

SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 52

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

The Woman in the Wilderness STUDY GUIDE

We begin this study in Revelation 12 with another question from a viewer.

Question—What are the seven Spirits before the throne in Revelation 4:2, 5?

Answer—The seven Spirits are the complete and perfect Spirit of God.

1. Revelation 5:6—Seven Spirits are sent forth into all the world.
2. John 16:7—The Comforter or Holy Spirit is sent to His people.
3. Zechariah 4:6—The seven-branch candle stick represents the Holy Spirit.
4. John 3:3—The Holy Spirit enables us to see spiritual things.
5. John 16:13—The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth.
6. Isaiah 11:2—The seven-fold Spirit of God is resting upon Christ.
7. 1 Corinthians 2:9, 10—God reveals what He has prepared for us by the Holy Spirit.

Seven denotes completion and perfection, thus symbolizing the complete and perfect Holy Spirit of God.

THE WOMAN IN THE WILDERNESS

Revelation 12:13-17

Time, Times, and Half a Time

In both Revelation 12:6 and 12:14, the woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God. The texts say

that the woman would be fleeing persecution for “a thousand, two hundred and sixty days” or “a time, and times, and half a time.” In Bible prophecy, each prophetic day represents a literal year (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34). 1,260 prophetic days are equal to 1,260 literal years (“time” equals 1 prophetic year; “times” equals two prophetic years; “half a time” equals half a prophetic year). Three and half prophetic years equals 1,260 literal years with the Bible’s understanding of 360 days per year: 3.5 prophetic days times a 360-day year = 1,080 days plus 180 days (half a 360-day year) will both equal 1,260 prophetic days = 1,260 literal years. Further broken down, we would find 42 prophetic months = 1,260 literal years (30 days per month x 42 = 1,260).



“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....” **REVELATION 12:14**

The Flood of Waters

Flood waters represent the enemy’s efforts to persecute God’s people (Isaiah 59:19). In Revelation 12:16, the “earth” helps the woman, God’s church, escape the persecution of the dragon, or the devil, working through human powers. The wilderness and the earth are both helping the woman to flee from persecution.

The Earth

This designates a place in the wilderness that is less populated than the “sea” or “waters” that represent “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:15). So the earth represents a less populated continent where God’s people, the woman, would find refuge from the persecution taking place during the Dark Ages.

Similarly, Elijah fled into the wilderness for three and a half literal years to escape Jezebel’s persecution. (1 Kings 17:1-4; James 5:17). Elijah’s flight from Jezebel during this prophet-

KEY SCRIPTURES

Rev. 12:13 DRAGON...PERSECUTED THE WOMAN

Rev. 12:16 THE EARTH HELPED THE WOMAN

Isa. 59:19 THE ENEMY COMES IN LIKE A FLOOD

Rev. 17:15 THE WATERS... ARE PEOPLES, MULTITUDES

ic time period reminds us of a similar period of time when the woman is fleeing from persecution in Revelation 12. This time period correlates with the church of Thyatira where “Jezebel” is used to call our attention to the spiritual apostasy from God during the Dark Ages (A.D. 538-A.D.1798).

Revelation is taking all the little pictures of the Bible and connecting them together into one big picture. The previous apostasies, the time periods, and the help God gives to His people, all are to be understood by the biblical stories of past ages. The woman in Revelation 12 represents God’s church being delivered from the apostasy and persecution taking place all around her. Many of God’s faithful died, but the church survived and continued to find refuge in God. As a result of the “earth,” representing continental America, swallowing up the persecution of the dragon, the Protestant reformation was able to survive and prosper.

Wings of an Eagle

The symbolism of the “wings of a great eagle” is significant because it also points to an Old Testament deliverance on behalf of God’s people. God brought His people out of bondage and persecution from Egypt “on eagles’ wings” (Exodus 19:4). Here we see that God is using familiar Biblical imagery to denote the similar history of His church in Revelation 12. This history is important because the United States (US) eventually becomes God’s New Testament place of refuge for His people, just like the promised land of Canaan was in the Old Testament. The US is the present-day “glorious land” for God’s new covenant people. Like the promised land, the US would be flowing with milk and honey and a land of religious freedom for God’s church. Economically and spiritually blessed, this nation would openly state, “In God We Trust.”

Two Wilderness Places

During the 1,260-year period of persecution against believers by the recognized church, there were two places where the woman fled. One was the Alps and wilderness places of Europe. The other was the continent of North America, which would eventually give the woman freedom from religious oppression and persecution.

The Remnant

Revelation 12:17 introduces us to the very end of time and God’s remnant people. This picture of the remnant focuses on the centerpiece of the final conflict between Christ and the dragon who is angry with the remnant. This verse is Revelation chapters 13 and 14 “juiced down” into one verse. The remnant of the woman is keeping the commandments of God because they are clothed with the righteousness of Je-

sus Christ, according to Revelation 12:1 and Malachi 4:2. As Jesus said, if we love Him we will keep His commandments (John 14:15). Those who love Jesus love Him because He first loved them (1 John 4:19). The remnant are a people who have responded to God’s love for them; their love for Him leads them to keep His commandments.

The remnant also have the testimony of Jesus which is the “spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10). This is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit speaking through prophets. This has been manifested in God’s Church, the Woman, throughout history, and will be manifest in God’s remnant church in the last days.

Summary

This woman—the church—would be in hiding during the Dark Ages, during the time of the church/state union. After the breakup of the Roman empire in A.D. 538, Justinian, the pagan Roman emperor, united with the head of the Roman church in a church/state union. That union lasted until Napoleon attacked the head of the church and took him captive in the year 1798. This is the 1,260 prophetic days or “time, times and half a time.” During that period of time when the popular church—the church united with Papal Rome—persecuted believers, God’s true church of faithful believers was in the wilderness.

The serpent or devil casts out of his mouth water like a flood to persecute God’s church. During the days of the medieval church, God’s people fled into northern Italy and southern France. In cold, windswept mountain hideouts and caves, God’s people copied and preserved His Word. Eventually, many of them left the old world for a new world of religious freedom. And here in the new world they, too, found a place of refuge.

At the end of the 1,260-year prophecy, sometime after the year 1798, Revelation points to the woman—the remnant, God’s last-day movement. Revelation 12:17 describes God’s true end-time church. It describes the dragon as angry with the woman. Why? Because the woman is clothed with Christ’s righteousness. This had been discarded for tradition and creature merit by the medieval church. The woman is standing on the Word of God and therefore the remnant of her seed is standing on God’s Word, clothed in His righteousness, and keeping God’s Commandments. They are the remnant because they are like the original, the woman. They rest in Christ for salvation and trust in His Word for all things spiritual. Amen. ★

