

December 22nd – The Woman, the Child, & the Dragon

“Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.” (Rev. 12:1-3)

One of the keys to understanding any passage of Scripture is to identify its genre. In other words, what sort of literature is it? There are many different genres in the Bible – historical narrative, wisdom, didactic, etc. The Revelation belongs to a genre known as apocalyptic – it utilizes a lot of imagery and makes many statements about the future. Yet, apocalyptic texts also take a look back into the past. That’s exactly what we have with today’s verses.

Rev. 12 introduces to the story of a woman, her child, and a menacing dragon. The text tells us she was “clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.” The twelve stars indicate the woman’s identity – she is Israel, the nation of twelve tribes. Rev. 12:5 tells us that “she bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” Who could that Ruler be? None other than King Jesus! So then, the Child is Israel’s Messiah – Jesus.

But what about this dragon? Rev. 12:4 says that “the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.” Clearly, the dragon represents the Devil who was banished from hell along with a third of the angels (Rev. 12:4). The Devil did everything He could to destroy Jesus and thwart God’s plan of salvation. But regardless of all his effort, the Devil was unsuccessful in stopping the Lion of Judah. The dragon is great, but our God is greater!