

# PANORAMA OF PROPHECY

A LIFE-CHANGING BIBLE STUDY!

A WOMAN IN THE WILDERNESS

1 Kings 3:16-28

## THE STORY ...



A hush fell over the royal judgment hall, and all eyes were fixed on King Solomon. His servants wondered how the young monarch would resolve this perplexing case.

Two single mothers were sharing a room, and each gave birth to a baby boy at about the same time. During the night, one of the mothers had accidentally turned over and smothered her son. When she awoke early and saw her child was cold and still, the distraught woman took her roommate's sleeping baby to herself and laid her dead baby in its place. Later the other mother awoke, saw the dead baby, and began to wail with grief. But after examining the infant, she quickly realized that it was not her child. Across the room, she could see her roommate tightly clutching her baby.

Now both women stood before the king, tugging for possession of the living infant. "This child is mine!" one shouted.

"No, the dead baby was yours!" the other countered.

How would the king determine which was the true mother? Solomon interrupted their debate and told a guard to take a sword and divide the living infant in two. At first the soldier thought the king was jesting, but Solomon began to glare at the guard's hesitation. Slowly he drew his sharp, gleaming sword and made his way toward the woman holding the baby. Suddenly the true mother threw herself at the king's feet and pleaded, "Let her have the child, but please do not slay it!" But the other woman said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, but divide him." Now Solomon knew without a doubt who was the true mother.

In prophecy, a woman is a symbol of a church (Jeremiah 6:2). With so many churches in the last days, how can we distinguish the true, last-day church that has the living Son from the counterfeits? Like Solomon, we must use the sword of God's Word (Hebrews 4:12)!



## THE STUDY

Fill in the blanks after reading each Bible text.

### 1. How does Revelation picture God's true church?

**Revelation 12:1, 2, 5** A \_\_\_\_\_ clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with \_\_\_\_\_, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. ... She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a \_\_\_\_\_ of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

NOTE: In Bible prophecy, God's church is symbolized by a pure woman (Jeremiah 6:2). In Revelation 12, this woman is clothed with the sun, moon, and stars—the natural light of God's creation. Jesus told the church, "You are the light of the world." Matthew 5:14. The sun represents the light of Jesus (Psalm 84:11; Malachi 4:2). The moon under her feet represents the types and shadows of the Old Testament sacrificial system. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so the sacrificial system was helpful because it reflected the light of the Messiah to come (Colossians 2:16, 17; Hebrews 10:1). The 12 stars above her head symbolize the leadership of the church—12 tribes in the Old Testament and 12 apostles in the New Testament. The one who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron is Jesus (Psalm 2:7-9; Revelation 19:13-16).

### 2. Who is the "great red dragon," and what does he try to do?

**Revelation 12:9** So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Revelation 12:4** The dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to \_\_\_\_\_ her Child as soon as it was born.

NOTE: The dragon is Satan, who at the time of Jesus' birth was working through the pagan Roman Empire. Satan influenced Herod, a ruler under Rome, to try to murder baby Jesus by killing all the infants in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16).

### 3. What happens after Satan fails to destroy Jesus?

**Revelation 12:5** And her Child was \_\_\_\_\_ to God and His throne.

NOTE: After His resurrection, Jesus ascended up to heaven and to God's throne (Acts 1:9-11), where He was beyond the reach of Satan.

### 4. After Jesus was caught up to heaven, what did Satan do to the church?

**Revelation 12:13** When the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he \_\_\_\_\_ the woman who gave birth to the male Child.

NOTE: When Satan could no longer vent his hatred on Jesus, he decided to hurt Jesus by turning his fury against the church.

### 5. Where did the woman go during this terrifying period of persecution? How long did it last?

**Revelation 12:6** Then the woman fled into the \_\_\_\_\_, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

NOTE: The woman (God's church) fled into the wilderness (the remote places of earth) to hide from her enemies. It is a well-known historical fact that during the Dark Ages, God's people fled to the caves and solitary places of earth, including the shores of America, to seek religious freedom and protection from papal persecution. The 1,260 days (also described in the Bible as 42 months or as three and a half years) refers to the terrible 1,260-year period of persecution during which millions died for their faith. During this time period, God's church was alive but was not identifiable as an official, visible organization. (See the supplement entitled "Years of Persecution.")

### 6. What are two other identifying marks of God's true church?

**Revelation 12:17** And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the \_\_\_\_\_ of God and have the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.

NOTE: God's remnant church, into which He is calling all His people, will keep God's Ten Commandments (including the Sabbath). It will also have the testimony of Jesus, which is the spirit, or gift, of prophecy (Revelation 19:10). God calls His end-time church "the remnant," because it is identical in doctrine and characteristics to the apostolic church. A "remnant" is the last remaining portion of a bolt of cloth. It is exactly like the first piece from the same bolt.

### 7. How did Jesus say that we demonstrate our love for Him?

**John 14:15** If you love Me, \_\_\_\_\_ My commandments.

**1 John 5:3** For this is the love of God, that we keep His \_\_\_\_\_.

NOTE: In our opening story, Solomon was able to identify the true mother by her genuine display of love. In the same way, God's true church will be recognized by its sacrificial love and its willingness to obey His commandments.

### 8. What three angelic messages will God's end-time church be preaching?

**A. Revelation 14:7** Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His \_\_\_\_\_ has come; and \_\_\_\_\_

Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.

**B. Revelation 14:8** And another angel followed, saying, "\_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

**C. Revelation 14:9, 10** Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the \_\_\_\_\_ and his image, and receives his \_\_\_\_\_ on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God."

NOTE: These three angelic statements represent the three urgent messages that God's church will preach before Jesus returns.

