

No.
60.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS
WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE
RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

REVELATION 12.

An Address (revised) at

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Scriptural literature for Believers

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An Address. by Percy W. Heward.

Outline:-

- (1). Scripture Contexts, Scripture Structures and Scripture Allusions.
- (2). The Dragon.
- (3). The Woman.
- (4). The Man Child.
- (5). The Remnant of Her Seed.

May I translate the passage literally? It is deeply important that we should know the Scripture about which we are speaking, and know it in its context. The chapter before ends, "And there was opened the temple of God in the heavens, and there was seen the ark of His covenant in His temple, and there became lightnings and voices and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail, and (going on straight from chapter 11) a great sign was seen in the heaven, a woman having been clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars". Notice the clothing in this wonderful scene. We have sun, moon and stars. The sun surrounding. the moon under the feet, the stars being only mentioned about the head and being numbered, a crown of twelve stars. Just as in Gen. 1, you have the sun, moon and stars, so here. Thus, moreover, in other Scriptures. Twelve stars suggest to us not only a general reference to the stars, but also Gen 37, "And having in womb she crieth, being in pangs and being pained to have brought forth. And there was seen another sign in the heaven, behold a great fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on to his heads seven diadems, and his tail draweth the third part of the stars of the heaven, and cast them into the earth, and the dragon stood in front of the woman that was about to have brought forth in order that whenever she should have brought forth her child, he might have devoured. And she brought forth a son, a male, who is about to be shepherding all the nations in an iron rod, and her child was snatched toward God and toward His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness where she hath a place, having been made ready from God, in order that there they should be nourishing her, days a thousand two hundred and sixty. And there became war in the heaven, Michael and his angels warred against the dragon, and the dragon warred, and his angels, and they had not strength, nor was a place found belonging to them any longer in the heaven. And the dragon was cast, the great one, the serpent, the old one, the one called Devil, and Satan, the one that deceiveth the whole inhabited world,- he was cast into the earth, and his angels with him were cast out. And I heard a great voice saying in the heaven, just now there became the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Messiah, because there was cast down the accuser of our brethren, the one accusing them in the sight of our God day and night. And they (angels) overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their soul until death. Because of this, rejoice heavens, and the ones in them tabernacling. Woe to the earth, and the sea, because, there descended, the Devil toward you, having great indignation, knowing that a brief appointed time he hath. And when the dragon saw he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the manchild, the male, and there was given to the woman two wings of a great eagle in order that she should fly into the wilderness into her place, when she is being nourished there, an appointed time, appointed times and half an appointed time, away from the face of the serpent; and the serpent cast behind the woman out of his mouth water as of a river, in order that he might make her borne away by the river, and the earth helped the woman and the earth opened its mouth and drank down the river which the serpent cast out of his mouth, and the dragon was angered on (against) the woman and went away to have made war with the left ones of her seed, the ones keeping the commandments of God, and having the witness of Jesus (Christ), and he stood on to the sand of the sea".

Let us notice, first of all, the context of this passage, for we remember that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, and that every Scripture is arranged by Him, and that the arrangement is perfect. Chap. 12 continues from Chap. 11. In Chap. 11, we have brought before us particularly what God does at Jerusalem during the time of Antichrist. We have the 42 months in which the city is trodden under foot (verse 2), and inasmuch as during those 42 months there will be the abomination of desolation, according to the language of the Lord Jesus quoting from Daniel, those who love Him must have obediently fled from Jerusalem. Consequently in Chap. 11, we have no indication of any believers at Jerusalem; but only the presence of two witnesses, whose non-relationship to the present dispensation is marked out by the fact that they use vengeance, killing those who attack them. This would be entirely out of place for those who belong to the present dispensation. "Here is the patience and faith of the saints". Naturally we want to know what takes place away from Jerusalem - what takes place as to the Lord's people when they flee hence. Chap. 11 prepares us to accept some instruction on this point found in Chap. 12. The subsequent context, Chap. 13, is closely linked. As you notice, the first words are not, "And I stood", but "He stood", the dragon stood upon the sand of the sea. Apparently we have brought before us the dragon, and the beast in closest fellowship in this verse. The dragon is on the sand and the beast rises out of the sea, and when the beast rises out of the sea with an authority which is complete, as far as Satan can give it, you will notice that he combines the beasts of Daniel 7, for we have the leopard, the bear, and the lion. Furthermore, we have a definite statement that power was given unto him to continue 42 months. The period of 42 months is thus marked in chapters 11, 12 and 13. These three passages go together. In chap. 11 we have the exact words, but it is remarkable that whereas the treading down is described as taking 42 months, the witness is described in days, 1260 days. In like manner the period of chapter 12 is explained in two manners, days with respect to the feeding in verse 6; and likewise time, times and a half a time, when the woman is nourished, in verse 14. All the variations of wording are inspired and important. "Forty two" is particularly the number of Antichrist. It was the number of Jabal in Gen. 4, of Cain's family, a factor of the number of Nimrod too; and even we ourselves speak of that which is ruined as being sixes and sevens, and forty two is six multiplied by seven. It is very remarkable that our English "proverbial language" has preserved this thought. Forty two is Antichrist's number, or one of his numbers. Hence in both cases when Antichrist is specially before us we have the forty two months. The witnessing and the preserving are graciously linked with days and daily enabling. It is very beautiful after the statement that Satan has but a brief appointed time, to be told the Lord will keep the women during the appointed time, the appointed times and a half. For though in one sense from God's standpoint they are $3\frac{1}{2}$, for He always

allows things to reach His appointed goal, but nevertheless He always breaks off man's plan in the middle. You will thus see that the three chapters go together. Chap. 11 shows what takes place at Jerusalem, Chap. 12, particularly though not exclusively what takes place for those caused to flee, Chap. 13 the persecution of those who are found in the Roman earth, where Antichrist exercises his power. The united patience and faith of the saints comes before us in verse 10. The hearing out of the saints of the Most High is clearly marked in verse 7 of chapter 13. Thus these three chapters lead up to chapter 14 where we have the view of the suffering ones glorified, and this leads to the pondering of the structure of Revelation. If we try and make Revelation a history straight through, every chapter after every other chapter, we shall soon find confusion. As God has given to us various lives of the Lord Jesus - the four Gospels, as we have the book of Kings often parallel with the book of Chronicles, and in certain parts, Isaiah giving a third record, as in Daniel most evidently shown by Divine interpretation, Daniel 2 is not chronologically followed by Daniel 7 and 8, but there is a parallel between the two passages, so is it here. In the book of Revelation there are parallel histories. Almost every section leads up to "the hour".

Personally I have found the study of the hour in the book of Revelation one of the most definite keys to the interpretation of the whole. In Rev. 1 - 3, we have the introduction of the letters to the churches, and the promises of God to keep the faithful one "out from the hour of the testing". The Lord will never permit His believing people to come into the hour of the testing. The hour of the testing must be distinguished from the great tribulation. It is the period of wrath, in which the vials are poured out. In Rev. 6, we have the unsealings. I need hardly say that the redeemed are not, personally in glory in chap. 4 and 5. There are representatives of ? the redeemed, but that is very different. There are wondrous beings, we would almost think "angelic", which would seem to represent the Lord's people till they reach there. In chap. 6 we have the unsealings, and in chapter 7 the first mention of the redeemed in glory. They are viewed as a great multitude in verse 9, and they are in front of the throne. Then at once, Chap. 8 verse 1 says "When he had opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour". They are caught up just before the hour. Half the hour seems to be a time of silence in heaven, the other half is crowded with solemn events. Chap. 8. 2 begins a fresh section. We cannot make this subsequent to the sixth seal. In the sixth seal we have the great day of God's wrath. This must evidently be a going backwards historically, that is, the beginning of a parallel passage. The chapter breaks are human, and sometimes mistaken. The seven trumpets are not in the seventh seal, but they give a somewhat parallel history. Thus we go back over the same period, till in chap. 10 we have the days of the voice of the seventh angel when he is about to sound, and in 11.15 we read, "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He shall reign for ever and ever". When the word sounds forth we are told that wrath is come (11.18). It is therefore not at all surprising that in this connection we have the words of 11.13, "The same hour there was a great earthquake". All the different narratives appear to lead up to the hour. In Chaps. 12 and 13, as we have noticed, we have one record. Then in Chap. 14, when the redeemed are viewed in glory once more, at once the words sound out (verse 7) "Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgments is come". Thus there is the evidence in this passage that we are dealing with parallel histories, - for prophecy is history written in advance. Chap. 14 leads on to Chaps 15 and 16. In 15 and 16 you do not have a going back in history, but the fullest account of the hour. Consequently the word "wrath" is prominent for wrath is the mark of the hour. It is not linked with the period of the trumpets, it is not linked with the unsealings. I mean, not linked with the unsealings till we reach the sixth. It is associated with all the vials, and at the end of chap. 16, we have plainly the climax of wrath.. Then Chap. 17 begins a fresh narration leading on to the hour. In Chap. 18, "In one hour is thy judgment come". The hour is always associated with judgment, with wrath, with indignation.

It is deeply important that we should consider the allusions to the earlier Scriptures which are found throughout the book of Revelation. I do not propose to ask you to look at them all at once, but keep your mind on the alert, not only for those that are mentioned, but for any which are suggested by the view given us in Rev. 12. First, we have a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. The women of Revelation are important. "That woman Jezebel", the woman who is the harlot of Chap. 17, but in holy contrast, the woman who is the bride, the bride in chap. 19, the Lamb's wife; nor can we forget chap. 21, where the city, new Jerusalem is described as a bride adorned for her husband. There is a marked contrast between the harlot, even the mother of the abominations of the earth, and the Bride devoted unto the Lord. You will notice, furthermore, that this bride is seen in other Scriptures, and implied. We think of the Song of Solomon where we have the Shulamite, the bride of Solomon, bearing his name, and viewed as two camps, for the

question is asked "What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies". Nor would we omit the statement "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?". Gal. 4 might also be noticed. Here we have an allegory from history concerning the bondwoman and the freewoman, and the apostle adds by inspiration, "This Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem that now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us!" Here we have the Jerusalem which is above, not the earthly Jerusalem, and Rev. 12 would seem to fit in with this. It has well been said that we do not have a literal woman when God speaks of a sign or wonder. The appearance is totally against such an idea, and the Holy Spirit marks out "A sign". Therefore we have a system, but plainly a system of Truth, for everything is approved by God, and we feel the definite link with the Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us.

As to the dragon, the name is suggestive. It occurs about a dozen times in Rev., for Satan. It implies one who looks with piercing eyes - one who terrifies. It is a terrible name to tell of the awful power of Satan. We particularly notice the stress on the dragon in Chap. 13. The dragon there exalts the beast, and is represented by the beast. In Chap. 16. 13, the dragon is seen as the leader of the Satanic trinity, and in the 20th chapter, where various names of Satan are brought together, we read first of the dragon. Our mind reverts to some passages in the earlier Scriptures, where we have brought before us the dragon trodden down, (Psalm 91); all Scripture is linked.

Next, we have to notice the manchild in verse 5. The manchild is described as one to rule all nations with a rod of iron. We know that this is a description of our blessed Lord in Psalm 2; and again in Rev. 19, but in Rev. 2, we find that the faithful one in Thyratira (the central letter), has a similar promise. Says verse 26 "And he that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces shivers, as I received of My Father." Here we have brought before us a position of ruling over for the faithful saints of the present dispensation. It would seem therefore that this male must be either the Lord Jesus, or the people of the Lord Jesus Christ, either with respect to His incarnation, or His resurrection. So it would appear that we have a reference to the redeemed of the Lord who are faithful - they are to take a position of reigning with Christ, and sitting with Him in His throne. You will notice that in the present dispensation this manchild takes no share in government. There is not the slightest thought of executing wrath. The manchild is put where Christ is, because there is the snatching away to God and His throne. Now we must carefully distinguish from Christ's present position and His millennial throne. "To him that overcometh He says, I will grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I overcame, and am sat down with My Father in His throne". Christ is now on His Father's throne, according to Psalm 110. "Ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" - that is the description. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory". Here is the prospect He will be in glory, He will sit on the throne of His glory. Ye shall be with Him, that is the thought here. The manchild exercises no present authority, he is snatched away to God and His throne. I beg you to notice the emphasis upon HIS throne. The manchild will exercise the authority but nothing is before the time. Our English version "caught up" may be misleading. There is no word "up"; we might rather render "caught away". The term is from the same root as the word in Phil. 2., "The Lord Jesus thought it not a thing to be grasped at to be equal with God." Moreover an intensified form of it occurs in Acts 19.29, where we read the crowd snatched hold of certain people, not a snatching up, but the context does not alter the original index meaning of the word. The whole city was filled with confusion and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. So we read in John 10 of the wolf snatching them (same word), and in Jude, of snatching those in danger out of the fire.

So the idea seems to be explained, even preservation, and a quick, an absolute preservatio .

but the time of birth does not suit the Lord Jesus Christ,

Not a few conceive that the manchild is caught from earth to heaven, but this theory falls to the ground because the manchild is not born on earth. The manchild is never seen on earth, the sign is in heaven and we do not see the woman on earth till the manchild has been snatched away to God and His throne. But some will say, if the woman be the system of Truth, if the woman gives one view of the Lord's people, how can the manchild give another view? How can the Lord's people be seen in two places at once? Granted that we have here a wonderful reviving, a reviving that will be marked by the manchild figure, how can the Lord's people be twice described? May I suggest that Scripture often employs two pictures to give a fuller view. It is so in the types of the Lord Jesus, Abel and his sacrifice, Noah and the ark, Isaac and the ram, Moses and Aaron. The altar and the sacrifice, - these are all needed to give us a full view or a fuller view of the Lord Jesus. It is common in Scripture to give a twofold unveiling in a type, and here too we have a sign. Scripture shews us in the parables of the Lord Jesus something similar. Remember the parable of the tares. The servants are distinguished from the reapers, they are evidently among the Lord's people on earth, unable to mark off wheat and tares. Then are they not some of the wheat themselves? Yet they are the servants who talk about pulling up the tares. Two views of the redeemed, but no co-extensive, the wheat is a wider term. So in Rev. we find the woman and the seed, in the 12th chap. Very forcibly in Luke 15, to return to a parable, we have the woman and the ten pieces of silver. The woman is surely the church, the ten pieces of silver are the church. We are not surprised therefore that if the Lord's people individually are viewed as the ten pieces of silver and the woman is the saints collectively, that in Matth. 25 the Lord's people are virgins individually, though the bride collectively; so they are the friends of the bridegroom individually, but the bride collectively. Types always give us a part view. So, we realise that as the Epistle to the Hebrews, the saints are at the same time inside the veil, and outside the camp. The manchild vigour, with a view to ruling, suggests identity with Christ, union with Christ. The description of the manchild is such that one would ~~think that~~ almost think that it was Christ Himself. In that sense we have brought before us the position of believers made to sit together in heavenly places even now. If I mistake not, the expression "caught away" to God and His throne gives largely the same aspect as "Made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus". But the woman does not show identity with Christ, rather married union with Christ and devoted relationship to and dependence on Christ. Indeed, the woman aspect brings before us that which leads up to the reviving, and that which is therefore followed by a full appreciation of what we have and are "in Christ Jesus". Oftentimes, believers live as if they were on the earth. When the Lord awakens His people, they will enter into the position of being clothed with the sun; not shining forth as the sun, that is future, but having a righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ, for He is the sun, and we are clothed with His robe. When there is a reviving we shall realise our heavenly calling. A further reviving will lead to a fuller realisation of our union with Christ. There are the two aspects of our position. The woman is persecuted. Viewed in Christ, we are not persecuted, but as we go forth to Him without the camp (so He is still without the camp, as well as on the throne) as we go forth to Him without the camp, we find what it is to be rejected. If Christ can be on the throne, and yet without the camp, is it surprising His people can have the twofold position? The Epistle to the Hebrews helps us in this deeply important subject.

But some will say, may not this passage after all be Jewish? There is a manchild in Isaiah 66. But have we not a help to the witness against making Rev. 12 Jewish? The manchild in Isaiah 66 is not identified with the children of verse 8 "Before", and "As soon as" would seem to be distinguished, but if any identify them thus there plainly is a contrast for the Holy Spirit adds an earthly view in that passage. Each passage is clear in its context, - there is a heavenly Jerusalem, and there is an earthly. There is a heavenly people, and there is an earthly people. "What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were two hosts. There are the heavenly people and the earthly people, and the

final city will have the 12 apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel. This is deeply important, for it is so often ignored. We notice next that the woman is caused to flee to a place of safety. A place of safety where she is kept, and not only kept, but nourished, during this solemn period, for the Lord is determined there will be many of His saints caught up to meet Him at the end of it. Hence, He preserves them, though Antichrist decrees, as we shall see, that none of them buy and sell. The Lord Who fed in the wilderness can feed again. It is not surprising that He will repeat His miracles, and the prayer will have a fuller meaning, "Give us day by day the bread that comes upon us". It is noteworthy that the woman is preserved in the wilderness during the three and a half years when Satan is cast out. The very time when the abomination of desolation is set up, the time when the saints are to flee from Jerusalem. All Scripture agrees. The dragon is unable to injure the woman. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him". God can open the earth and can remove this water. But the dragon goes forth to make war with the left ones of her seed. Mark the expression "The left ones of her seed". Apparently they are brought before us older than the manchild, for the manchild has only just been born. Doubtless many of the Lord's people will be in this earth, but will be scattered in different parts and though the Lord will particularly provide for a large number to be together in a holy fellowship, there will be others who will be in different districts, and different surroundings. Indeed they may well be the ones to whom many on the earth will shew kindness, without knowing why, and when the Lord returns He will explain that the kindness was to Him (Matt. 25). There will be God's restraining hand whereby when these are sick and in prison some will visit them; when they are starving ~~they~~ some will give them food, though it will be officially forbidden to allow any to buy and sell who do not receive the mark of the beast. The Lord will look after His people, but Rev. 13 shows that many of the saints will be slain, they will be worn out, - the remnant of her seed, the left ones of the seed, God will preserve a number in one place (and this will probably involve that literal nearness, certainly He will preserve them in a spiritual fellowship). If we do not lay a stress upon the literal wilderness, because this is a sign, we must definitely see that the woman is preserved. The unity of the redeemed is maintained, though individuals may be touched. This seems to be quite in accord with what we have ~~in~~ earlier in the chapter. There we are told how that the dragon draws the third part of the stars of heaven, and casts them to the earth. Individual saints are thus pictured, as laid low in accord with Daniel 8, but the work of God will never be cast down. They seem to be called the stars by anticipation (though we would not forget Rev. 1.20) inasmuch as they that turn many to righteousness will shine as the stars in the heaven. Individuals will be brought low, the Antichrist will make war with the saints and overcome them. Here is the patience and faith of the saints, but the testimony shall be twice preserved, - in the heavenly position at the throne of God, and its earthly position away from man's glories; ~~twice~~ preserved, for God will not allow His purposes to be frustrated, and so in Rev. 12 we have one of the final references to Gen. 3. The two seeds are before us in Gen 3. The seed of the woman bruises the serpent's head, Christ is pictured, and we see His people with Him viewed as the seed of the woman. "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" comes to our mind. There is a period of travail first as Matt. 24~~7~~, shews us an anticipatory period:- All these are the beginning of travails, pangs. The very term is employed and John 16 may allude to this. There shall be a reviving, and beyond the revival the Lord's dear blood-bought people shall be manifest with Him in glory when He is manifested and faithful ones shall reign with Him over this poor sin-stained earth, then made His. In the place where He was despised and rejected, He, the Righteous One, shall be recompensed, and shall be gloriously exalted, as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

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