

PICTURES OF JESUS IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION - PART 1

Jesus, the Christ Child

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	Revelation 12:1-5
Subject:	What happened when the Dragon tried to destroy the Christ-child that the woman had delivered
Complement:	the Dragon failed and the Christ-child was caught up to heaven.
Exegetical idea:	When the Dragon tried to destroy the Christ-child that the woman delivered, the Dragon failed and the Christ-child was caught up to heaven.
Homiletical idea:	Jesus lives! Jesus reigns!
Purpose:	To remind my hearers that the mission of Jesus to save us from our sins was accomplished in spite of Satan's attempts to stop Him.

Introduction

Most sermons about the birth of Jesus are based upon the narratives in the Gospel of Matthew or the Gospel of Luke. Matthew was one of the 12 disciples, and Luke was a physician who traveled with the Apostle Paul. They tell us of shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem, angels singing "Glory to God in the highest!" and wise men coming from afar.

Most people are unaware of the fact that there is another narrative about the birth of Jesus other than the ones recorded by Matthew and Luke. This other narrative doesn't mention shepherds or wise men. Rather, this other narrative about the birth of Jesus tells about an enormous red dragon! That's right! An enormous red dragon. When was the last time you saw an enormous red dragon in a Christmas play? This dramatic account of the birth of Jesus, the Christ child, is found in the book of Revelation.

The complete title of the book of Revelation is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. It is the revelation by Jesus Christ to His servant John about things which will come to pass. And it is also the Revelation about Jesus Christ. In this sermon series, we are highlighting five pictures of Jesus in the book of Revelation: the Lamb of God, the Risen Lord, the Faithful Witness, the

Glorious King. And today we are going to consider the picture of Jesus, the Christ child. As we study this picture of Jesus, our artist Gloria Kuhlman, is going to capture the message in a beautiful picture!

The passage in the book of Revelation which deals with the birth of Jesus, the Christ child is found in Revelation 12. I invite you to take your Bible and open it to the last book of the New Testament, the book of Revelation. We will begin reading with Rev 12:1-2. “A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.”

Who is this woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head? Some Bible commentators suggest that this woman is Mary, the mother of Jesus. What do you think about that suggestion? Clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars under her head.

Does this woman represent Mary? I have concluded from my study that the answer is Yes and No! I am convinced that this woman in Revelation 12:1-2 includes Mary, the mother of Jesus, but it is not limited to Mary. This woman clothed with the sun and with the moon under her feet, and with a crown of twelve stars on her head represents all of the people of God. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, the people of God are represented by a pure woman. In Isaiah 54:5, the prophet declares to the people of God, “For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.” And in 2 Cor. 11:2, the apostle Paul writes these words to the people of God in Corinth: “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to

Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.”

The people of God down through the ages are represented as a pure woman. In contrast, those who have turned away from the Lord our God are represented as an impure woman, a harlot. It is from the seed of the pure woman, the people of God, that the Messiah would come. The prophet Isaiah had foretold, Isaiah 7:14, “ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.” And Immanuel means? God with us!

So this same pure woman, clothed with the sun, and with the moon under her feet, and with a crown of twelve stars on her head represents the people of God. If the sun represents the glory of Jesus, the Sun of Righteousness, most clearly revealed in New Testament times, then the moon which reflects the glory of the sun might represent the Jewish ceremonial system which was pointing forward to the Messiah who was to come.

What about the crown on the pure woman’s head? That is literally a victory garland. A victory wreath. And the people of God will gain the victory! Amen! By the grace of God, the people of God will gain the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. What about the twelve stars in the crown? Twelve is a symbol of the completeness, the complete people of God, whether the 12 tribes or the 12 apostles.

Let’s continue reading in Rev. 12:3-4. “Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. 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.”

What a terrifying sight! This enormous red dragon intends to destroy the Christ child the moment He is born! Who does this enormous red dragon represent? Satan. How do we know that? The apostle John exposes the identity of this dragon in Rev. 12:9. “The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”

So, according to this picture of the birth of the Christ child in the book of Revelation, Satan intended to destroy Jesus as soon as He was born. Why? Because Satan wanted to prevent Jesus from accomplishing His mission. Satan wanted to obstruct God’s purpose. The mission of Jesus was imbedded in His name: He came to save His people from their sins. And God’s purpose, born in His heart of love was that whoever believed in Jesus would not perish but have everlasting life.

But Satan, the enormous red dragon, wanted to obstruct God’s purpose. He wanted to prevent Jesus from accomplishing His mission. And so, reading again from 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 the Gospel records of Matthew or Luke confirm the words of this prophecy? Is there any information in the Gospel records which show that Satan intended to destroy Jesus the moment He was born? Absolutely. Look with me at the testimony of Matthew, in Matthew 2:1-8. “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.’ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests

and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ‘In Bethlehem in Judea,’ they replied, ‘for this is what the prophet has written:

But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, ‘Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.’”

Did King Herod have any intention of going to worship the Christ child? No! Herod didn’t want to worship Jesus, the newborn King. Herod wanted to kill Him! So when the wise men failed to return to Herod, having been warned by an angel of the Lord to go home by another route, King Herod reacted with rage! We can read the account in Matthew 2:16. “When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.” This was not simply a random act of violence by an irrational monarch. Herod, as an agent of Satan, was trying to destroy Jesus. The dragon was trying to devour the child at the moment that it was born.

Let’s go back to Revelation chapter 12. Rev. 12:5 “She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.”

The entire life and ministry of Jesus is summed up in one sentence! She, that is the pure

woman, gave birth to a son, a male child. Who is this male child? The text tells us. He is the One who will rule the nations with an iron scepter. Does those words remind you of another text in Scripture? “Rule the nations with an iron scepter.”

Those same words are found in Revelation 19:15. In the picture of Jesus returning as King of kings and Lord of lords, we read, “Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will rule them with an iron scepter.”

This male child in Revelation 12 is Jesus. He comes to earth at His first coming as a helpless baby in Bethlehem, Immanuel, God with us. But He will not remain as a helpless baby. He will come a second time as a glorious King, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Look back in Rev 12:5. “She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.” That “snatching up to God” is a reference to the ascension of Jesus, after His death and glorious resurrection! We read in Acts 1:9, “After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’”

Just as we read in Revelation 12:5, Jesus was snatched up to God. But notice. Jesus wasn’t just snatched up to God. Go back to Revelation 12:5. What do we read there? He was snatched up to God and to his throne. Jesus was snatched up to God and to his throne. Is that a reference to God’s throne or to the throne that Jesus would sit on? The answer is found in Revelation 3:21. “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just

as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.”

These are the words of Jesus, the Faithful Witness. He was snatched up to God and to His throne and He sat down with His Father on his throne! We see this same Jesus, the Lamb of God, in Revelation 5:6. “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.”

And in Rev 7:9, we read, “After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: ‘Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.’” Look down to Rev 7:17. “For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

What a wonderful hope is ours! What do you say? And the whole story is captured right there in Revelation 12:5. “She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.”

The great red dragon tried to destroy Jesus the moment that He was born. Satan tried to obstruct the mission of Jesus. The Devil sought to prevent Jesus from saving us from sin and death. But Satan failed. The mission of Jesus was accomplished! Praise the name of the LORD! No wonder the angel sang, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Satan tried to destroy Jesus, but he failed. Jesus came to earth as a helpless baby, Emmanuel, God with us. And He grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.

Jesus lived a perfect life, reflecting the unfailing love of our Heavenly Father. And then He laid down His life to save us. But when they laid Jesus in the tomb, the tomb could not contain Him. Jesus rose again on the third day, just as He had foretold. Up from the grave He arose! And He ascended to heaven, snatched up to God, not to occupy some obscure place, but to sit with His Father on His throne! A place of honor. A place of exaltation.

And He will come back to earth a second time, but not as a helpless baby. No! Jesus will return a second time as King of kings and Lord of lords. And then Satan and those angels who joined with him in his rebellion against God will be cast into a lake of fire. And sin and death will be no more. Sickness will be no more. Crying will be no more. Because the book of Revelation tells us that God is going to create a new heavens and a new earth.

I'm not making this up, brothers and sisters. I'm speaking the truth to you today. We read in Rev 21:1-4, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'"

And all of that is possible because Jesus, the Christ child came. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, the whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. That's what the Christmas season is all about. It's a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Christ child. But more than that. It's a time to celebrate that Jesus accomplished

His mission—to save His people from their sins. Satan tried to stop Jesus. Satan tried to devour the child the moment that He was born. But Satan failed. Jesus lives! Jesus reigns! Jesus accomplished His mission to save us from our sins. Oh come, let us adore Him, Jesus the Christ child. Oh come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Come, let us follow the example of the wise men of old, and bring our gifts. Let us thank Him for coming to our sin-sick, death-marred world to save us! Let us worship Him now. Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.