

## REVIEW OF THE MORNING

The purpose of chapter 13 of Revelation is to give us a sweeping vision of the spiritual battle that is raging. This morning we looked into the features of our enemy. This evening we turn to other images in the vision.

## THE WOMAN

The next central character is the woman.

Here is how the imagery is understood. The moon represents the reflected light of God, the law and the Old Testament. The sun is the direct light of God, the Messiah and the New Testament. The twelve stars are the 12 patriarchs who become the 12 tribes of Israel.

The woman is the body of true believers. She is the true Israel that gives birth to the Messiah. And then she is the true Israel and the church.

It's worth noting that faithful Israel was the bride of God in Scripture before the imagery was ever used for the church. For example, [Hosea 2](#)

19. "I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy;

20. I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.

It would be a mistake to limit the image of this woman to any single individual like Mary, the mother of Jesus. The scope of the image is beyond any single individual. However, the fact that the woman's life is a direct parallel of Mary's life is no coincidence. Her life serves as a metaphor and a foreshadow of what's to come, much like Abraham and Isaac.

The child is quite obvious, it is the central character of the entire story; it's Christ. The vision goes right from His birth to His death deliberately. The incarnation of God into this world and His ascension back to the Father are the two most strategic points in this spiritual battle. And it is the battle that is the focus.

## INTO THE WILDERNESS

The woman is lifted with wings into the wilderness.

Her situation is much like the story of Elijah running from the evil Jezebel.

Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah: "Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there." (1 Kings 17:2)

The reason Elijah was taken away was for safety and refuge. It is the same concept here. The wilderness, here, represents foreign lands where Israel will find safety. Of course, that's exactly what happened. For two thousand years the Jewish people have maintained their identity, despite being scattered in the wilderness. The wilderness gives us the exact opposite image of the "great city" of chapter 11 (v.8). That image spoke of the nations, not as sanctuary but as a hotbed of sin.

## THE INSANITY OF SATAN

The war is explained with the perspective of Satan. I think one commentary offered a striking thought; Satan is basically insane. And that insanity fuels his rage. It makes sense when you consider his situation is the exact opposite of salvation.

As far as we know, angels live forever. The chapter says that Satan is enraged because his time is short. Just in the fact that his life has gone from limitless to some limit; even if it was 10,000 years, is short. Time always flies, if it is an issue, it's always short. Salvation is going from limited life to eternal life. It seems Satan has gone from the eternal to a limit. No wonder he's gone insane!

As the dragon, Satan turns his rage against humanity. He sends a flood against the woman. The idea is actually old imagery. The word “riverborne” (potamophoretion) was found on a papyrus from 110 BC. We also know the idea of water being chaos is ancient imagery. Another use of open waters in the Scripture is as a symbol of a great multitude.

It’s conceivable that the chaos of Satan is carried in a great stream of humanity. In our day, that would be a good description of postmodern society. God intervenes with the land, the earth swallows the water. We know from Genesis on, that God separated order from chaos by separating the water from the land. The teaching of the New Testament is all about, not just order, but order in a holy context.

The war continues beyond the chapter as Satan wages war on the offspring of the woman. These people are the true believers yet to come as they are identified as those who keep God’s commands and the testimony about Jesus.

## DISCUSSION

This morning we talked of chaos not simply being the opposite of order, but the absence of the virtues of order. What qualities are absent in moral chaos; physical chaos, social chaos, intellectual chaos, spiritual chaos?

- In what ways do we see chaos in our culture today?
- How would you explain the woman of chapter 13?
- Could she be Mary, the mother of Jesus? Why? Why not?
- The dragon’s plan was to devour the child, why didn’t he just devour the woman?
- How would you interpret the water spewed from the dragon?