

SIGNS ON EARTH, SIGNS IN HEAVEN

(Mat. 24 / Rev. 12)

(No. 1070 – 8/3/14 - NLC)

I. INTRODUCTION: THESE ARE THE LAST DAYS!

- A. Church needs to wake up and understand the times
- B. Rapture is our “Blessed Hope”

II. SIGNS ON THE EARTH (MAT. 24)

- A. **Mat. 24:3-14:** ³As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and **what will be the SIGN of Your coming and of the end of the age?**” ⁴Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵For **many** will come in My name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive **many**. ⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. **All these are the beginning of birth pains.**

⁹“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of Me. ¹⁰At that time **many** will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other,” ¹¹and **many** false prophets will appear and deceive **many** people. ¹²Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of **MOST** will grow cold, ¹³but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

- 1. “Sign” (v.3) – Gk. *sēmeion* = “miracle, sign or wonder; an indication” (derived from root “to signify”)
- 2. Like birth pains (v.8), **ALL** of these indications are being manifested with growing frequency and intensity
 - a) Deceptions [NOTE: José Luis De Jesús Miranda of *Growing in Grace* who claimed to be Christ and antichrist had millions of followers in many nations died suddenly 8/8/13 (cirrhosis of the liver or cancer)]
 - b) Wars – Russia/Ukraine, Israel/Hamas
 - c) Pestilences (v.7 KJV/Gk. & Luke 21:11) – Ebola, MERS, Chikungunya, etc.
 - d) Increasing wickedness
 - e) Apostasy in the Church

B. Wake up, look up, stand up, lift up!

1. **Luke 21:28:** *When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*
2. **Heb. 10:25:** *Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you **see the Day approaching.***

III. SIGNS IN HEAVEN (REV. 12)

A. **Rev. 12:1-6:** ¹A great and wondrous **sign** appeared **in heaven**: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. ²She was pregnant and **cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.** ³Then **another sign** appeared **in heaven**: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. ⁴His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. ⁵She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. ⁶The **woman fled into the desert** to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for **1,260 DAYS.**

1. “Sign” (vv.1 & 3) same as Mat. 24:3
2. Background to Rev. 12
 - a) Rev. 4-22 is future, prophetic (**Rev. 4:1**): *After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”*
 - b) Rev. 11 climaxes with the kingdoms of the world becoming the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ & the dead being judged; after what is clearly the consummation of the Tribulation, God retells the story again from a different perspective (Gentile Vision) in Rev. 12.
3. Interpretations of the woman & child
 - a) View #1 - Virgin Mary and Jesus: Problems:
 - (1) Mary gave birth to Jesus on the earth, not in heavenly places
 - (2) Her child was not caught up to the throne as soon as He was born

- (3) Rev. 12 is prophetic, not historical
 - (4) There is no explanation for Rev. 12:6 which states that the woman fled into the desert for 3½ years.
- b) View #2 - Israel (12 stars = 12 tribes) & Messiah Jesus: Problems:
 - (1) Prophetic, not history!
 - (2) How did Israel fulfill v.6 & flee into the desert for 3½ years after Christ was born?
 - (3) Rev. 12 is a **heavenly** sign – **earthly** Israel brought forth Jesus on the earth (Gal. 4:22-26)
- c) *View #3 – Christian Church & the overcoming Bride
- 4. Woman has external glory, the child is hidden!
- 5. The dragon (Satan) is interested in the child, *NOT* the woman (v.4)!
- 6. Verse 5 (“male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter”) is the main reason so many believe the male child has to be Jesus
 - a) **Rev. 2:26-27:** ²⁶*To him who overcomes and does My will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—²⁷He will rule them with an iron scepter; he will dash them to pieces like pottery’—just as I have received authority from my Father.*
 - b) Rev. 2-3 are messages specifically directed to the overcomers within the Church (not all... “a few, those with ears, the rest” etc.)
- 7. Child **snatched up** to God and to His throne (v.6)
 - a) “Snatched” Gk. *harpazo* (1 Thess. 4:17 - saints will be “caught up” in the Rapture)
 - b) He promised His throne to the overcomers in Rev. 3:21
- 8. Woman “pained to be delivered” (v.2)
 - a) Expectant mothers reach a point where they want to “expel” their child and be freed from the burden
 - b) Those believers who are truly a part of the overcoming male child group are being rejected & expelled from the institutional church in the world today!
- 9. Woman left behind for 3½ years (v.6)
 - a) Key verse to understanding Ch. 12!

- b) Luke 17:34-36 - one taken, one left behind
- c) The child is proportionally a much smaller group – the distinction between the 2 groups is becoming more strikingly apparent in these days!

B. Rev. 12:7-17: ⁷*And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸But he was not strong enough, and they **lost their place in heaven.** ⁹The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was **hurled to the earth**, and his angels with him. ¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. ¹¹**THEY overcame him** by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. ¹²Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.”* ¹³**When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman** who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a **time, times and half a time**, out of the serpent’s reach. ¹⁵Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. ¹⁶But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. ¹⁷Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to **make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God’s commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**

1. The dragon is displaced when the male child is caught up
2. “They” (v.11) are in heaven rejoicing – clearly refers to the overcoming male child who has already been caught up to the throne in the Rapture
3. Woe to those on the earth – the woman!
4. Only after being hurled to the earth does Satan persecute the woman for 3½ years (“time, times and half a time”)

5. Dragon makes war against the rest of her offspring who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus (these are Christians!)
6. Satan's war on the saints left behind for 42 months (3½ years) is explained in more detail in Rev. 13
7. A great multitude will come out of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:9-14) – all are martyrs!

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. Church needs to wake up and understand the times; time to pray, work, prepare & persevere... *NOT* time for selfish, lukewarm apathy!
- B. **Rev. 22:17, 20:** ¹⁷*The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life...*
²⁰*He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon."*
*Amen. **Come, Lord Jesus.***