

The book of Revelation has a central theme: It describes how Jesus will establish God's kingdom on earth and rule over it forever. He alone has the authority to take and open the 7-sealed scroll of God representing God's rule on earth (Ch. 4-5). Revelation chapters 6-19 describe the process of Jesus breaking the seven seals, each unleashing a series of judgments intended to persuade mankind to repent, stop their rebellion and receive Him as their king. Revelation culminates in chapter 19 when Christ, the King of kings, returns removing all rebels and establishing His blessed kingdom on earth.

Revelation chapter 12 is in a parenthetical section of the book describing two key figures involved in the last days on earth: Israel "the woman" (mentioned 8 times) and Satan (mentioned 14 times). Jesus wants us in this chapter to understand how He will overcome Satan to establish His rule on earth. It describes Satan's many attempts to oppose God's plan for Jesus to come and rule on earth and God's repeated and final victory.

1. Read Revelation 12:1-6. Without noting who they represent, describe the main characters and what happens between them.
2. Note: 12:1 describes a Woman who is said to be a great sign to the earth. This woman gives birth to a son (12:2,4) who will rule the world (12:5). This refers to Israel and Jesus, the one born through her as Messiah. 12:2 says the woman will be in great pain before the son comes into the world. This probably refers to the great suffering Israel endured through centuries of persecution and attempted Genocide by Satan (the Dragon). Satan attempted Genocide against Israel numerous times throughout history. Pharaoh ordered all Hebrew male babies killed and later attempt to kill all the Hebrews when they fled to the Red Sea (Exodus 1:15-19; Exodus 14). The Persian official Haman was going to have all Jews killed but was thwarted by the providence of God (Book of Esther). The Assyrians were going to destroy all the Jews in Jerusalem but an angel of the Lord destroyed the Assyrian army of 185,000 men in one night (Isaiah 36 & 37). How is Israel a sign to the nations of God's faithfulness to His promises? How does God preservation of Israel affect your trust in God?
3. In Rev. 12:3 Satan is described as having 7 heads and 10 horns. From Daniel we know these are metaphors for nations and kings. The same metaphor is used in rev. 13:1 to describe the final world empire headed by the Antichrist. These metaphors indicate Satan's control over man's kingdoms. Jesus calls Satan the 'ruler of this world' in John 12:31. What does Matthew 4:8-9 tell us about Satan's authority over man's governments? Why do you think Jesus wants us to know this about Satan?
4. In Rev. 12:4 Satan tries to kill the Messiah (the son of the Woman). How did he try to do this in the gospels? How did God defeat Satan's evil plans? Note: this is another example of how NOTHING is going to stop Jesus from coming and ruling the earth. Why would Jesus want us to know about Satan's attempts and failures to thwart God's plan of His Messiah?
5. How is Satan described in Rev. 12:9? What does Satan do to the whole world? What do the following verses tell us about how Satan deceives people into believing lies? Do you think it's important to know how Satan deceives? Why?
  - a. 1 Timothy 4:1
  - b. 2 Corinthians 11:3,13-15
  - c. 2 Corinthians 4:4-6
6. How does knowing non-Christians are under the deceiving influence of Satan affect your attitude toward them? What wrong attitudes can Christians have toward those who believe false teaching? What does 2 Timothy 2:24-26 tell us is the correct way to help non-Christians who are deceived? Why is this sometimes difficult to do?
7. What does 1 Peter 2:15-17 tell us about the right way to relate truth to non-Christians? Why is this sometimes difficult to do?
8. Read Rev.12:10. What was Satan doing in heaven against Christians before being cast down? According to 1 John 2:1-2 what do you think he accuses God's people of and what does Jesus want us to know about our sin? Would it make any difference if we didn't know this? If you are feeling accused of not being worthy of heaven because of your sin what should you do?

9. According to Rev. 12:11, how do God's people overcome Satan when he comes to the earth with wrath and persecution? Satan attacks using fear to intimidate (See Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Peter 5:7-8). Why would each of the things mentioned in this verse that Christians are doing help them with fear?
10. Read Rev. 12:6 and 12:13-16. What will Satan try to do to Israel (the woman)? What is the outcome? Read Zechariah 12:1-5. How does this describe this same event? Israel is supernaturally preserved from Genocide. Why would Jesus want you to know this?
11. How has Revelation 12 encouraged you? What has the Lord shown you he wants you to start thinking or doing in light of what you learned in Revelation 12?