

Revelation Chapter Twelve

The Sign of the Woman and Her Adversary

Astronomical Significance of The Woman

1. The vision sequence that constitutes chapters 10 and 11 gives way to chapter 12.
2. The little scroll of chapter 10 and the recommissioning of John in 10:11 contained the prophetic doctrine beginning with chapter 12 to the end of the book.
3. This vision sequence covers chapters 12 and 13.
4. The information in this chapter revolves around a woman and a dragon, both of which are presented in the format of zodiacal “signs” (cf. vv. 1, 3).
5. The descriptive adjective “great” is used in the aforementioned verses in connection with these two entities.
6. It is critical to the present study to also recognize that the two main characters of the drama are seen in astronomical terms.
7. The celestial zodiac, which has been corrupted in the minds of men by paganism, contains two constellations which are represented in the present vision.
8. The first in order is commonly referred to as Virgo, the Virgin.
9. The second is the dragon (Draco).
10. Draco is a Decan of the 4th constellation, Sagittarius.
11. Each of the 12 constellations exists in a circle called the ecliptic.
12. This heavenly zodiac was set up by God as a witness to humanity in Genesis 1:14 on D + 4 of restoration.
13. The exact expression reads “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night (1st purpose-24 hour cycle), and let them be for signs (2nd purpose is doctrinal) and seasons (agricultural-3rd) and for days and years (calendar; 4th).”
14. The purpose of this heavenly storybook was to teach the unfolding drama of redemption in prophetic imagery.
15. Two main Christian authors detail all of this in two books “The Gospel in the Stars” (Joseph Seiss) and “The Witness of the The Stars” (E. W. Bullinger).
16. It is an on-going witness which has been subverted by practitioners of paganism and is reflected in the ancient myths.
17. Professional students of the heavens in Persia were called Magi.
18. These Gentile and believing scholars, who honored God by traveling from the East to visit the infant Jesus, took their lead from the things they were observing in the heavens, and probably from their study of the Scripture, particularly the book of Daniel with its doctrine of the 70 Weeks of Years.
19. In fact, this class of scholars was connected to and was influenced by Daniel, during his career in Babylon.
20. A series of celestial alignments (“signs”) alerted them to the fact that an important king was about to be born of messianic credentials.
21. This is all documented in a truly remarkable and indispensable book entitled, “The Star That Astonished The World” (Ernest L. Martin).
22. Martin in his book establishes the truth that on the very day of Jesus’ birth the astronomical phenomenon of Revelation 12:1.

23. He shows in chapter five of his book that Jesus was born on September 11th 3BC.
24. The woman of chapter 12 is symbolically featured as being “in heaven” and both the Sun and Moon are in association with her.
25. The Sun clothes her and the Moon is at her feet.
26. The only sign of a woman which exists along the ecliptic (the track of the Sun in its journey through the stars) is that to Virgo the Virgin.
27. She occupies, in body form, a space of about 50 degrees along the ecliptic.
28. The head of the woman actually bridges some 10 degrees into the previous sign of Leo the Lion, and her feet overlap about 10 degrees into the following sign of Libra, the Scales.
29. At the time of Jesus’ birth, the Sun entered its annual course through the heavens into the head position of the woman, around August 13, and exited from her feet about October 2.
30. But the apostle John saw the scene when the Sun was “clothing” the woman (e.g. mid-body).
31. The only time in the year that the Sun could be in a position to “clothe” the celestial woman called Virgo (that is, to be mid-bodied to her, in the region where a pregnant woman carries a child) is when the Sun is located between about 150 and 170 degrees along the ecliptic.
32. This “clothing” of the woman by the Sun occurs for 20-day period each year.
33. This 20 day spread indicates the general time when Jesus was born.
34. In 3 B.C., the Sun would have entered this celestial region about August 27 and exited from it about September 15.
35. If the intent in Revelation chapter 12 is to associate the birth of Jesus with the period of time when the Sun was mid-bodied with this woman called Virgo, then Jesus would have to be born in this 20-day period.
36. From the point of view of the Magi, who were astrologers, this would have been the only logical sign under which the Jewish Messiah might be born, especially if He were to be born of a virgin.
37. In the “Encyclopedia of Astrology (p. 366) it is stated that the sign of Virgo is the one which has reference to a messianic ruler to be born of a virgin.
38. Virgo is considered as being the head or first of the zodiacal signs which depict the Person and career of Messiah.
39. The fact that the woman is connected to the sign of Leo by some 10 degrees shows where the story of Messiah begins and ends.
40. It begins with His virgin birth and ends with Him being crowned King of kings in the final or 12th sign of the Lion.
41. It is also of interest to note that the days from August 27 to September 15 corresponds to the witness of Luke relative to the birth of John the Baptist and the eighth course of Abijah.
42. The position of the Moon in John’s vision actually pinpoints the nativity to within a day and to within an hour and a half (90 minutes) as absurd as that might first appear on the surface.
43. The key is the Moon.
44. The seer says it was located “*under* her feet.”
45. The Moon travels about 12 degrees a day in its course through the heavens.
46. It is vital to note that the Moon is the New Moon.
47. Since the feet of Virgo represent the last 7 degrees of the constellation (in the time of Jesus this would be between 180 and 187 degrees along the ecliptic), the Moon has to be positioned somewhere under that 7 degree arc to satisfy the description of Revelation 12.
48. But the Moon has to be in that exact location when the Sun is mid-bodied to Virgo.

49. In the year 3 B.C., these two factors came to precise agreement for about an hour and a half, as observed from Palestine.
50. That took place in the twilight period of September 11th at the conclusion of the Feast of Trumpets.
51. The alignment began about 6:15 p.m. (sunset), and lasted until around 7:45 p.m. (moonset).
52. This is the only day in whole year that the astronomical phenomenon described in Rev. 12:1 could take place.
53. The Moon was in the crescent phase.
54. It was a New Moon, the start of a new lunar month.
55. Ordinary people in modern times who are not professional astronomers have little knowledge of the solar, lunar, planetary and stellar motions; the people from the first century up to the Industrial Revolution were well versed in these things.
56. Even people of little education were generally knowledgeable of the main motions of the heavenly bodies.
57. When these people read Revelation 12:1-3, an astronomical relationship was realized at once.
58. Here we have a relationship between Virgo, Sun, and Moon or New Moon that indicates late Summer.
59. Here we have an exact combination of celestial factors that prohibit Jesus being born even one day earlier on September 10th.
60. On that day the Moon would have been above the Virgin's feet with no visible crescent moon.
61. On the 12th the Moon would have moved beyond or east of the Virgin's feet, at least 25 diameters of the Moon.
62. That day was just after sunset on September 11th, the start of a new day by Jewish reckoning.
63. Interestingly there are some depictions of a woman possessing these features on pages 88 and 89 of Martin's book.
64. They are of catholic sources but they clearly show a crescent moon and a sun in mid-body of the woman.
65. This timing of Jesus' birth fits well with Luke's description of the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem.
66. In Luke 2:8-11 where it says "there were shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flocks by night...and the angel said...for today [which began at sundown] in the city of David there has been born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."
67. What New Moon could this have been?
68. The answer is most amazing.
69. September 11, 3 B.C. was Tishri One on the Jewish calendar.
70. To Jewish people this would have been very profound.
71. Tishri One is none other than the Jewish New Year's day or Rosh ha-Shanah, or as the Bible calls it, The Day of Trumpets (cf. Lev. 23:23-26).
72. And remarkably no other day of the year 3 B.C. astronomically fits Rev. 12:1-3!
73. It was an important annual holy day of the Jews (but not one of the three annual festivals that required all Palestinian Jews to be in Jerusalem).
74. Looking at celestial events that occurred around that *Rosh ha-Shanah* date of September 11 in 3 B.C. we see that on August 12th (exactly one month prior to Jesus' nativity) there was a

- close conjunction between Jupiter (reckoned astronomically as the Father) and Venus (the Mother) when they were only .07 degrees from one another when they appeared as morning stars on the eastern horizon.
75. Nineteen days later (August 31), Venus came to within .36 degrees of Mercury in a very similar display.
 76. Then, on September 11th, the New Moon occurred signaling the Jewish New Year.
 77. This happened when Jupiter (the King star) was approaching Regulus (the King star).
 78. And, on September 14th, Jupiter and Regulus came into their first of three conjunctions in this extraordinary year.
 79. Over an eight month period, Jupiter made its “crowning effect” over the king star Regulus.
 80. There could hardly have been a better astronomical testimony to the birth of the messianic king from the Jewish point of view (Magi exegete all this!).
 81. Every one of these celestial occurrences happened with the Sun and stars being positioned within the constellation of Leo the Lion (the constellation of Judah from whence the Messiah was destined to come) or in Virgo the Virgin.
 82. Not only was Jesus born on the Jewish New Year or the Day of Trumpets but so was Noah according to Gen. 8:13.
 83. Ancient Jews debated as to whether the first day of creation (or restoration) in Gen. 1:1-5 took place in Spring or Autumn (fruit was already on the trees for Adam and Eve).
 84. Among the Jews it came to be regarded as the birthday of the world.
 85. Tishri was the first month of the Jewish calendar (Ex. 12:2).
 86. Each of the Jewish months were to be officially introduced by the blowing of trumpets (Num. 10:10).
 87. Since the festival year in which all the Mosaic festivals were found was seven months long, the last month Tishri was the last month for a festival trumpet.
 88. Trumpet blowing on 1Tishri signaled the fall harvest cycle of feasts.
 89. This is one of the reasons the day was called “the Day of Trumpets.”
 90. The last trump in the seven month cycle was always sounded on this New Moon day (Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1; cp. 1Cor. 15:52).
 91. This was the exact day of kingly inauguration for the rulers of Judah (cf. 1Kgs. 1:34; 2Kgs. 9:13).
 92. There could well be a reflection of this symbolic feature in the NT.
 93. The Day of Trumpets was the time for the start of the 7th month (since Moses) and the time for the “last trump” for introducing the festival months.
 94. Note that in Revelation 11:15 which records the blowing of the 7th or “last trump” we have these words “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdom* of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.”
 95. The official coronation of Jesus takes place in connection with this final trumpet.
 96. This day’s theme is that of kingship, a new beginning, and remembrance of the righteous dead.
 97. Most probably this was the day of Joseph’s promotion over the Egyptian empire (Gen. 41:1 cp. vv. 40,41) as he was a type of Christ.
 98. Psalm 81 is an enthronement psalm in commemoration of Joseph.
 99. Jewish authorities acknowledge this import with respect to the Day of Trumpets.
 100. Gaster states: “The Sovereignty of God is dominant theme of the occasion [and] it is one of the cardinal features of New Year’s Day” (“Festivals of the Jewish Year” p. 115).”

101. The theme of that day was the triumph of God over all the forces of evil.
102. Gaster says that this day demonstrates God “continually fighting His way to the Kingdom, continually asserting His dominion, and continually enthroning Himself as sovereign of creation. At New Year when the world was reborn (creation/restoration and post-flood) that sovereignty was evinced anew” (p. 115).
103. The ancient Jews in their synagogue services for this day celebrated the fact that God rules over all and is the King of kings by quoting Zech. 14:16 “The king, the LORD of hosts.”
104. Some scholars have suggested that psalms that begin with “The LORD reigns [or “Yahweh is become king] like Psalms 93, 97 and 99 were originally designed for recitation at the New Year festival.
105. It is postulated by various scholars that Yahweh was crowned annually at the “New Year feast of Yahweh.”
106. The scholar Mowinckel has argued that the “enthronement psalms” (Pss. 47, 93, 96-99) in which Yahweh reigns were a part of the liturgy of the ancient synagogues on this day in the 1st month of Tishri (our September).
107. One Jewish scholar (Machzor) says “On *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, the Jewish people in Egypt stopped their slave labor [they began their time of liberty], while they waited for the Ten Plagues to play themselves out so that Moses could lead them to freedom” (“The Complete Artscroll Machzor).
108. This would suggest that the 10 plagues took place over a period of some six months.
109. In the revelation of things to come to the apostle John the recording of the blowing of the 7th trumpet followed by the intercalation of the struggle between the Woman and the Dragon in this chapter is significant.
110. In 11:15 we have mention of the blowing of the 7th or last trumpet in which the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of Jesus.
111. Next comes the vision of the Woman in an astronomical context, which as we have noted signifies the day and hour of Jesus’ birth.
112. One other astronomical detail that needs to be addressed is the twelve star crown or wreath.
113. In Norton’s Star Atlas he mentions twelve stars surrounding the head of Virgo.
114. They are (1) Pi, (2) Nu, (3) Beta (near the ecliptic), (4) Sigma, (5) Chi, (6) Iota — these six stars from the southern hemisphere around the head of Virgo.
115. Then there are (7) Theta, (8) Star 60, (9) Delta, (10) Star 93, (11) Beta (the 2nd magnitude star) and (12) Omicron — these last six from the northern hemisphere around the head of Virgo.
116. All these stars are visible by observers on earth.
117. Thus, the description describes a perfectly normal astronomical scene that could be readily recognized by all people.
118. Here was Virgo with twelve stars around her head, while the Sun was in the uterine position and the Moon under her feet.
119. And again, the only day this could have happened was in 3 B.C. sometime between 6:15 and 7:45 on the 11th of September which as One Tishri or New Year’s Day by Jewish reckoning.
120. Truly, this constitutes “a great sign in heaven (2nd heaven)!”

VERSE 1 A great sign appeared in heaven (Καὶ σημεῖον μέγα ὤφθη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ
[conj kai + noun nom.nt.s. semeion sign + adj.nom.nt.s. megas great + aor.pass.ind.3s. horao

see; appear (pass) + prep en + art.w/noun loc.m.s. ouranos heaven, sky]: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown [wreath] of twelve stars [γυνή περιβεβλημένη τὸν ἥλιον, καὶ ἡ σελήνη ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτῆς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς στέφανος ἀστέρων δώδεκα [noun nom.f.s gune woman + perf.mid.part.nom.f.s. periballo clothe; throw up a siege mound + art.w/noun acc.m.s. helios sun + conj kai + art.w/noun selene moon + prep hupokato beneath, under + art.w/noun gen.m.p. pous foot + pro.gen.f.s. aute “her” + conj kai + prep epi on + art.w/noun gen.f.s. kephale head + pro.gen.f.s. aute her + noun nom.m.s. stephanos crown, wreath + noun gen.m.p. aster star + adj.gen.m.p. dodeka twelve]);

VERSE 2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth (καὶ ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα, καὶ κράζει ὠδίνουσα καὶ βασανιζομένη τεκεῖν [*conj kai + prep en “with” + noun loc.f.s. gaster belly; with following verb ‘to have in the womb’, i.e. ‘to be pregnant’ + pres.act.part.nom.f.s. echo have, hold + conj kai + pres.act.ind.3s. krazo cry + pres.act.part.nom.f.s. odino suffer birth pains, be in travail; “in labor” + conj kai + pres.pass.part.nom.f.s. basanizo test or make proof of anything; pass. be in anguish; fig. of severe torment or harassment; “in pain” + aor.act.infin. tikto give birth*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 1-2

1. Immediately after the storm theophany of 11:19 “a great sign” is set before John.
2. The “sign” as noted above is astronomical as related to the stars.
3. The particular configuration of a woman with the sun in mid-body, the moon positioned at her feet, and a twelve-starred crown on her head is the exact astronomical display that appeared in the heavens at Jesus’ birth on 11 September 3 B.C. sometime between 6:15 and 7:45 PM.
4. The inclination to identify the woman as the virgin Mary fails when later in the vision we see the woman fleeing into the wilderness during the tribulation where she is nourished for three and one half years (cf. vv. 13ff.).
5. Certainly the woman cannot be the church as this woman arising from her offspring and not vice versa.
6. The Christian community could hardly be the mother of Jesus.
7. The only woman that fits is corporate Israel.
8. Again, clearly Israel is the focus of verses 13 and following.
9. Also note the phrase “the rest of her seed” in verse 17 which phrase shows that there will be some addition to her.
10. The Jewish Messiah born under the law was the product of the Jewish community.
11. Connecting various elements of the symbolism with Gen. 37:9-11 further strengthens this identification of the woman.
12. In the dream of Joseph the Sun is Jacob and the moon is Rachel, and the 12 stars are the tribes of Israel.

13. The figure of Israel as a travailing woman adds to this (Isa. 66:7ff.; Jer. 4:31; 13:21; Micah 4:10; 5:3).
14. Just as a woman experiences the travail of childbearing so Israel over her history to the 1st Advent experienced much adversity in the angelic conflict to fulfill the destiny of bringing Messiah into the world.
15. The source of her pains, at least in part, was due to the persecution instigated by Satan in an attempt to frustrate the birth of the Messiah.
16. The phrase “being with child” does not refer to Mary’s pregnancy but to the promise given to the chosen race that Messiah would arise the people that began with Abraham.
17. The line of Christ began with Adam and continued forward to Abraham the first Jew.
18. In Israel the Edenic promise that Messiah would spring from the seed of the woman spurred Satan to deny this eventuality.
19. With the chosen people came a renewed effort to break the succession of male descendants thus making null and void the divine design.
20. Neither captivity or compromised Jews nor any other thing was permitted to negate the promise of a virgin-born Messiah.
21. As a result the woman “cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.”
22. Corporate and believing Israel suffered by association with her destiny.
23. The verb “being in labor” (*odino*, suffer birth pains) refers to the long history from Abraham forward when the chosen people were the objects of satanic attack.
24. Israel’s history through all its phases was like labor in that it constituted a struggle.
25. The verb “being in pain” (*basanizo*, be in great pain) describes acute pain and is further descriptive of the extremes Israel encountered to advance the plan to the moment when Jesus was born into this world.
26. At times Israel was her own worst enemy as seen in the cycles of discipline of Lev. 26 and her captivities and restoration.
27. She went from the status of nation to non-nation and back again.
28. Israel experienced so many traumas and suffering from Abraham to Christ, yet God kept the promise alive despite the opposition.
29. This then, is what verse 2 is symbolically portraying.
30. All her wars and all her failings and all her successes all served to advance the promise to its fruition.
31. Like the Church after her this woman has suffered much and continues to suffer until the time of her full redemption at the coming of Christ.
32. Then she will suffer no more when her Messiah dwells with her in the promised kingdom.
33. As will be noted in the verses that follow this Woman continues to suffer after the promise to bring the Promised One into the world.
34. The Woman in the vision is probably to be limited to those Jews who are believers.