

The Woman, the Child and the Dragon

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[0 : 00] The book of Revelation, chapter 12 and at verse 1. And a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And another sign appeared in heaven, behold, a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and on his head seven diadems.

His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was caught up to God and to his throne.

And the woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

[1 : 14] Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.

He was thrown down to the earth and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come.

For the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. For they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short.

[2 : 35] And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time and times and half a time.

The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.

Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

And he stood on the sand of the sea. May the Lord bless that. Portion of his own holy and inerrant word, and to whose praise be all the glory.

I think we'll return to the Lord in prayer. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you indeed for this word. We thank you indeed for these wonderful scriptures that have been passed down from generation to generation among your people.

[3 : 59] And Lord, these scriptures are our rule for life and for death. Gracious Lord, we thank you that you reveal yourself to us through the written word in conjunction with your glorious Holy Spirit.

who works in our minds and works in the hearts of his people. Gracious Lord, we thank you for each other. We thank you for the church of Jesus Christ.

We thank you for all our brothers and sisters scattered throughout this world. And in particular, we thank you and we pray for those who are being persecuted for their faith even this day.

And those, Lord, who perhaps even this day will lose their lives because of their testimony of this wonderful saviour Jesus.

Strengthen them, encourage them and be with them. And Lord, we pray for our church here at a local level. We pray for the eldership, O Lord, of this congregation and I thank you for it.

[5 : 05] And I pray, Lord, for the elders and deacons that you would continue to grant wisdom, knowledge and understanding. And that's seasoned with grace and love as they do all the work behind the scenes in keeping the church going.

Lord, I thank you for them and I pray for them. And I pray for everyone connected with this church. Lord, we pray for those who are at home at this time.

Lord, we pray that you would be with them in a very real and special way. And in particular, Lord, we pray for those who are unwell at this time. And our prayer is that your healing hand would be upon them if it is your will.

Lord, we pray that you would strengthen, you would encourage, you would reveal the Lord Jesus to them in great measure. Heavenly Father, I pray for the children connected with this congregation. And Lord, I thank you for them. Lord, I pray that you would, Lord, bring each and every one of them to that saving faith in due time. I thank you, Lord, for the Sunday school that has been going on here for generations.

[6 : 11] And Lord, for everything that has ever been taught. And Lord, I pray that that word would come to fruit in their lives at a young age. We thank you for our children.

We thank you for our grandchildren. And we thank you for our great-grandchildren. Be with them. And Lord, may they serve the Lord Jesus in due time.

Heavenly Father, we pray for this district down here in Point. And Lord, we pray in particular for those who do not have any time for the gospel, who do not have any time for God's law, who do not have any time for the church.

Lord, we pray that you would help each and every one of us to be ambassadors of grace in this community and beyond. That with meekness and with humility, we would tell others about Jesus. Heavenly Father, help us and encourage us to do this, in particular in these dark days. Lord, we know that many people are putting their faith in many things, but the Lord Jesus.

[7 : 20] And Lord, we pray that that will change in due time. Heavenly Father, we just pray for those who lead us at national level and at local level.

And Heavenly Father, we pray for those in Downing Street and we pray for those at Holyrood. And Lord, we just ask that you would grant them wisdom, knowledge and understanding, in particular in these days, as more and more rules are set upon us.

And our prayer is, Lord, is that they are serving you in truth, because they have been put there by you, Lord, whether they know it or not. And I pray, Lord, that the church in this nation would speak up and advise and look after the people of God.

And Lord, we just pray that in the future you would unite your church. Heavenly Father, we pray for our leaders. We pray for our church. And we pray, Lord, for all those in this nation who do not know you yet.

Lord, we have much to pray for. And Lord, we have to pray concerning our own sin and wrongdoing as well. Lord, we look in our own hearts and we see all the wrong things we have said and done, even in this past week.

[8 : 36] And we ask, O Lord, that you would forgive us. We ask, O Lord, that you would sanctify us. Heavenly Father, grant us that godly wisdom and that humility to know that you are dealing with us in a very personal and real way.

And that that you have begun will see through to the end. And we thank you, Lord. We thank you for all that you do for your people. So, Lord, as we study your word together, may we see Jesus more clearly.

And may we worship you in spirit and in truth as we do so. For we ask it in his name always and forever. Amen. So, for a few moments, we're going to look at a few of the verses from Revelation chapter 12.

And we're going to look at verse 1 to verse 6. Revelation 12, verse 1. To verse 6.

The woman, the child, and the dragon. Now, I want you to imagine that you have signed up to be a missionary.

[9 : 58] To go out with the word of God. And you're heading off to Papua New Guinea. And you cannot wait to get there. You feel the call of God in your life.

And you are in it for the long haul. You arrive in the country. And your team leader informs you that you are to make your way to the most remote part of the island.

And you think to yourself, wow, what a challenge. But what a blessing at the same time. Seven days on foot through thick jungle you go.

And you arrive at a small village. Where the locals eye you with great suspicion. You realize that this tribe are a pre-stone age tribe.

They have never seen a westerner. And they hesitantly welcome you. And they give you some soup of which you don't know the contents. They hesitantly welcome you in this manner.

[11 : 08] And your first job as they welcome you in is to learn the language. Now, this will take you approximately three years just to get to the basics.

The locals are curious to know about you. And they're curious to know about the world in which you came from. Now, imagine you are given the task of explaining electricity to them.

How would you do it? How would you explain electricity to them? And you're not allowed to use any props such as a torch or a light.

Well, by now you know a little about the way they think and communicate. They believe in powers and they believe in spirits. So, perhaps you could say that electricity is like a power that goes through ropes.

It's like a spirit that goes through ropes and travels through ropes from one location to the other.

How about voltage? Resistance? Ohms?

[12 : 21] Transformers? How would you explain all that to them? Well, you know that you would have a tricky job on your hands. Now, this is something of the problem that the apostle John had.

In communicating to us everything that he saw that day where the Lord revealed himself and revealed eternity and heaven to him.

That day when he saw, what did he see? Well, the beginning of the book tells us he saw one like a son of man. Revelation 1 and verse 12 onwards.

After this, what else did he see? Do you remember? He saw a door standing open into heaven. And he heard a voice speaking like a trumpet which said, what did the voice say?

John, come up here. You must come up here and I will show you what must take place.

[13 : 44] You'll see that in chapter 4 of this book. And what did he see? Well, he saw a throne in heaven with a rainbow surrounding it.

He saw mysterious winged creatures flying about. He saw lightning. He saw a sea-like crystal. He witnessed cosmic battles between angels and demons.

That is what the apostle saw that day. That is what the apostle has recorded for us in this book.

Now, how does he go about it? How does he communicate all that he saw that day to us? Well, he uses symbols. He uses symbols.

For he knew and the Lord knows that our finite minds would never be able to handle a full disclosure right into that spiritual world.

[14 : 49] But he was given a glimpse of it. But he was given a glimpse of it to record for us. You see, that day will come for the Christian.

For today, we will see through that curtain that he saw that day. For today, we see as in a mirror dimly.

But the day will come where you and I of our faith is in the Lord Jesus. We will see behind that curtain. And we will see face to face as the apostle Paul says.

And remember what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, 12. He says, Now I know in part. Then I shall know fully.

Even as I have been fully known. One day, you and I, if we are Christians here today, we will experience all that John saw that day.

[15 : 55] Because that's where the Christian is headed. To glory itself. But until then, we only see in part.

You see, chapter 12 is the center point of the book of Revelation. Chapters 1 to 11 of this magnificent book. They tell a story.

The story of the mystery of the universe. A glimpse with space, time, and a glimpse into eternity.

Now chapters 12 to 22, the second half of the book. They tell us exactly the same story. But in greater detail.

And what the apostle does here. He condenses this story. This mystery. Into one chapter. Chapter 12.

[16:57] Philosophers. Philosophers. Psychologists. Sociologists. Archaeologists. Biologists. Amongst many others.

Have been attempting to answer one or two foundational questions. For millennia. For thousands of years. What kind of questions were they asking?

And what kind of questions are they asking today? Questions such as, why are we here? Questions such as, to what end are we here?

Where are we going? And probably the biggest. Why is there so much evil and wickedness in this world?

Do you know that after thousands of years, there is yet no consensus? They're still debating.

[18:05] They're still arguing. They're still fighting. Because they will not look at this book to find the answers.

And I tell you now. That a Sunday school class. Has more knowledge.

Of these foundational questions. Than the most intellectual philosopher in this world. Because even a Sunday school class knows the truth.

That we have been created by our creator. And we have been created by our creator. To worship him. In spirit.

And in truth. And we are to serve him. And to serve him. And worship him. Only. You see, Revelation 12.

[19:03] In fact, is a summary of history. Of time. And it's a summary of God's dealing with his created universe. And it also tells us about Satan's rage.

Against the people of God. And against all his created order. Revelation was written for two reasons. First, to encourage the first century Christians.

Who were persecuted because they would not worship the state. Written to remind them that God is in full control.

Not the Roman government of the day. Therefore, as the word of God is alive. And to be our only rule. For life and for death.

It is to encourage you and I. In these tumultuous times. The second reason. Revelation was written. It was written.

[20:07] It was written to challenge. Not only was it written to encourage people of God. It was written to challenge them. You know, these first century Christians.

They realized that the state could not save them. Even if they were tempted to join their neighbors. In worshiping the Roman state.

Therefore, and once again. In accord with the scriptures. It challenges you. And it challenges me. To remain steadfast.

To Christ. And to his kingdom. For he is the only one that is to be worshipped. And he is the only one.

That has the ability. And the capacity. And the efficacy. And the grace. And the grace. To save. He alone knows the truth.

[21:06] State worship was forbidden then. And it is still forbidden today. Many of our brothers and sisters throughout this world. That obligation and that command is put upon them.

Even today. The scriptures consistently command the Christian to obey the law of the land.

As long as that law is in accordance with God's law. The Christian is consistently commanded to pray for states, men and women.

But state worship for the first century Christian was forbidden. They and we are to believe.

That Christ is sovereign over all. And in full control. Then. Now. And God willing if tomorrow comes. Tomorrow as well.

[22:05] Revelation was written to encourage. And revelation was written to challenge. So what did John see?

Well in these verses. He saw the woman. He saw a child. And he saw a dragon. Look at verse 1 with me please. And a great sign appeared in heaven.

A woman clothed with the sun. With the moon under her feet. And on her head a crown of 12 stars. The new international version has.

Instead of a great sign appeared in heaven. A great sign appeared in the sky. You know. When you actually look at the original translation of this.

This suggests that this report that John is seeing. Is actually visible to others. For others to see. What John is actually seeing here.

[23 : 08] Is public knowledge. Rather than John's experience alone. John throughout his writing. He uses this term.

Sign. You will see it all over his gospel as well. This term. Sign. Sign. And it conveys. What it is. That is revealed. And what is revealed.

Is not secret. But it is for public consumption. If you look at verse 3 here. And if you were to look at Revelation 15.1.

You will see the term used again. And moreover. In the book of Revelation. John uses this term four times. To describe. To describe. The apparent miracles done by the beast.

To deceive people. Into following the beast. You will see it in chapter 13. And you will see it at verse 13. And 14. And it is in chapter 19 as well. Where the beast will do all these.

[24 : 09] Apparent miracles. And the people will be deceived. And sucked in by the beast. So that is a sign. For public consumption as well. And in his gospel. The apostle describes the miracles of the Lord Jesus.

As signs. For public consumption. They are to be witnessed. In order for us to believe. Nothing secret.

Nothing esoteric. But for public consumption. You see. This Jesus. That we worship this day. And this book.

That we study together. This day. Is still a sign. For all to see. Just like the woman.

Is a sign. For all to see. You see. The church. Is a sign. For all to see. Today as well.

[25 : 08] It's a sign. It's a sign of God's grace. And his love. And his power. To save. When it comes to the gospel. Of free grace.

It is intended. For all. It is a sign. For all. This is a sign. The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is a sign. To a world. That needs forgiveness. The church. Is a sign. To a world. That is drifting away. From God. And it is still.

A sign. Today. It is for public. Consumption. Well. The radiant woman. Is clear. For all. To see. Who is she? Well. The whole world. Can actually see her. If they would only look. And what a woman. She is. The text. Tells us. That. She is clothed.

[26 : 03] With the sun. And the moon. At her feet. And she has a crown. Of twelve stars. On her head. So who is this woman? Well.

This woman. Is it Mary. The mother of the Lord Jesus? Well. No. Because later on. The text tells us. The dragon became furious.

With the woman. And went off to make war. On her. And the rest of her offspring. So who is the woman. In the text. Well.

The woman. In the text. Is the messianic community. Of God. Whether under the old covenant. Or like us.

Under the new covenant. For example. Listen to Isaiah. In chapter 54. He says. Sing. O barren woman. Address to Zion.

[26 : 58] Who is the mother of the people of God. In the old testament. Paul uses similar language. In the book of Galatians. In chapter 4. And at verse 26.

What does he say? The Jerusalem. That is above. Is free. And she is our mother. So this woman. Is the people of God.

It is you. And I. It is the people of God. Throughout the whole generations. Now the Messiah. The child.

Would spring out of this people. Out of this messianic community. The Messiah. The Messiah. Would come. What else does the text tell us.

About the woman. Well. Her feet. On the moon. Depict dominion. And the 12 stars. On her head. Represent the 12 tribes. Of Judah. And the 12 apostles.

[27 : 52] Respectively. She is none other. Than the church. She is the church. Which is radiant. In the sight.

In the sight. Of God. The church. Which is loved. By God. Jesus was born. Out of this community. In order to save. This community. He would give himself. For this community. And he rules over. This community. In love. Even today. The church. The people of God. In all ages. Has. And it will always be visible.

In this world. And the church. Will always be vocal. In this world. The church.

[28 : 48] Is a great sign. Of both. The power. And the grace. And the love. Of God. And a great sign. Appeared in heaven.

A woman. Clothed with the sun. Beautiful. And radiant. Why? Because they've been redeemed. By King Jesus. They've been made pure.

By King Jesus. Jesus. The first sign. The woman. Is the church. Of the Lord. Jesus Christ.

Now look at verse 2. With me please. She was pregnant. And was crying out. In birth pains. And the agony. Of giving birth. Now what is important. And the most important thing.

About this woman. Is that she is pregnant. And that she is crying out. With birth pains. Is that she is pregnant. Is that she is pregnant. Is that she is pregnant. And the old testament. Is that she is pregnant. Again in particular.

[29 : 44] He likens the distress. Of God's people. In his day. As a woman. Giving birth. And you will see. All through the scriptures.

The people of God. Being persecuted. And put down. And in distress. And you know. In Greek. And in Hebrew.

And in English. This language. Of deliverance. Has a double meaning. It can apply. To the birth. Of a child. To deliver.

A child. Or. And it can be used. To imply. Or to describe. The rescue. Of a people. In trouble. Or in distress.

Distress. The most important. Thing. About this radiant. Woman. Is that she is about. To give. Birth. She is about.

[30 : 39] To give. Birth. The second great sign. Look at verse 3. With me please. And another sign. Appeared in heaven. Behold. A great red dragon.

With seven heads. And ten horns. And on his head. Seven diadems. The second great sign.

Appears in verse 3. Now this great sign. Is not as beautiful.

Or as glorious. But it is horrible. In every way. Behold. A great red dragon. With seven heads. Ten horns. And on his head.

Seven diadems. Now there is no mistaking. Who this is. There is no mistaking. Who this is. Verse 9. Tells us. In this chapter.

That he is. That ancient serpent. Who is called. The devil. And Satan. And he is the deceiver. Of the whole world. You see.

[31 : 33] This red dragon. Was the one. That deceived me. For so long. Before grace. Entered into my life.

See this red dragon. This is the red dragon. That deceived you. For so long. Until grace. Entered into your experience. As well.

This red dragon. Is the one. Who deceives. The whole. World. And he is. Horrible. Red dragon. Is the.

Is the emblem. Of murderers. Intent. You remember. What Jesus said. He was a murderer. From the beginning. John chapter 8. The language.

The symbols. The apocalyptic. Style of writing. It may be esoteric. It may be mysterious. It may be hard. For us. To grasp. However. Remember. The great.

[32 : 25] Philosophical questions. We were talking about. Earlier. Why is there. So much evil. In this world. Well. Here. Is. The answer. Right.

Before us. And this. Is a sign. For all. To see. For all. To see. Once again. This sign. Is visible. For the whole.

World. Even today. To see. Just as it was. Right before. John's eyes. You see. The devil. And his work.

Are unmistakable. The wake. As a wake. Behind a boat. Of this great. Red dragon. Is a sign. That you and I.

See. Every day. Sin. Deceit. Carnage. Is the work. Of this.

[33 : 18] Red dragon. Who deceives. The whole world. The work. Of Satan. Is the sign.

That John. Saw. This day. Now. We see. As a. Usurped authority. In his appearance. What is the text. How does the text. Describe him. Well. Seven heads. And ten horns. Is the combination. Of the heads. And horns. Of all the four beasts. In Daniel's vision. Do you remember. Daniel's vision. Going back. To the old testament. In Daniel. Seven. He sees these beasts. Coming out. Of the sea. The beasts. You will remember. What. Who did they represent. Well. The beasts. Represented world powers. And governments. And empires. Which have their origin. In. And they owe their power. And allegiance. To this dragon. And this primeval. [34 : 12] Spiritual opponent. Of God. Behind. Behind. Behind every evil. And oppressive empire. This world. Has ever seen. They have had their allegiance.

To. This. Red. Dragon. You only need to look at your history books. To see nothing but war. A nation. States. Committing genocide. On their own people. Seven heads. Signifies. The universality. Of his power on earth. In other words. Behind every evil empire. Is an angry Satan. Intent. On destroying. The people of God. Whether. Whether. Two thousand years. Before the birth. Of this child. Or two thousand years. After. The resurrection. And the ascension. Of this child. This wonderful child. [35 : 12] That would grow. Into a man. This wonderful child. That would defeat. This red dragon. And every evil empire. This world.

Has ever seen. You know. We must remember. That all world powers. And governments. Are made up. Of unregenerate. Men and women. We must never. Forget that. Never forget that. Unregenerate. Men and women. Who have no time. For God. For his law. For his gospel. And we must. Be careful. Isaiah.

Saw it in his day. And he stood up. On his own. On his own. He stood up. And he said to them. Woe. Woe to those. Who call evil. [36 : 08] Good. And good. Evil. Who put darkness. For light. And light. For darkness. Who put bitter. For sweet. And sweet. For bitter.

But they did not listen. The people. Did not listen. And an even more. Oppressive. Kingdom. Would come in. And sweep them. Into exile. For 70 years. Brothers and sisters. This is not our home. We must never. Forget that. This is not our home. Now we have to be careful here. It would be so easy for us to downplay. Or to deny our own sin. And wrongdoing. And responsibility. You see. We too. By nature. Are guilty. We too.

[37 : 06] By nature. Are guilty. Since humanity fell in that garden. You know. We need the theological wisdom. And honesty. Of the little girl. Who had a terrific fight.

With her brother. She attacked her brother. On the couch. And started kicking him. And pulling his hair. And when the mother came in. The mother pulled her off. And said to the daughter. Why did you let the devil. Put it into your mind. To pull your brother's hair. And to kick him in the shins. Why would you let him do that? And the little girl paused. And she thought for a moment. And she said. Well maybe the devil. Put it into my mind. To pull my brother's hair. But kicking his shins. Was all my own idea. The second sign. The great red dragon.

[38 : 02] And his work. Is clear. For all to see. Then. And now. You know. We need this Lord Jesus.

For forgiveness. And sanctification. And direction. And we need this Lord Jesus. To make us. What we are not. By nature. And that is. Holy.

You know. Verse four. Is where the drama. Really begins. Look at verse four. With me. His tail. Swept down. A third of the stars. From heaven. And cast them to the earth. And the dragon. Stood before the woman. Who was about to give birth. So that when she bore her child. He might devour it. Remember. This is an apocalyptic metaphor. And it is taken. Originally. From the Old Testament. And Hebrew poetry. Where. When you read Hebrew poetry. You see that. Nature gets involved. In everything. You will remember. That the hills dance.

[38 : 59] You will remember. The trees. They clap their hands. You will remember. That the stars. Fall from the skies. And once again. All this. Is plain.

For us to see. The devil. Is banished. From heaven. And he's cast down. To earth. This is not secret. This is plain. For all. To see.

Because the scriptures. Are plain. And they tell us. So. They tell us. So. And the picture. Of the dragon. Waiting beside the birth canal. It's intended.

To be horrible. And it's intended. To be grotesque. Because this dragon. Is grotesque. The woman. Is struggling. She's in agony. Of pain.

And this dragon. Is about to attempt. Something. That is utterly. Catastrophic. And violent. As a third. Of the universe. Collapses. In the process. And many believe.

[39 : 53] That a third. Of the angels. Gave their allegiance. To this dragon. And they were swept. Down to this earth. With the dragon. In this great. Catastrophic.

Collapse. But God. Is sovereign. It's God's plan. Give me the child.

He says. Come on. Give me the child. I am going to eat him. It reflects. The rage. Of Satan. Against God. Against his Messiah.

And against his church. So how does this work out. In history. Well. The first blood path. Takes place. In the village. Of Bethlehem. You will remember. Where Joseph.

Is warned. In a dream. By God. To flee to Egypt. The same as the people of God. In the Old Testament. Flee to Egypt. And Herod. In a rage.

[40 : 48] Following the instructions. Of the great red dragon. Whether he would admit it. Or not. He goes into the village. And he slaughters. Every child. Under two years of age. Such is the rage.

Such is the rage. Of Satan. Against this Messiah. And his people. And you will see this red dragon attack. The Lord Jesus. Every step of the way.

Through his earthly ministry. And you will see the Lord Jesus. Hanging on the cross. And you will see Satan there. Thinking he's won. When in actuality that. Has defeated him.

You see chapter 12. Reveals the devil. As the deeper source of evil. Verse 5. The birth of the child. If you would look at that. With me please. She gave birth to a male child. One who is to rule the nations. With a rod of iron. But her child was caught up. To God. And to his throne.

[41 : 44] You see with the help of God. The woman perseveres. And she gives birth to the child. And here. We have the birth. We have the life. We have the ministry.

We have the death. We have the resurrection. We have the ascension. All in one sentence. Lord Jesus. This is your life.

All in one sentence. He is destined to rule. And he has already been snatched up to God.

The text tells us. The deliverance of God's people. Does not come this time. By a return. To a promised land.

But by the means of a birth. Of a child. The spiritual victory. Won by Jesus. Is expounded in the next section. Verses 7 to 9. All about heavenly warfare.

[42 : 43] The whole of Revelation. Is the story. Of this wonderful child. Who won the victory. And is now seated. At the right hand of God. The child. Who would save us.

What about the woman. Now that the child. Has been taken up. To be with his father. In heaven. And is seated. At his right hand side. What about the woman. Now that the woman. Has to remain on earth.

In other words. What about the church. And the woman. Fled into the wilderness. The text tells us. Where she has a place.

Prepared by God. In which she is to be. Nourished for 1,260 days. Now great debate. Surrounds the interpretation.

Of the 1,260 days. Is it literal? Is it figurative? Well I think it could be both. Simultaneously. It is possible.

[43 : 42] That it actually refers back. To 167 years. Before the birth. Of the child. It refers back.

To 167 BC. And the severe. Oppression. Of Israel. By a Greek. General king.

Called Antiochus. Epiphanes the fourth. And he began. Slaughtering pigs. In the temple. In what became known. As the abomination.

Of desolation. And during the reign. Of this. Greek king. To read the Torah. God's word. Or to observe the Sabbath. Became a capital offense.

You could lose. Your life. For it. Oppression. And genocide. Marked his rule. Over Israel. And the people of God. Now this man. Took wicked.

[44 : 37] To a whole new level. Josephus. The historian. Records for us. That Antiochus. His armies. Once they had taken over. The towns. In Jerusalem. They moved up.

Into the hill country. And they ran into. An old priest of God. Called. Matetius. And this Matetius. He had three sons. The first.

Was called Judas. Judas. The hammer. Was his name. In Aramaic. Judas. Maccabeus. Now this man. Actually invented.

Guerrilla warfare. To fight. This Greek general. And do you know. That his tactics. Are still studied. Today. In military colleges. Throughout the world.

For three and a half years. There was intense warfare. Until a final battle. Where the Greeks. Were soundly defeated. By Maccabeus. And the Jewish.

[45 : 32] Guerrillas. And after that. The temple. Was rededicated. To the Lord. Three and a half years later. In 164 BC. That's 164 years.

Before the birth. Of the child. Therefore. One thousand. Two hundred. And sixty days. Three and a half years.

This became symbolic. For the Jews. And it became symbolic. For the Jews. As a time. Of intense. Suffering. So you mentioned.

One thousand. Two hundred and sixty days. They knew right away. What you meant. So as they read this. They knew right away. What was meant. Intense suffering. For the people. Of God.

Therefore. Three and a half years. Became symbolic. For the Jews. As a period. Of intense suffering. And then. At the end of it. God would reveal himself. And the opponents. Of God.

[46 : 28] Would be defeated. Of course. John is looking back here. As he mentions this number. It's all in the past. However. One thousand. Two hundred and sixty days.

Is emblematic. Now. For any period. Of time. Of intense. Suffering. For the people. Of God. Between the first. Coming of Jesus. The birth.

And the death. And the second coming. Which is in the future. This one thousand. Two hundred and sixty days. Is the here and the now.

For many of our brothers and sisters. Throughout this world. Who are suffering terribly. For their faith. This one thousand. Two hundred and sixty days. Is the here.

And now. Where the western churches. Are all closed. And meet online. It is the here and now. Where our western worlds.

[47 : 24] Head into the great unknown. John's point here is. That the people of God. Will be vindicated.

They will be vindicated. When the Lord moves in. At that second coming. Of this child.

Now the desert. The desert refers to the messianic community. Fleeing into the wilderness. It refers to God's faithfulness. To his covenant people. As they pass through the desert.

On their way to the promised land. How is this possible? Because the male child. Has won the battle. Snatched the battle. And is taken up to heaven. You know.

We as the people of God. We must remain. In this wilderness. We must remain. In this wilderness. Until it is our turn. To be snatched up to heaven.

[48 : 19] Or the Lord himself returns. As I said earlier. This wilderness is not our home. We are not to get too comfortable. In this wilderness.

We are here to worship the Lord. The point is that God will protect you. And he will watch over you. As you pass through this wilderness. The wilderness. The wilderness. The wilderness. The wilderness. For many of our brothers and sisters. That suffer terribly as well.

The woman. The child. And the dragon. It is written to encourage. And it is written to challenge. As we walk through this wilderness together.

Believing that Jesus. Believing that Jesus. This child. Has won the battle. He has won the war. Because of his deep love.

[49 : 16] For the woman. His church. Giving himself an order. For you and I. To reach this promised land. where we could not go of our own accord because of our sin but Jesus has dealt with our sin.

Praise God. Our allegiance now, who is it to? It is to Christ and to Christ alone.

The one who loved us and gave himself for us. John revealed that the child and the woman have defeated the dragon. Therefore, we are to remain steadfast.

For the child and the woman will be vindicated when God finally and ultimately intervenes at the end of time and takes this woman, his church, his people, you and I, to be with himself.

God is in full control. The story is told of the little girl who lived beside a graveyard and in order for the little girl to get to the shops, she had to pass through the graveyard and she used to pass through even at night on her own in the dark.

[50 : 43] And somebody asked her one day, little girl, don't you ever get afraid as you pass through the cemetery at night?

And the little girl paused and she thought and she said and she answered, oh no, I don't get afraid. You see, my home is only over there.

You see, that's my home. It's only over there. Let us pray.

Gracious and ever-blessed God, we give you thanks this day for your word, which is inerrant and which is truth. And we thank you, oh Lord, that this word both encourages and challenges us to remain steadfast to this child who was snatched up to heaven with the victory won.

Gracious Lord, we thank you for these few verses that we have studied together, which give us that glimpse into eternity itself.

[51 : 58] And we thank you, oh Lord, that you have revealed all these wonderful things to us. And our prayer from the depths of our heart this day is that you would reveal this truth to everyone in this land, that you would reveal this truth of the necessity of salvation through the efficacy of Christ's death, that you would reveal it to all those who are in places of authority and power.

Lord, we pray for those who are already Christians in these places. Lord, we pray for those who rule over us. And we pray that you would grant them wisdom, knowledge and understanding in these days.

But most of all, Lord, we pray that you would show them grace in their hearts and show them Jesus. Help us, oh Lord, as a church, to point this nation back to Jesus and help us not to be sidetracked and to help one another, to pray for one another and to uphold one another, knowing that this child has won the victory.

So Lord, would you go before us this day and bless us and forgive us for Christ's sake. Amen.