 4:2](#)). The moon under her feet represents the types and shadows of the Old Testament sacrificial system. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so the sacrificial system was helpful because it reflected the light of the Messiah to come ([Colossians 2:16, 17](#); [Hebrews 10:1](#)). The 12 stars above her head symbolize the leadership of the church--12 tribes in the Old Testament and 12 apostles in the New Testament. The one who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron is Jesus ([Psalms 2:7-9](#); [Revelation 19:13-16](#)).*

So, what is this all about: John is looking at God's people through the ages. What is it that we can learn in here?

This symbol of a woman runs throughout the Bible. The woman is the mother of all races [Gen 3:20](#). This is whom the seed must pass through ([Gen 3:15](#)). The imagery here also reminds us of [Gen. 37](#), where Joseph had a dream where the sun, moon, and stars are represented as the family of Israel.

Interestingly this woman is pregnant and she's in pain:

According to Jacques Doukhan, in the "Jewish traditions childbirth symbolizes the Messianic hope."

We see the anticipation of the redeemer-child ever since Adam and Eve sinned because a promise was made that there would be a seed of the woman to come.

LINK: However, all would not be well with this woman.

The Woman would be persecuted.

Revelation 12:3 NKJV

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

Q: Well, who is the dragon? We don't have to go very far. Notice, v. 9.

[Revelation 12:9](#) (NKJV)

"So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan..."

The child would be persecuted

Revelation 12:4-5 NKJV

⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. ⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

His tail: Note, [Isaiah 9:14-15](#)

I can only imagine, John's reaction to this scene: Together we are reminded:

Ever since the beginning, the evil one worked through the serpent to seduce the woman into sinning. After the fall, God intervenes and promises humans that He will help. A promise is made for a deliver.

Genesis 3:15 NKJV

¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”

- Ever since this declaration - Satan has been fearful of the one to come and has been looking in anticipation so he could kill the infant as soon as it was born. You remember that even in the times of Moses that Satan tried to kill the first born of Egypt hoping to kill the deliver.

Satan was worried ever since that promise was made that he will be defeated. Now, when the fullness of time came, Jesus entered the world. As soon as He was born, the devil, worked through human agents, trying to kill Jesus prematurely (see [Luke 4:13, 28-30](#); [John 7:30; 8:59](#)).

Revelation 12:6 NKJV

⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

The woman would be persecuted. Seeing that he failed to kill Jesus - he turns now to the followers of Christ with great fury.

The battles that you fight in life are not just your battles. Your challenges, are not yours alone. In every battle you fight - Satan is trying in one way or another to take you from Christ and if does not succeed, he will try to crush you.

However, John would like to pause right here and tell us something important. And that is, this battle started long time ago. It is not just between the enemy and the church but it's ultimately a battle against Jesus Christ. And through the church, His bride, He seeks to hurt Jesus.

[Revelation 12:7-12](#)

Revelation 12:7-12 NKJV

⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon was

cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God, day and night, has been cast down. ¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

Notice friends

1. This war began in heaven
 - a. Michael (which is another name of Jesus in battle) has been fighting with Satan before the world was created.
2. However, we are told that [Rev. 12:9](#) “...the great dragon was cast out...” **When was that?** Can I suggest that this was recent? I will come back to that.
3. The good news in this passage is that “Salvation is assured.” The Bible says [Rev. 12:10](#) “...the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.” **When was that?** We will come back to that.
4. Furthermore, **Victory is assured**, notice [Rev. 12:11](#) “...they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” **So God’s people will win at last.**
 - a. **HALLELUJAH??**
5. **However, in the meantime, we are told** [Rev. 12:12](#) “...Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.””

So, when was He cast out? If we put v.19 and v.12 together, we can better understand the significance implied especially to those living in the last days.

I would like to suggest that this war began in heaven to begin with:

Isaiah 14:12-15 NKJV

¹² “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! ¹³ For you have

said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' ¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

[Ezekiel 28:15-18](#) (NKJV)

¹⁵ You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. ...O covering cherub.

Wickedness was found in him, and its origin is irrational, however, it was found in him. He fought against God and God cast him out of heaven.

However, notice [Job 1:6-12](#)

Job 1:6-10 NKJV

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it." ⁸ Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?" ⁹ So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰ Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land.

Did Satan have access to heaven after he was thrown out of heaven? YES.

So, his casting out was not a complete one yet... right? Further evidence...

Zechariah 3:1-2 NKJV

¹ Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. ² And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! *Is* this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

Only at the cross was he cast out for good. Completely. Never again to have access to heave.

John 12:31 NKJV

³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

Luke 10:18 NKJV

¹⁸ And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Ever since Jesus claimed back the dominion of earth, ever since He defeated Satan on the cross, Satan is “now CAST OUT.” NOW we can sing and shout:

Revelation 12:10 NKJV

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

HALLELUJAH - Now we can overcome Satan. The blood of Jesus has paved the way for you and for me. Now we can sing and shout!!

Now we can rejoice. Now we can look forward with certainty that tomorrow will be brighter and better because in Jesus we are victorious.

However, the triumph over evil has not changed the face of the earth - Jacques Doukhan.

SATAN PERSUES THE CHURCH Pt. 2

Notice what History tells us. However, now let’s look at History with Hope because we now know the end of the story for the faithful.

Revelation 12:13–16 NKJV

¹³ Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*. ¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵ So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

Like the ancient Israelites, the church founded finds itself in the desert and nourished by the hand of God (12:6, 14). The eagle’s wings ([Revelation 12:10](#); cf. [EX.19:4](#)) and the earth that in engulfs the enemy ([Rev. 12:16](#); cf. [Exod. 15:12](#)) both refer to the exodus event when the Israelites were still flying Egypt and were being tracked down by the Egyptian army. - Jacques Doukhan.

HOW IS SATAN WORKING NOW – SINCE HE’S BEEN CAST DOWN?

Through deception this time, threats, and persecution

- [2 Cor. 11:3](#) “3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

[Ps. 69.](#)

What History has to say about the Christian’s Persecution.

“The emperor Domitian banished the apostle John to Patmos. Foxe’s Book of Martyrs says that the Roman authorities branded the Christians “atheists” and imputed to them every disaster, natural or otherwise, to justify torturing and executing them.” – **Light for the Last Days: Jesus’ End-Time Prophecies Made Plain in the Book of Revelation “The Structure of Revelation 12–14”**

The church historian Eusebius tells the moving story of Polycarp, the old bishop of Smyrna. He was led into the stadium and given a chance to recant his Christian faith and save his life. The Roman proconsul asked the bishop, “What harm is it to say, ‘Lord Caesar,’ and to sacrifice, and to save yourself?” Polycarp answered, “Eighty-six years have I served Christ, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, who has saved me?”²⁵

- Cont. same resource.

The second phase of church history in Revelation 12 is that of the dark Middle Ages, during which so-called heretics and witches were outlawed, prosecuted, and executed by the state-church union for the crime of “heresy.” This dreadful period lasted more than a thousand years

- Cont. same resource.

A shocking example is the massacre of the Huguenots in France that began on St. Bartholomew’s Day, August 24, 1572. On that day more than seventy thousand Protestants were murdered at the command of a king and his mother, Catharine de Medici, who acted under the direction of the papacy. Pope Gregory XIII struck a special medal to commemorate his triumph in “the massacre of the Huguenots.”

- Cont. same resource.

The third phase is that of the remnant church of Jesus. She again stands firmly on the solid platform of the apostolic faith: the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus (see Rev. 12:17). These two fundamental beliefs are the abiding hallmark of the true saints of God in all ages. (For an in-depth treatment, see Appendix C.)

- Cont. same resource.

Follow PPT slides now...

The faithful remnant alone of the Woman would stand

Revelation 12:16–17 NKJV

¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Expository on [Rev. 12:17](#) - Explain

The Greek word for “remnant or offspring” is “*loipos*” - it can be translated as “remaining” or “rest.” Sometimes it is also translated as “remnant.” - In the Old Testament (OT), this word is usually used for the survivors of war. Most scholars agree that there is a historical remnant, the faithful remnant, and the eschatological remnant. **The context here is on the “eschatological remnant of God’s faithful ones.”** AND they are identified as Keeping the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.

- The testimony of Jesus in this context is the gift of prophecy.

Revelation 19:10 NKJV

¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See *that you do not do that!* I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

There is a special group therefore, that was supposed to appear in the last days that would have restored the truth that had been cast down. This group would have those two identifying marks. This would be the same group as that of Revelation 10 which was told to “prophecy again.”

Revelation of Jesus Christ: Ranko Stefanovic

[Revelation 17](#) indicates that this woman who once was the true church of God will, during end-time events, have a very negative role. She will eventually turn from her faithfulness to oppose God and his true people. This is why God's end-time people in Revelation are referred to not as the woman but rather as "the remaining ones of the woman's offspring."

1. God will have a people who will have undivided loyalty to him - are you one of them?
2. God will have a visible remnant church - are you in that church? This does not mean the church won't have its own internal challenges. [Matt. 13](#) tells us that the enemy will try to sow his seed in God's church. But it remains the body of Christ for Christ must have a body. If you remove yourself from it, then you will be like a body part standing alone.
3. Satan will find two allies ([Rev. 13:1-10](#); [13:11-17](#)) and will persecute the church with intense zeal (and through many counterfeits and many false worship schemes he will shake the church to its call. **Here is a call for you who thinks it's a smooth ride being in God's church. It's not. But those who overcome...**

ADVICE

Great Controversy p. 593

In order to endure the trial before them, they must **understand the will of God as revealed in his Word**; they can honor him only as they have a right conception of his character, government, and purposes, **and act in accordance with them**. None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.

Let's lift Jesus and His truth more

There are Christians who think and speak altogether too much about the power of Satan. They think of their adversary, they pray about him, they talk about him, and he looms up greater and greater in their imagination. It is true that Satan is a powerful being; but, thank God, we have a mighty Saviour, who cast out the evil one from heaven. Satan is pleased when we

magnify his power. **Why not talk of Jesus? Why not magnify His power and His love?**

1 Ellen Gould White, *The Desire of Ages*, vol. 3, Conflict of the Ages Series (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898), 493.

ILLUSTRATE:

The armies of Napoleon won many battles because they trusted in their commander.

Story 2

- *On the first day of training, everyone knew the World War II medic, Desmond Doss, was different. Not only did he kneel beside his bed to pray, he also read his Bible every day. Doss refused to carry a weapon and would never train or work on the Seventh-day Sabbath (although he did heal on the Sabbath, just as Jesus did). His fellow soldiers ridiculed Doss. They teased him and harassed him. Doss felt like he was alone, with everyone against him. At one point, one of his officers tried to get him discharged on the basis of mental illness. It wasn't long, however, before this Sabbath-keeping soldier was seen as a God-send. Time after time Doss braved enemy fire in Okinawa to treat and save wounded soldiers. Even with snipers aiming their guns at Doss, he still went into the heat of battle. Despite being hit by a grenade, he carried over 50 wounded soldiers to their safety. Desmond Doss became the only non-combatant to receive the United States Medal of Honour during WWII. Doss honoured God by being obedient to His Commandments, even when the going was tough. He saw obedience as an important part of loving Jesus and Doss would rather die than break one of God's Commandments. Desmond Doss was in the minority. He stood for God through ridicule, torment and possible death. If you join God's true church you too may face opposition. What can you learn from this story to help you in your decision for Christ?*

CONCLUSION

Friends, when John saw the vision of the persecution that the church was going to go through, I believe he would've felt an urge to warn people of their

need to remain faithful. I believe that at the same time, he would have been comforted to see that there would be a church in the last days that would be “the visible body of Christ.”

The Seventh-day Adventist church is that church that John saw. It is the only church that keeps all of God’s commandment and has a prophetic gift.

APPEAL

1. Be faithful friends - victory is assured
2. Persevere friends in the truth - keeping the commandments of God and holding onto the faith of Jesus (that is be faithful).
3. Trust and believe in the Testimonies

PRAYER