

## WHY LIFE IS LIKE IT IS REVELATION 12

Today's sermon is the first of three of a summer series pertaining to contemporary subjects, some history, and the end times.

It seems necessary to me to bring a Biblical perspective to these subjects using orthodox hermeneutics (which are principles of interpretation) as opposed to the bizarre interpretations that are widely published on the internet that present grotesque caricatures of the Biblical witness.

Thus, I am beginning with "Why Life Is Like It Is" based upon Revelation 12 because I believe that if we understand it properly, we will understand the question posed by theodicy: why a good and gracious, all-powerful God permits the manifestation of evil in the lives of His people.

Apocalyptic literature of which Revelation along with the Books of Daniel and a portion of Zechariah are examples of a specific genre of literature involving angels and highly figurative language.

Additionally, Revelation presumes that the reader is thoroughly familiar with the First Testament from Genesis to Malachi.

I The scene opens with **a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.**

A The clothing of the woman is heavenly as opposed to the clothing of the anti-church of Revelation 18 who is clothed in earthly opulence.

B Nevertheless, the woman of Revelation 12 is glorious!

C The Gospel is the radiance that envelops her and the Law is the moon that is waning beneath her feet.

III The number 12 in Revelation always refers in some manner to the Church: either the 12 tribes of Israel as the First Testament Church or the 12 Apostles who wrote the Apostolic Scriptures of the New Testament and assisted by the Holy Spirit founded the Church. These are the 12 stars.

IV **She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.**

A The pain exemplifies the expectancy of Mother Eve awaiting the birth of the promised Savior.

B In **Genesis 3**, there was a prophecy that one of Mother Eve's descendants would crush the serpent's head.

C Millennia later, the Prophet Micah prophesied that Israel would bear a Child.

D Thus, the woman is at first Eve, then Israel reduced to One in the person of the Blessed Virgin Mary who conceived the Holy Child by the Holy Spirit.

- V **Then another sign appeared in Heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems emblematic of political power.**
- A Verse 9 of chapter 12 interprets the dragon for us: **The great dragon is that ancient serpent who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world ...**
- B The serpent is the old evil foe of humanity who introduced us to sin: **devil means accuser and satan means adversary.**
- C **The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour it.**
- D Of course, the enemy works through humanity; he sought to murder the Son of God through the agency of King Herod but failed. Later satan's temptations, Rome, crucifixion, and a bloody death were attempted, but Jesus Christ triumphed over all.
- E The **tail swept one third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.**
- F These are the demons – angels who left their former estate and fell from grace with satan.
- G Now they are upon the earth to do their master's bidding.
- VI Jesus' incarnation and ascension are rolled into one expressing both His humanity and divinity: **She gave birth to a Son, a male Child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. Her child was caught up to God and to His throne.**
- VII **The woman fled into the desert/wilderness to a place prepared for her by God.**
- A God has prepared a dwelling place for His Church, but why the desert wilderness?
- B Because this is the exact place where Israel was in total dependence upon God.
- C Here the Church will remain for 1,260 days – an imperfect period of time: one-half of the perfect number 7X180– not to be understood literally.
- VIII **War developed in Heaven: the Archangel Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his demonic angels, but they were not strong and lost their place in Heaven. The great dragon was hurled to the earth and his troops with him.**
- VIII Thus, the struggle between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world intensified.

- A John heard a voice from Heaven saying: **the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down ... and they have conquered him by the Blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony ...**
- B The means of grace: **the Word and the Sacraments** are the weapons of the Church.
- IX Now, the dragon devil is furious ... enraged ... because he knows that his era is short.
- X Thus he pursues and persecutes us (the woman has now become the New Testament Church) venting his anger against the Bride of Christ – the Church – for we place our lives in the care of Jesus Christ and refuse to worship and serve the dragon.
- XI **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 ...**
- A Remember from **Exodus 19:4** God said through Moses: I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself.
- B This **dwelling place** is a tabernacle where God is present with His people.
- C Here we are nourished with His Word and Sacraments.
- XII In an attempt to thwart God's protection, the dragon poured water out of his mouth to sweep the Church away with a flood.
- A These are the lies of satan – the false doctrines and false religions that appeal to the innermost desires of many.
- B Thus, the earth – those who fall for his lies - swallow the fraudulent deceptions.
- XIII **Then the dragon went to make war on her offspring – those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**
- XIV And this is why life is like it is.
- XV God loves us and provides for us, but we have an enemy who is hell bent on robbing us of our faith and destroying us.
- XVI But, **greater is He who is in us the he who is in the world.**