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SECTION VI

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

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The Revelation of Jesus Christ

the “Angel of God,” the “Angel of His presence,” these titles refer, not to a created angel, but to the Son of God Himself, before His incarnation. The “Angel of the Lord” appeared to Abraham, wrestled with Jacob, spoke to Moses upon the mountain, and met Joshua before the children of Israel went into the Holy Land.

In the period of time represented by the great tribulation, God will again be dealing with Israel; and He will naturally enough, as we believe, deal with them as He did in the Old Testament days, exercising over them a ministry similar to that which He exercised before He came into the world as a Child at Bethlehem. Of course, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns in glory, planting His feet upon the mount of Olives, then the nation of Israel will have a full revelation of Him, recognizing Him as the Son of God, their Messiah. But until that time, He will protect them without their knowing that He is the Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

JOSEPH—A TYPE OF CHRIST

Joseph is a type of the Lord Jesus. You will remember that, while Joseph was in Egypt, there occurred seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. The seven years of plenty foreshadowed the age of grace, while the seven years of famine speak of the period of tribulation.

During the seven years of plenty, Joseph was becoming a power in Egypt. His brothers had sold him into Egypt; but from then on until the lean years came upon them, we do not read anything else about the brothers of Joseph, those brothers who had sold him. They thought that was the end of him, as far as they were concerned. They never dreamed that he would become a great and mighty ruler in Egypt.

Likewise, when Jesus was nailed to the cross, the Jewish nation thought that was the end of Him; but God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him a name “above every name.” Although they do not now recognize Him as Lord and Saviour, the day will come when they will see Him and realize that He is the Messiah, for whom they have been looking through the centuries!

There were seven years of plenty. Then came the seven
The Revelation of Jesus Christ

lean years. And when Jacob “saw that there was corn in Egypt,” he said to his sons, “Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get ye down thither.” You remember the story—how Joseph looked after the welfare of his brethren without their knowing who he was, and how he finally revealed himself to them. In like manner, after the day of grace has ended, the seven “lean years,” the tribulation years will run their course; and at the close of that awful period of tribulation, the One whom the Jewish nations know as “The Angel of Jehovah” will reveal Himself to them as their Messiah.

The “Mighty Angel” Described

John saw that the “mighty angel,” coming down from heaven, was “clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire” (10:1).

This graphic description of the Angel of Jehovah takes us back to the Old Testament days; for the “cloud” with which He is “clothed” is none other than the Shekinah Glory. It is identical with the pillar of cloud and fire that separated Israel from Pharaoh’s hosts in the Red Sea, bringing confusion to the enemy, but light and protection to the people of God. The same Shekinah Glory led Israel through the wilderness, overshadowed the tabernacle, and dwelt in the Holy of Holies, always a symbol of God’s presence in the midst of His redeemed children.

It is the same cloud of glory which Isaiah saw (Isa. 6:1-8); and the “beloved disciple” tells us that, when “Esaias ... saw his glory, and spake of him” (John 12:41), he saw Jesus of Nazareth before He came to Bethlehem.

It is the same glory which Peter, James and John saw when Christ was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun. When He ascended into heaven, His disciples beheld Him as He “was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9). In His own eternal glory, which He had with the Father before the world was, He ascended into heaven, whence He had come.

When “every eye shall see Him” coming in glory to reign, He will appear in His own Shekinah Glory. And His face will shine as the sun, even “the Sun of righteousness,” who will “arise with healing in His wings” (Mal. 4:2).

As John beheld Him, “the mighty angel,” he saw “a rainbow ... on his head.” The first reference to the rainbow in the Word of God is found in connection with God’s covenant with Noah. Not only will He remember that promise, never again to destroy the earth with a flood; but as “the Angel of the Covenant,” He will remember all his promises to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And He will keep them, every one!

“His face,” as John saw it, was “as it were the sun” for brightness; and “His feet as pillars of fire.” When He comes in glory, exercising His authority to cleanse the sin-cursed world with the purifying fires of judgment, none shall be able to stand before Him, save those who are clothed with His righteousness. Every man who expects to live in the presence of God and enjoy His presence must have a nature that complements His nature. How can an unregenerated man who has never been born of God, stand in the presence of a Being with a face like the sun itself for brightness?

If God gave unregenerated people the choice between heaven and hell, which do you think they would choose? Hell, of course. How could an unregenerated man endure the glory of heaven? Why, he would spend the ages of eternity trying to get out! You have to have a nature to fit you for heaven if you are ever going to live there. The ordinary eye cannot endure the bright glare of the sun, but the eagle can look into the face of the sun without flinching. And the man who is born of the Spirit, filled with the love of God, will be able to look at His person and not be afraid, because he will be like Him, and see Him as He is.

Only the “coats of skins,” which God provided for Adam and Eve, not without the shedding of blood—these only, received by faith in the promised Redeemer and eternal Lamb of God, enabled our first parents to stand before God unafraid, after they had sinned. And only those whose garments have been “washed in the blood of the Lamb” will be able to look upon His glory, unashamed and unafraid, throughout the endless ages.

But let us return to our chapter, and note what the “mighty angel” said and did:
"THE LITTLE BOOK"

"And he had in his hand a little book open . . . ."

Note that this book which the mighty angel, who is the Son of God Himself, has in His hand is open.

What does the "little book" signify? My understanding is that it is none other than the seven-sealed book—the title deed to the earth—which is now completely unsealed.

"And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth." When the children of Israel were at the brink of the River Jordan, ready to pass over, the Lord said to Joshua: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you" (Joshua 1:3). So we see here the Son of God, as the Angel of the Covenant, placing one foot upon the land and one upon the sea, thus speaking of universal government: that is, when the Son of God returns to the earth. He will take possession of every foot of ground and every drop of water. At the present time the devil, who is "the prince of the power of the air," has dominion over the earth. When Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, there to be tempted of the devil, Satan said to Him, as he took Him up into an high mountain, "All this power (that is, all the kingdoms of the world) will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine" (Luke 4:6, 7). Jesus did not dispute the power of the devil to give Him the kingdoms of the earth, because the kingdoms of the earth are now under the rule of the prince of darkness. Paul tells us, in II Cor. 4:4, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not." And again in I John 5:19 we are told that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." That is true now; but in the dark hour of the tribulation, when the Antichrist is on his throne, it will be even worse; for there will not be the restraining power of the Holy Spirit to hold the evil forces in check.

But thank God, dark though the picture is, a ray of light shines through the gloom when we remember that the devil’s little hour will last for a brief time only. Then the Son of God will return in His power and might, and destroy the forces of the devil. With "his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth," He will cry "with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth."

“And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

He cried with a loud voice "as when a lion roareth." The Lion of the Tribe of Juda will lift up His voice, and He will be answered by seven thunders. Someone has suggested, in reply to the question that arises as to why John was not allowed to write "those things which the seven thunders uttered," that it was because he was a child of God. Therefore, he was not distressed by having to write the fearful judgments that are to come upon the world. What he had already written was fearful enough! How terrible a thing it will be to fall into the hands of an angry God, unsaved, rejecting His mercy and His grace!

"THE MYSTERY OF GOD"

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

According to the Revised Version the foregoing words read, "There shall be delay no longer." The thought is not that there is to be "time no longer" but that "there shall be delay no longer," that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel... the mystery of God should be finished."

The Son of God has borne with the earth for two thousand years, but the time will come when He will delay no longer. Have you ever wondered why God permits the world to go on as it has gone for so long? People have asked me, when I have preached a series of sermons on the subject of
Satan, "Why does God tolerate the devil? Why did He ever create him in the beginning? And why, when the devil fell, didn't He blot him out right then?" Others have asked, "When God created Adam and Eve, why didn't He create them in such a way that they would be incapable of sin?"

I do not know the answer to these questions. They are mysteries which I cannot unfold. Moreover, if God had wanted us to know these things, He would have told us. But one day "the mystery of God" will be finished. In that day we shall walk no longer by faith, but by sight. And in that day we shall understand not only the meaning of the things referred to, but the meaning of everything that has taken place since the beginning of the world. It is then we shall understand the things that have taken place in our lives. "The mystery of God" will be finished.

But until that time comes, we must walk by faith, holding fast to God's promises, remembering that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28).

Often people whose hearts have been broken by some tragedy ask the question, "Can't you give us just a little light on this mystery?"

I have a dear friend in Chicago. In the days before we became friends, his wife was in Christian Science. Had God not saved her soul, she would have become one of the leaders in time, because she was studying this cult with all her heart. She came one day to hear me preach and became interested. After hearing the sermon, she said, "I have heard you preach, and now will you come up and hear a lecture at my church?" I went at her request.

A few weeks later I preached on the theme, "Will You Always Resist the Holy Spirit as Your Fathers Did?" I was about to pronounce the benediction and bring the service to a close, when a member of my church said, "Do not close the meeting; I feel sure there is someone here who wants to accept the Lord Jesus Christ." I yielded to that request, and gave the call. Down the aisle came the woman who was interested in Christian Science. She was weeping as though her heart would break, and that morning she "passed from death unto life."

Her husband was a Chicago dentist, with a large staff of assistants; but in spite of his success, in spite of his standing,
I have never seen anything as dark as this. I have tried to see the "why" of it, and I cannot. Everything is dark. Can't you give me a little light?"

If I had been given from the moment until the end of time, I could not have explained the "why" of things to her. What I said to her I say to all who question: One day "the mystery of God" shall be finished. All the tragedies of sin, the tragedies of the world, with its load of sorrow and woe, the things which cause us to wonder and fear, will be known.

The son of God shall descend; He shall plant His feet upon the earth, and shall bring this nightmare of sin to a close. In that day "the mystery of God" shall be finished.

In the meantime, never cease to trust Him; and in that day you will learn the glorious truth that "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE "LITTLE BOOK" EATEN

The second division of this chapter has a practical message for us all. John was told to take the book and "eat" it; and when he did so, he found it sweet to his taste, but his inward parts became very bitter.

What are we to understand from this? The Word of God is likened to food. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The message of the "blessed hope" of our Lord's return is "sweet" to those who "love his appearing"; but if this blessed message is really "eaten," it leads to a pathway of separation which is oftentimes fraught with bitter experiences. One cannot live for Christ and for the world at the same time; and often a Christian is forsaken by his best friends, even by father and mother and other loved ones. But the Lord has promised a rich reward, which is to be given at the time of His return, for those who suffer for Him in any way. "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me"—these are His reassuring words.

There is no truth that needs to be emphasized more than this; yet Satan has blinded the eyes of many who love the Lord, leading them to believe that the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, visibly and bodily, is a form of fanaticism and heresy. But that does not make this so. Many of the greatest evangelists and missionaries and soul-winners of all the Christian era have cherished this "blessed hope." It purifies the life, and adds zeal to service as only it can do!

In verse 11, John was told: "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," signifying that the Spirit of God had more to record through him about the nations, with which the book of Revelation has to do. This further information is given in the following chapters.

May I remind you again of the fact that, in order to understand clearly the latter portion of Revelation, we must bear in mind that these chapters which we are now studying portray to us the events which will take place after the translation of the church; that God will then be dealing once more with Israel as a nation; that the age of grace will have ended with the taking away of the church; and that the Jew, not the Gentile, will occupy the center of the stage.

THE MEASURING ROD AND THE TEMPLE OF GOD

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein" (11:1).

When a man is contemplating the purchase of a piece of land, he usually has it measured. That measuring takes place before he buys it. In the verse quoted, there is a command given to John to "rise, and measure the temple of God."

There have been three temples in Jerusalem. First, there was the temple which was planned by David, built by his son, Solomon, and later destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (II Kings, 24, 25). Then there was the temple built by Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel, which was destroyed by Antiochus Epiphanes. The third was Herod's, which was standing when Jesus came. It was destroyed by Titus, A.D.70. Upon the temple site stands today the Mosque of Omar, a place sacred to every Mohammedan. But one day that Mohammedan mosque will be swept away. How this is to be accomplished we do not know, but neither did we know how the grip of the Turk upon the land of Palestine was to be broken. Yet that it was, is now a matter of history.
God's ways are “past finding out,” but that His plan will be carried out to completion we know; and the day will come when a Jewish temple will stand upon the site now occupied by the Mosque of Omar. That temple will be erected by Jews still wearing the “veil of blindness.” Even now they are returning to their homeland, their hearts burning with a desire once again to live under a flag of their own. They are going back in unbelief, to await the time when the “blindness in part,” which is their portion, shall be taken away. This will not come to pass “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Rom. 11:25).

Do not confuse the “times of the Gentiles” with the “fulness of the Gentiles.” The first has reference to the period of time, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, which ends with the personal return of Christ to the earth; the second refers to the number that will comprise the church, which is the body of Christ.

It will be during the reign of the Antichrist that the new temple will be built, and in that temple the Antichrist will either set up his image, or be there in person.

“But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not: for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months” (11:12).

You will notice that John was told to measure “the temple of God.” Although it will be built by Jews who will still be in a state of unbelief, yet in the midst of the unbelieving multitudes who will have received “the mark of the beast” there will be a believing remnant, who belong to the Lord.

During this time the Beast and his followers will persecute the Jews; for, when he sets up his image to be worshipped “in the holy place” of the temple, every orthodox Jew will know that he is Satan-inspired. To all devout Jews an idol is “an abomination.” Such as these will break their covenant with the Antichrist. And persecution in its most bitter form will follow. Then their enemies will turn upon them and “the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.”

Here we have our first reference in Revelation to the 1,260 days. Where have we found previous mention of this period? Let us turn to Dan. 9:27. There we read that “in the midst of the week he (the Antichrist) shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even unto the consummation...”

The reference here is to the seventieth week of Daniel, and the forty-two months referred to represent the last half of the seven years for which the seventieth week stands. In those forty-two months the Antichrist will be doing his very worst; apostate Israel will be at its worst, with the Gentiles literally treading the holy city under foot. Jerusalem will be passing through a period of unspeakable misery.

It will help us to remember that the last three and one-half years of the seventieth week of Daniel are identical with the forty-two months mentioned here, as well as with the “thousand two hundred and three score days” in the verses which follow. Do a little addition, multiplication, and division; and you will see for yourself.

THE TWO WITNESSES

1. Their Testimony.

“And I will give power unto my two witnesses” (11:3).

There have been many theories advanced as to the identity of these two witnesses, and various claims have been made. We cannot be dogmatic about this. God has not seen fit to reveal to us the identity of these two men, but there are references in the Bible which lead us to believe that one of them will be Elijah. In Malachi 4:5 we read: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

Some people think that John the Baptist was a fulfillment of that promise; but although John came in the spirit of Elijah, he was not that prophet. The spirit which empowered Elijah also inspired John, but John was not a re-incarnation of Elijah.

As to who the other witness will be, we have no statement given, but we believe he will be Moses. Whoever these two may be, we are told that they will prophesy for “a thousand
two hundred and threescore days"; in other words, three and one-half years, of forty and two months, as stated above. They will be absolutely safe from harm until their testimony is finished; and during that time they will have power to perform strange and wonderful deeds, such as causing the rain to cease, turning the water into blood, and smiting the earth with plagues "as often as they will."

Moses and Elijah performed these very miracles in Old Testament times—another reason which leads us to believe that they will doubtless be the "two witnesses" of Jehovah during the closing days of the seventieth week of Daniel. Moreover, Elijah went to heaven without dying; and God buried Moses, no man knowing where his body lay in a "valley" near Mt. Nebo. Satan contended with Michael for the body of Moses, as Jude tells us. Did he want to hinder God's plan for the last days? At least, these are interesting questions.

2. Their Martyrdom.

"And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them" (11:7).

The man living in the center of God's will lives until God calls him home, and God will keep him free from harm until He is ready to permit evil to come near him. So it will be with these two witnesses. Until God is ready, no man will be able to touch them. But when their work is finished, "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

"... which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt." We have in these brief words our Lord's opinion of Jerusalem as it will be during the time of spiritual darkness in these terrible days. As it was in the days of Lot, and as it was in the days of the idolatrous Pharaohs, so it will be in "the great city ... where ... our Lord was crucified." In such a day the two witnesses will bear testimony to the God of heaven.

What a picture of the vile condition of the hearts of men is set forth in these verses! We think terrible things happen in these days; but in the day when Satan is ruling and reigning, men will be so hardened in their sins, so full of hatred for anything that is of God, that they will actually rejoice over the dead bodies of God's witnesses! And in the last portion of the tenth verse we have set forth the reason for their behaviour: "Because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth." Their consciences will be made uneasy by these two men. And among those who rejoice over their downfall will be the apostate church of Christendom.

3. Their Resurrection and Translation.

But in the midst of this terrible rejoicing, these God-defying men will receive an awful shock: for "the spirit of life from God entered into them (the witnesses), and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them (11:11). Can you not picture the horror and fear which will grip the evil hearts of their enemies as the two witnesses rise to their feet?

"And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud."

Here again we have the cloud of Shekinah Glory. "And their enemies beheld them." What a graphic picture!

THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE.

"And the same hour was there a great earthquake ... and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven" (11:13).
With the translation of the two witnesses comes an earthquake which shakes the city, causing a “tenth part” to fall. We are told that in that earthquake seven thousand men will be slain. Surely that will add to the terror of those who are left. Would you not think it would be enough to turn any man to God? But what happens? “The remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.” What that means I do not know: but it would seem as though those who will be left after the earthquake will give to God a glory which is inspired by fear, a fear which has in it no trace of repentance.

Have you ever noticed, when some great catastrophe takes place, how men turn to God and call upon Him; and how after the terror is over, they go right back to their old ways again? That is because their call upon God was inspired by fear, a fear into which no hint of real repentance from sin enters. They do not love God. They know nothing of what it means to come in contact with the Son of God and “be born again.” Theirs is a temporary state of awe and fear, which brings forth a terrified call upon God.

So the frightened “remnant” call upon and give glory to the “God of heaven.” But they have no desire for the “God of heaven” to be any nearer to them than heaven!

“The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly” (11:14). With these words we reach the end of this parenthetical vision, and the beginning of the seventh trumpet judgment, which we studied in our last lesson. It will, indeed, be a time of “woe, woe, woe”!

My dear unsaved friend, are these searching “things which shall be hereafter” not enough to send you to your knees, in repentance of sin, before it is too late? Look to Calvary, and “be ye saved” by the shed blood of the Lamb of God. He loves you: He died for you: He longs for your love. But if you do not meet Him in this life as your Saviour, you will meet Him as your Judge. And as a holy God, He must judge sin. He must vindicate His righteous law. Look to Him now by faith and “be ye saved”; for there is no other way to heaven and eternal life than by the way of the cross. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

Chapter X

"THE WOMAN, THE MAN CHILD, AND THE DRAGON"

Rev. 12:1-17

In a previous lesson we observed that, although the seventh trumpet judgment, recorded in 11:15-18 takes us on to the end of the tribulation period; yet with 11:19 the Holy Spirit goes back to give in the succeeding chapters further details regarding the great tribulation. This method of presenting a truth is frequently used by the Spirit of God, throughout the Scriptures. The late Rev. James M. Gray, D.D., called it “the law of recurrence, whereby God first states a truth in outline, then goes back to fill in details.” It is a good method of teaching in any field—and, indeed, what methods can excel or even measure up to those used by the Master-Teacher, the Holy Spirit of God?

Let us remember also that the Bible was not divided into chapters and verses when it came from the hands of the inspired writers: and the logical beginning of the section upon which we are to enter in our study today is 11:19, introducing, as it does, chapter twelve.

We shall see as we look into this passage that it has to do with the woman, Israel; the Man Child, Christ: and the Dragon. Therefore, it is entirely in keeping with the theme that the opening verse of this division should speak to us of “the ark of his covenant,” the symbol of God’s covenant-relationship with His chosen people. He will not fail to keep every promise; and, in fulfilling His covenant of promise, He will have to execute judgment upon “the dragon . . . that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan.” Hence the “lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail” of 11:19. These things speak of judgment. And
Satan, together with all his hosts, must be judged for persecuting God's covenant people.

It is helpful, in getting an outline view of this portion of the book, to note what others have said about it. The Scofield outline presents "the seven personages"; and, as we have already seen, the number, seven, plays a prominent part in the book. These "seven personages" are: (1) The woman, 12:1, 2; (2) Satan, 12:3, 4; (3) the Christ Child, 12:5, 6; (4) the archangel, 12:7-12; (5) the Jewish remnant, 12:17; (6) the beast out of the sea, 13:1-10; and (7) the beast out of the earth, 13:11-18.

These are "the great actors for good and for evil" that will be on the stage, as it were, during that short period of time between the translation of the church and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory. For our study today we shall consider the "woman," "the man child," and "the dragon," noting also the "war in heaven" between the archangel, Michael, and "his angels" on the one hand and "the dragon... and his angels" on the other. Then in our next lesson we shall see what chapter thirteen says about "the beast out of the sea" and "the beast out of the earth."

**The Woman—Israel**

*Rev. 12:1, 2*

"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; and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

This woman that John saw, "clothed with the sun," with "the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars," had a malevolent enemy, the great dragon, with "seven heads and ten horns." The tail of this dragon drew a third part of the stars of heaven behind him. When the woman was delivered of her child, the dragon was there to devour it; but "the man child" was caught up into the presence of God—that "man child" who is going to "rule all nations with a rod of iron." Later in this chapter we read that the woman flees into the wilderness, where a place has been prepared for her by God. There she will be nourished and protected for "a thousand two hundred and three score days."

First of all, we want to know what the Word of God tells us concerning the identity of this woman. There is only one way of understanding the figures of the book of Revelation, and that is to take each figure and turn to other portions of the Word of God and see what is said in regard to that figure. It is amazing, my dear friends, to find what some Bible teachers and preachers had made of this woman. I want to give you a few interpretations concerning her identity:

1. Of course, you know that the most popular view concerning her is that she is the church of Jesus Christ. According to this interpretation, she is seen here complete, in glory, cloaked with the sun, and with a diadem of stars. But it does not take any thought to bring you to the conclusion that this is not correct, because she gave birth to a child, and that child, as we shall see, was the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the church did not give birth to the Lord Jesus Christ: it was the Son of God who founded the church.

2. The Roman Catholic expositors see, in this picture, the Virgin Mary and the place that she occupies now in heaven. It is upon this portion of the Word of God that Roman Catholic expositors and theologians base their doctrine concerning the ascension of Mary and her elevation to be "the Queen of the Heavens."

3. From the beginning of the church, there have been false teachers; and among these have been certain women who had the conceit to claim that this woman of Revelation represented their own portrait. One of these false teachers was Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy. She asserted that "the man child" was Christian Science; that "the dragon" was "mortal mind"—whatever that is—ready to devour the teaching she set forth in "Science and Health, the key to the Scriptures."

The born-again soul needs no argument to offset such blasphemy! The spirit of God teaches the Christian that these things are Satan's lies. But what does the Bible say about this woman?
We turn back to the thirty-seventh chapter of Genesis for the scriptural key to these symbols. Every Sunday School child is familiar with the story of Joseph and his dream. He saw, as he slept, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars (he was the twelfth of Rev. 12:1), bowing down to do obedience unto him. The vision of the boy, Joseph, was understood by his father to foreshadow the glory of Israel that is yet to be, when, as a nation, she looks upon Him whom she has pierced.

To quote another: "The moon at her feet represents the reflected glory of the old covenant, the sun, the glory of the new covenant." The twelve stars, of course, represent the twelve tribes, just as they did in Joseph's dream. Moreover, the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). In that day the nation will be back in their own land, even as the prophets have said.

Sometimes men pervert the simplicity of a truth, trying to make a self-evident fact seem difficult to understand; and here we have an illustration of this. In other words, the whole line of Old Testament prophecy heralded the coming into the world of the Redeemer through the nation of Israel. Moses foretold that He would be "the seed of Abraham," from the tribe of Judah, a suffering Saviour and a reigning King. Samuel promised that He would come through the House of David: Isaiah, that He would be born of a virgin. Explicitly he wrote: "Unto us (Israel) a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder" (Isa. 9:6). The New Testament bears records of the fulfillment of these promises, even unto the most minute detail.

Why, then, is this not the clearest, the most logical, the only scriptural interpretation of the identity of the "woman" of Rev. 12:1,2? Furthermore, the following verses abundantly prove this fact, dovetailing with other portions of Bible prophecy, and unmistakably identifying the woman, fleeing into the wilderness from her persecutors, with Israel in the terrible suffering of the great tribulation period.

The Child—Christ

We have no difficulty in identifying the "man child." Without a doubt He is the Lord Jesus Christ, because verse five tells us that He is "to rule all nations with a rod of iron." Many passages from the Word of God tell us that our Lord Jesus will one day be recognized as King of kings and Lord of lords, but at least two other times these very words are used concerning Him, as a good, marginal reference Bible will show: "Thou shalt break them (the 'nations,' R. V.) with a rod of iron" (Psa. 2.9). "Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Rev. 19:15).

We turn again to Rev. 12:5, and there we read further that the dragon was not able to devour the child, but that He "was caught up unto God, and to his throne." Even so our Lord, having finished His redemptive word on Calvary, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven—"caught up unto God," the Father, "and to his throne." There He is today, interceding for His redeemed children, waiting till the day when all His enemies shall be made His footstool. (See Psa. 110:1; Heb. 1:13.)

The Dragon

We have already seen that, as this woman was about to be delivered, there was waiting for that "man child" a dragon. He had seven heads and ten horns, and there were seven diadems upon those heads.

Now the dragon represents the Roman Empire, actuated and inspired by the devil himself. This is not the Roman Empire as it was at the time when the Lord Jesus Christ was born, although it is true that the devil through Herod attempted to destroy the Christ-Child at His birth. Rather, the Roman Empire pictured here is as it is yet to be. We shall see, when we come to make a study of the thirteenth and seventeenth chapters, that the future Roman Empire is represented by this beast, this great dragon with the seven heads and the ten horns. Those ten horns represent the ten confederated kingdoms into which the Roman Empire will be divided. After the church is gone, the Antichrist is going to weld those nations together; he is going to rule over the Roman Empire in that ten-kingdom form.
THE MYSTICAL BODY OF CHRIST

Let us pause here long enough to emphasize the fact that the bride of Christ is identified with Him, and will rule and reign with Him over the nations. He is the Head; we are members of His body. All New Testament Scripture abundantly proves this blessed truth. Accordingly, we read in Rev. 2:26, 27:

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father."

In view of this fact, realizing our exalted position in Christ Jesus, we are reminded by Rev. 12:5 that we, too, shall one day be "caught up unto God," when He calls His bride home. It is the "blessed hope" of the Christian. I wonder if we can ever thank God enough for the "exceeding riches of his grace" to us?

"THE WOMAN FLED INTO THE WILDERNESS"

John beheld the woman, representing Israel, as she "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" (verse 6).

Let us note the divine order here: Israel gave birth to Jesus; He ascended into heaven: the church, the body of Christ, is now caught up. Then the woman comes into view again. It is during the tribulation period that the devil is going to make a supreme effort to wipe from the face of the earth that nation that brought the Son of God into the world. Oh, the nation of Israel, the people of the wandering feet! There is no history so filled with tears and heartaches as that of the nation of Israel!

Many Jews feel that, if they can only get the land of Palestine for a national home, go back there, and identify themselves as a nation, all of their troubles will be over. They do not know that even now, through the Zionist Movement, they are going back to the greatest tragedy, the greatest heartache, and the greatest sorrow that they could possibly experience.

THE ARCHANGEL

... "There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels" (verse 7). Now, my dear friends, no student of the Bible is unfamiliar with the Archangel Michael. In the twelfth chapter of Daniel, where the great tribulation period is described, we read: "At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people . . ." When the Antichrist attempts to wipe the nation Israel from the face of the earth, then Michael will stand up. We are told in I Thess. 4 that, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes to take the church, He is going to descend from heaven with a shout—and with what else? "With the voice of the archangel." The Archangel Michael is going to be connected with the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. With a "shout" Christ shall call the sleeping dead in Christ to rise, and the living to be changed. And with Him will be associated the Archangel Michael, possibly in connection with the resurrection of the Old Testament saints. At any rate, he is the champion of Israel. He contended with Satan over the body of Moses; and Moses was an Israelite.

THE WAR IN HEAVEN

The Word of God tells us that the devil is "the prince of the power of the air," and he is also the master of the heavens. "We wrestle not," says Paul, "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (the heavenlies, R. V.)" (Eph. 6:12). Many people think the devil is in hell; but he has not been in hell yet, and will not be there for some time to come. The devil is very
much in evidence in Los Angeles today. He now has the control of the first heaven and the second heaven. The Word of God tells us about three "heavens." Paul wrote, "I was caught up to the third heaven." The first heaven is where the birds fly, where the clouds move; the second heaven is where the stars are, where the moon is; the third heaven is God's dwelling place. The devil and all of his angels are in possession of the first and second heavens. But when Michael comes with the Lord Jesus Christ to awaken the dead, and we are caught up to meet Him, the church of Jesus Christ will be caught right up into the territory of the devil in all of his power; and the Word of God says that there shall be "war in heaven."

In that day the devil is going to be cast out of the heavens. Now you may ask, "Does the devil have access right now into the presence of God?" Yes, my friends, he does. We learn that from the book of Job. (See also Zech. 3:1, Luke 22:31-32). What does he do there? He is the accuser of the brethren. Whenever you and I sin and break the Word of God, the devil immediately enters into the presence of God, and there he accuses us. Points out to the great Ruler of this universe that "the wages of sin is death," and demands that death shall be executed upon the offender. But we have at the right hand of God, an Advocate. That is why John says, "Little children, these things I write unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1).

When the church is translated into the presence of God, the devil is going to enter the court of God to make his last accusation. There will be a trial in that day; and Almighty God shall say to Michael, the archangel, "Michael, clear the court." Then the devil and all of his hosts will be cast out of heaven.

Now, that has never taken place yet. It is going to take place after the church is gone. Mark you, when Satan and his wicked angels are cast out, they will not be cast into hell, but down upon this earth. Then there will be rejoicing in heaven. All the redeemed in glory will say, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (verse 10).
The words of the verses just quoted, concerning the flight of the woman into the wilderness, correspond exactly with what Jesus said on the Mount of Olives, when His disciples asked Him, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matt. 24:3). In answer to this question, the Lord Jesus spoke very plainly. Referring to the time, yet future, when Israel will return to the land of Palestine, when their temple will be erected, and the Antichrist will set up his image to be worshipped—referring to these things, Christ said to His disciples, "When ye ... shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place ... then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains .... For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24:15-21).

ISRAEL'S REFUGE

The Lord has promised a way of escape for His people in that time of trouble, "a place prepared of God" (verse 6). Where is that place to be? There is a very striking passage in Isaiah 16:4, 5, "Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a convert to them from the face of the spoiler: for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land. And in mercy shall the throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness."

This refers to the return of Christ to establish His throne on earth; and the significant thing here is that, just prior to that glorious event, Moab will be a place of refuge for His people, Israel.

The great wilderness on the east of Jordan will in all probability be the place of refuge. From Dan. 11:41 we find that some lands are going to escape out of the hands of the Antichrist, and that Moab is among them. Now the marvelous thing is this: If you should go to Moab now, you would find great cities with beautiful homes, with doors on their hinges, and not a solitary inhabitant. They are the remarkable cities of Petra, hewn out of the rock; and apart from the outside world. Why is God keeping them there? Why is it that places such as Samaria, Jerusalem, and Capernaum have been literally reduced to ashes, while these cities have been marvelously preserved?

I believe that in that hour, obedient to His Word, the Jewish remnant will obey the instructions of the Lord and fly to the wilderness as He allures them there. And they will make their homes there during these three and one-half years of the tribulation.

GOD'S PROTECTING CARE

"And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth" (verses 15, 16).

Whatever the "water as a flood" may mean seems difficult to determine. The Bible speaks of the enemy as one who comes in "like a flood," and the statement may refer to some tremendous organized effort on the part of the Antichrist to locate this sheltered people with the view of destroying them. Or it may refer to some evil teaching that he shall disseminate among them to destroy their faith, which alone can save. This he may do, with the view of bringing about their destruction. True it is that some of the evil cults today, especially Christian Science, are claiming many Jews among their number. It is ever Satan's purpose to rob men of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, even Israel's Messiah and the eternal Son of God.

Whatever "the flood" may signify, God will safeguard the faithful remnant with His protecting care. That faithful remnant is referred to in verse seventeen as that company "which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." In some miraculous way that will be made known in that day, God will deliver His people from this final determined effort on the part of Satan to destroy that nation, through which Christ, according to the flesh, came.

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed."

The remnant will be the witnessing body of 144,000
Jews. We shall see in the next chapter how the devil will make war against them.

My friends, we have been listening to and studying about what the devil is going to do with the nation of Israel in that day. His attempts have always been the very same; he seeks to lead a man from God and from God's Christ. My dear brother, never think for one moment that the devil is trying to make a drunkard out of you; that he is trying to take you away from a good job and a good home and put you in the gutter. That is not the purpose of the devil in your life at all. It is to give you everything that God will give you, apart from Jesus Christ. He knows, whether you know it or not, that there is only One who can ever save your soul and bring you into a right relationship with God, and that One is Jesus Christ. The devil will let you accept everything that is in this Bible, providing you deny the deity of Christ and His atonement, and refuse to have the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of the world, in your heart. It is for you to decide whether the devil is going to succeed in his purpose. If you are still out of Christ, you are in Satan's camp. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."