



# Enter the Dragon

Revelation 12

Many of you have favorite Christmas traditions. One of the newest Christmas traditions in America is the annual battle over public nativity displays. The latest is in Wisconsin, in a place called Peshtigo Park. The secular objector to the sacred manger characters is Dan Barker who said,

“When the city displays the manger scene, which depicts the legendary birth of the Christian God, it places the imprimatur of city government behind one religious doctrine...This excludes citizens who are not Christian, Jews, Native American religion practitioners, animists, as well as the significant and growing portion of the U.S. population that is not religious at all (14 percent of adults), including taxpayers in the city of Peshtigo.”

Sometimes folks try to appease the Dan Barker's of the world by including other more secular characters of Christmas – like Santa – and other religious symbols – like a menorah.

If you're going to add some characters and symbols to the traditional nativity scene I have a few suggestions. Add the characters of

Revelation twelve: a woman clothed with the sun, a fiery red dragon, and a Child with a rod of iron in His hand!

I haven't lost my mind. Those characters tell the complete story of Christmas. They tell it from the perspective of Heaven looking down the corridors of human history from eternity past through eternity future.

Let's take a closer look at this 'cosmic' nativity. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Jesus Came As Your Savior Despite Satan's Continual Interference, and #2 Jesus Is Coming As Your Sovereign Despite Satan's Continuing Interference.

### #1 Jesus Came As Your Savior Despite Satan's Continual Interference (v1-5)

The traditional nativity scene that celebrates the birth of Jesus doesn't go back far enough. God was at work well before the arrival of Mary and Joseph at Bethlehem. He was at work in *eternity* and in *Eden*:

1. In eternity God already knew that mankind would need a Savior. Before the foundation of the earth was laid it had already been determined in Heaven that God would Himself enter the world as its Savior.
2. In Eden the reason for God's plan to send a Savior became clear: Adam and Eve, representing the whole human race that would spring from them, sinned. Since then, all human beings inherit a sin nature, and all human beings commit individual acts of sin.

God promised Adam and Eve that He would send a Savior into the world to deal with sin. The Savior would be God Incarnate, God in human flesh, fully God and fully human. The Savior would be born of a woman.

*And not just any woman!* God established a specific nation through which the Savior would be born. The nation was Israel. The Savior of the world would be born to a Jewish woman.

The first two verses of Revelation Twelve present this **woman** who would give birth to the Savior.

**Revelation 12:1** 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.

**Revelation 12:2** Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

People often accuse the Bible – and especially the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ - of being impossible to understand because of its weird symbols that are open to multitudes of interpretations. ***Nothing could be further from the truth!***

First of all, signs and symbols are always intended to *clarify*, not to *confuse*. Some years ago the countries of the world began to adopt universal signs and symbols in airports and public places. In America our traffic signs are largely symbols. Is it to confuse you? No, it is to clarify and communicate.

Second of all, the Bible defines its own symbols. This **woman** in Revelation twelve is defined for you all the way back in the first book of the Bible. In Genesis thirty-seven a man named Joseph had a dream. In his dream the sun, moon, and stars symbolized the nation of Israel.

The **woman** of Revelation twelve *is* the nation of Israel, with her twelve tribes, through whom God would send the Savior, Jesus Christ, into the world.

The nation of Israel is at the very heart of God's dealings with human history. It is miraculous that the Jews even exist as an identifiable people among the nations of the world. The physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have been scattered throughout the world since the time of Babylon - *for over 2500 years*. For the past 1900 years they have had no temple to worship in; still their language, literature, and lifestyle has been preserved.

It defies any possible rational or natural explanation that the Jews would return to their own land at the end of twenty-five centuries of global exile to be reestablished once again as a nation!

Nevertheless, in our own modern era, on May 14, 1948, Israel was again a nation in her promised land. She has since been the daily focus of world attention week after week, decade after decade - right up to today's newspaper headlines.

The only explanation that anyone can give for Israel's existence throughout human history as a nation is a supernatural explanation. God has a plan for Israel. Listen to these ancient prophecies that have come true before your very eyes:

**Isaiah 14:1** For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land...

**Jeremiah 23:3** "But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase...

**Jeremiah 23:8** "...but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own land."

**Ezekiel 11:17** "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel."

The existence of Israel as a nation should by itself be enough to convince any skeptic that there is a God Who is involved with human history. But there is more: Revelation 12:3-4 tells of interference with God's plan to bring a Savior into the world through the nation of Israel.

**Revelation 12:3** And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

**Revelation 12:4** His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

The identity of the **fiery red dragon** is not in dispute. You are told later in this same chapter, in verse nine, that,

**Revelation 12:9** "...that serpent of old, [is] the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world..."

Human history is the story of Satan's interference with the coming of Jesus into the world as your Savior. The grotesque imagery of the Devil standing before the woman seeking to devour her child is a symbolic summary of Satan's continual interference with the birth of the promised Savior. Satan knew that the Savior would be born of a woman and so he has tried throughout history to thwart that birth.

His interference began with Cain killing Abel. Cain and Abel were two sons of Adam and Eve. Cain was jealous of his brother and he murdered him. It's possible that Adam and Eve thought Abel might be the promised Savior; Satan may have thought so, too. At any rate you're told that the Devil was involved in Abel's death. First John 3:12 says **Cain... was of that wicked one, and slew his brother.** When Cain killed Abel, Satan was attempting to cut-off the line through which the Savior would be born.

When God began to reveal His plan to establish a new nation through Abraham, Satan's efforts became focused on destroying the Jews. Biblical history is full with his efforts to destroy Israel:

1. At the birth of Moses, Pharaoh ordered the death of all male children born to Jewish women. This was a satanic effort to end the line through which your Savior would come.
2. The Old Testament book of Esther records the attempts of a man named Haman to exterminate the Jewish race.
3. When Jesus was born, King Herod issued a decree to slaughter the Jewish babies two-years old and younger.

Satan is not alone in his long war against God:

**Revelation 12:4** His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

**A third of the stars of heaven** refers to Satan leading one-third of the angels in a rebellion against God. Satan, an angel himself, is the leader of the fallen angels that we call demons. When the Bible says that Satan **threw them to the earth** it means that the earth is their place of service to the devil.



Despite all Satan's diabolical designs to **devour** Jesus, your Savior **was** born through the nation of Israel:

**Revelation 12:5** She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

One important detail is overlooked in the traditional nativity scene: The baby Jesus was born to eventually **rule all nations with a rod of iron**. To that end, these verses summarize the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus by speaking of His ascension into Heaven to sit at the right hand of God's throne. His ascension into Heaven tells you He was successful as your Savior.

Jesus came the first time to save sinners. Who are the "sinners" Jesus was sent to save? They are **every** descendant of Adam and Eve. **All** human beings fall short of the righteousness of God. Let me ask you a question: Are you less perfect than God? If you answer "Yes!," then you are a sinner who Jesus came to save.

**Your Savior has come!** That is the true spirit of Christmas. Jesus came into the world to save sinners – and He has. He is the Savior of all men – especially those who believe.<sup>1</sup>

#2 Jesus Is Coming As Your Sovereign Despite  
Satan's Continuing Interference  
(v6-17)

After Jesus ascended into heaven Satan continued his attempts to exterminate the Jews. He hadn't thwarted the first coming of Jesus; perhaps he could or can interfere with the Second Coming of Jesus.

Modern history is full of attempts to exterminate the Jews. A careful study of Hitler and Himmler reveals occult, supernatural activity – *satanic activity* – that accounts for the incredible hostility of the Holocaust. The worst persecution against them is yet to come.

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

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<sup>1</sup> First Timothy 4:10

The text leaps forward into the future history of the world. Bible teachers and students of prophecy immediately understand the reference in verse six to **one thousand two hundred and sixty days**. These days add up to three and one half years. They are also sometimes referred to as **a time, times, and half a time**. Those are all prophetic descriptions of a three and one half year period of time that immediately precedes the Second Coming of Jesus to the earth. They are the last half of a seven year period at the end of human history called the Great Tribulation.

To interfere with the Second Coming of Jesus, Satan **declares war** in Heaven:

**Revelation 12:7** And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,

**Revelation 12:8** but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.

**Revelation 12:9** So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

It troubles some people to think of Satan being in Heaven. The Bible teaches that Satan was indeed cast out of Heaven, but that God calls him to appear there from time to time. Satan still has access to Heaven by God's permission. In the future he will instigate this war.

- being changed to bring change -  
God easily wins this heavenly war, letting Michael and the other angels have the privilege of carrying out His will. The Devil and his demons are finally and utterly cast out of heaven to the earth.

To interfere with the Second Coming of Jesus, Satan **determines wrath** on the earth:

**Revelation 12:10** Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

**Revelation 12:11** And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

**Revelation 12:12** Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

**Revelation 12:13** Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*.

**Revelation 12:14** But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

**Revelation 12:15** So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

**Revelation 12:16** But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

**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 commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Chief among Satan's efforts will be another 'final solution' attempt to exterminate all Jews. You see, God has promised the Jews that they would see the return of Jesus and believe on Him as their Messiah. Satan reasons that if he can annihilate the Jews from the earth then Jesus **cannot** return in His Second Coming. But the verses tell you that God will supernaturally protect a remnant of His people, the Jews. They **will** remain; Jesus **will** return.

Does it sound fantastic to you that Jesus Christ will one day soon return to rule the earth as its Sovereign? *It shouldn't!* There are more verses in the Bible regarding the Second Coming of Jesus as your Sovereign than there are regarding His first coming as your Savior. The only thing fantastic is that men, women and children celebrate a secular Christmas while refusing to believe the sacred truth about Jesus.

## Conclusion

Most of you have a nativity scene at home. Whether you do or don't, I sincerely hope that you will see that the true nativity scene includes these symbols: a **woman clothed with the sun**, a **fiery red dragon**, and a **Child** with a **rod of iron** in His hand. These symbols tell you that Jesus came as your Savior, and that He is coming again very soon as your Sovereign.

Is He **your** Savior? If not, you are not ready for Him to be your Sovereign...