

Glen Park Gospel Church  
**Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes**

Rev. Chris Trinhnam

Things to Come. No 2

26<sup>th</sup> February 2002

## The Big Picture

### Scripture Reading: Revelation 12 & 14.

Before you can appreciate a painting it is important to stand back and take in its overall effect. Before we can understand something of what God is doing in any period in the history of His creation, we need to step back and see the overview.

Revelation 12 is probably the heart of the book. It is a symbolic allegory. Understand it and you have the key to history. Chapter 13 gives more detail of the conflict as limited in chapter 12. Chapter 14 tells of the culmination of the age and the conquest of the King. Those who understand these chapters will understand the course of the end of this world's history. You may not be able to interpret all the symbolism at this point of time, but as history unfolds, those who do understand will know precisely what is to happen.

#### THE CHARACTERS.

**First, the woman.** She was clothed with the sun, and had the moon beneath her feet, and wore a crown of twelve stars. She was to give birth. 12.1&2. Is she Mary the earthly mother of Jesus, Luke 1.30; Eve whose seed will smite the serpent, Genesis 3.15&20; Or Israel on entering Egypt, Genesis 37.9? (A contemporary writer, Philo, says Joseph was considered at the time as the twelfth star) The context provides the answer. Her desert protection for 42 months corresponds in number with the cycles of the exodus from Egypt, Numbers 33.1-49. The inference is poetic, but refers to a period to come.

**Second, a great red dragon.** He had seven heads with a diadem on each and ten horns. He swept a 1/3 of the stars from the sky. He sought to devour the woman's child. 12.3&4. The word 'dragon' is from *drakon* referring to the sea monster of all evil, and also the serpent, Satan, as in Isaiah 27.1, and is symbolic for Egypt. Ezekiel 29.3; 32.2. A head is a seat of authority, and a horn refers to force, a military type power. (We leave the identification of these to a later study.) The tail sweeping the stars from the sky is a reference to Satan's bid in rebellion against God, and to put himself in God's place. He, the chief of angels, in the

process led others to perdition. See 2 Peter 2.4. The story is told in prophetic type form addressed to Babylon in Isaiah 14.12-17, and a similar prophecy against the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28.1-19. This event had occurred prior to Satan's appearance to Eve.

**Third, the male child,** born of the woman to be an autocratic world ruler. 12.5. The reference to a 'rod of iron' is a direct pointer to Psalm 2.9. Read the whole of this messianic psalm. It is about Jesus who has already defeated Satan at Calvary. Jesus was caught up to heaven where He is at this time.

What is notable here, is the cosmic, not local, nature of the conflict. The real battle is not right against wrong, or terrorism, but of Satan seeking to usurp God's Sovereignty for himself.

#### THE CONFLICT.

**First, the objective of the dragon is to destroy the woman's child.** 12.4. Satan did all in his power to prevent Jesus reaching the cross to die there as God's offering for our sin. See for example Matthew 2.7&8; 13-15; Matthew 16.21-23.

**Second, the dragon was at war with angels of heaven, 12.8&9,** but he was banished to

earth. See Daniel 12.1; typically Luke 10.18. What is release in heaven, is trouble on earth

**Third the period of his franchise is limited, 12.7&14,** to 3½ years, more precisely 42x30 day months or 1,260 days. Satan is a powerful spirit, but he is not autonomous. v12. This raises the question, 'Why is he allowed any latitude?' The answer can only be that we know a little of 'what', but less of 'why'.

#### Fourth, the threefold secret of

**perseverance. 12.10-12.** Satan is already defeated by the cross of Jesus. Hebrews 2.14, boldness in our testimony to faith in Christ in the face of persecution Ephesians 6.10-17, and a commitment to Jesus Christ, 'unto death'. 'Unto' here means 'up to' suggesting all manner of persecution up to death. Revelation 13.10 supports this. An example of this word 'unto' may be found in Acts 22.4.

#### Fifth, the dragon tries to take vengeance on the woman and her offspring.

**12.13&14.** The dragon pursues Israel, just as Pharaoh pursued Moses who found refuge in the desert, but His fury spills over to those who trust in Israel's God. Although the experience will be traumatic it indicates that Satan is already defeated. His time is short, and he knows it. Barred from access to God in heaven (as in Job 1&2), he can only rampage on earth.

The wings of the eagle are a reference to the protection of God. See Exodus 19.4 and Deuteronomy 32.10-12, who will care for His people during this time. Although many Israelites died in the desert, God brought his people through.

Assignment. Before our next study, read the book of Daniel in an easy English version. Take time to go over these notes. They are only a guide. Look up each reference in your own Bible, and follow the cross references. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you from God's word. Read the stories Jesus told in Matthew 13.24-52 Follow the advice in verse 43.

**Sixth, The dragon will direct the armies of the world against Israel 12.15-17.** The flood is a bible picture of an army spread out to conquer an enemy. See Daniel 11.10; 22; 26 & 40. However the Lord will fight for Israel and the armies will be overcome by disturbances in the heavens and the earth. See Zechariah 12.1-9, Ezekiel 38 & 39 and Revelation 16.

This period is further detailed in chapter 14, which we leave for another study

#### THE CONQUEST. 14.6-13

**The Gospel** is to be preached throughout the earth. 14.6&7. During the 'times of the gentiles' Luke 21.24, God by the preaching of the gospel is taking out of them a people for His name. When this is done Jesus will return. Acts 15.14-17. Matthew 24.14, and Isaiah 66.19.

**"Babylon"** the city of iniquity must fall.

14.8. This is dealt with in detail in Revelation 17 & 18. We will not pursue it here. Suffice it to say that it is linked to the amalgam of nations and cultures called the heads and horns. This is the subject of our next studies.

**God's elect** must survive the persecution of the beast, and the secret of perseverance. 14.9-13.

**The grain** will be harvested into God's storehouse. 14.14-16. Those who have faith in Jesus will be raised to meet Him at His coming.

**The grapes** will be gathered to be pressed in the wine press of God's wrath. 14.17-20. Revelation 20.4-6 tells us that there is a thousand years between the gathering of the grain and the grapes.

# Welcome

## Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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