

This chapter seems to me to be a parallel with the previous chapter, almost as if it is a retelling of the previous chapter with different symbols but the same message: **The world and Satan will attack and harm us physically, but God is the shepherd and keeper of our souls, and in Him we overcome!** Like all of Revelation, the wording points us back to other Biblical accounts. I will bring those out as we go through this passage. In them we see the patterns of God which are His fingerprints on history, which is His story.

¹ And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. Revelation 12:1 The Gospel of John reveals seven signs that proved that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, predicted in the Scriptures. He uses the same word six times in his Gospel. He even numbers some of them (John 4:54ⁱ). But in Revelation John uses the same word in a different way. We can read it as a wonder and in some cases as actions that are miraculous, whether with good or evil intentions.

The great sign is a woman clothed with the sun. In chapter one Jesus' face was said to shine like the sun (1:16ⁱⁱ). On the Mount of Transfiguration the same was said of Jesus (Matthew 17:2ⁱⁱⁱ). Psalm 104:2^{iv} says that God clothes Himself with light. And 1st John 1:5^v tells us God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. In Romans 13:14^{vi} we are told to put on the Lord Jesus. It is as if the woman has put on the most beautiful of all clothing, the garment of light. That is what I believe Adam and Eve were clothed in before the fall. In a symbolic way this is saying the woman has been restored to a relationship with God. This is the good news of the Bible. What was lost in the Garden of Eden is restored to us in Jesus whom Paul refers to as the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45^{vii}). By accepting Jesus' sacrificial death on our behalf, He takes our sins and clothes us in His righteousness. I call it "the great exchange". There is no more wonderful exchange! Jesus invites everyone to humble themselves to receive it. Then we become the bride of Christ. Even while we are being sanctified, God sees us perfected, clothed in Christ (Hebrews 10:14^{viii}). That is who I understand this woman to be. Jewish literature and Song of Solomon 6:10^{ix} describes YHWH's bride in similar wording. This would include both Old and New Testament saints. That implies she is the same one described in 21:9-11^x as the city of God with the glory of God shining like a rare jewel (Isaiah 62:2-5^{xi}).

The crown of twelve stars may represent her authority in Christ and her Jewish roots in the twelve tribes of Israel, or perhaps the twelve apostles, or more likely in the way we have seen it used in previous chapters, the redeemed of Old and New Covenants. We see in the description of the heavenly city both the names of the patriarchs and those of the apostles. We are grafted into those Jewish roots when we are in Christ, the Jewish Messiah (Romans 11:17,18^{xii}). In the first chapter the stars were the angels of the churches (1:20^{xiii}). This tells us this is more than the woman Mary but rather represents all the redeemed.

The moon under her feet implies her authority over the darkness. The moon rules the night, and the night and its darkness represent evil (1 Thessalonians 5:7^{xiv}). In Christ we have authority over evil. We have no need to fear those who can harm the body but have no more that they can do (Matthew 10:28^{xv}). We belong to our Shepherd King.

This compares to Joseph's dream where the sun and moon were Jacob and Rachel and the stars being all their sons, the rest of the Jewish nation. In that dream, the sun, moon, and stars came and bowed before him (Genesis 37:9^{xvi}). It was a prediction of Joseph reigning in Egypt and the family coming to him for refuge. He was a type of Christ to come, for he left his home, was sold as a slave, stayed faithful, provided bread for the world that they might live and not die, ascended to power, provided a refuge for his family, and was gracious and merciful to his brothers. Some of the sages referred to the coming Messiah as Yeshua ben Yosef. The similarities are another of the many physical patterns we can see describing the much better spiritual reality that was to come.

I think it is important to digress from the text and look at this foreshadow. Joseph interpreted the Pharaoh's dream of seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. He wisely suggested that storehouses save up the abundance of the years of plenty to get them through the years of famine. Revelation is describing the seven years of famine that are coming and already here in some places in the world. Famine is not just a lack of food, but as Amos said, a famine of hearing the words of the Lord (Amos 8:11^{xvii}). I believe we are nearing the end of the time of plenty. The most important thing we can store up for the years of famine is the Word of God in our hearts (Psalm 119:11^{xviii}). You cannot eat gold, and survival food will perish or be robbed, but the Word of God will never rust or be stolen (Matthew 6:19,20^{xix}).

² *She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.* Revelation 12:2 Here again we see the multiple applications of the Word of God. Mary is giving birth to Jesus may be the secondary meaning, but it is more applicable to the saints who were crying out for the Messiah to come. They travailed in prayer along with Anna and Simeon and many others for Messiah to deliver them (Luke 2:25^{xx}, 36-38^{xxi}). Israel was in bondage to Rome and heavily taxed. The religious leadership added to the agony of the time with their oppressive rules (Jeremiah 4:31^{xxii}). Everyone was longing for a Messiah to deliver them. It has been said that every young woman in Israel was asking God to be the mother of the Messiah.

Birth pains was also used to describe the nation of Israel in captivity in Isaiah 26:17,18^{xxiii} and Micah 4:9,10^{xxiv}; 5:3^{xxv} leading up to their return. Here it seems to be used as the birth of the new covenant and the coming kingdom of God. Jesus used birth pains to describe the time leading up to the end time (Matthew 24:8^{xxvi}), implying the time just before the age to come when Christ reigns on the earth. Jesus told the disciples in John 16:19-21^{xxvii} that their sorrow over His crucifixion would be like that of woman giving birth - but also that it would be turned to joy like that of a mother holding her newborn. The joy of birth is compared to the joy of the kingdom of God reigning in the hearts of all who will receive Him.

Jerusalem from above is free and is the mother of us all (Galatians 4:26^{xxviii}). Just as we saw the two cities contrasted (Babylon and New Jerusalem) so we see a contrast of Babylon the whore in chapter 17 representing the kingdom of unbelievers contrasted with this righteous woman who represents the kingdom of God. This woman flees into the wilderness and the dragon pursues her and makes war with the rest of her offspring, which shows us this is not only the woman Mary but the people of faith (See also verses 11-17). The Catholic church claims it is only about Mary to help with their veneration of her, but Mary is just a part of this woman. She is blessed among woman (Luke 1:42^{xxix}), but still just a vessel that God chose to work through.

³ *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.* Revelation 12:3 John sees another wonder in the heavenly realm, a great red dragon. Like the red horse in chapter six (6:3^{xxx}), red represents bloodshed, war, and in particular the persecution of God's people. The whore in 17:3-6^{xxxi} is scarlet and described as being drunk with the blood of the saints. Behind the kingdoms like Egypt and Babylon is the dragon who is especially focused on killing God's people (John 10:10^{xxxii}). Think of the tens of millions that died under the regimes of Stalin, Mao, and Hitler, each of which were antichrist.

The dragon is identified as Satan in verse 9, but the descriptions are drawn from several Old Testament passages that explain in more detail who he is and how he is working. The word for dragon literally means a great snake, not like what we think of as a dragon. This points us back to Genesis 3 and reminds us that it was the serpent's temptations that Eve yielded to. He is a liar and very clever (John 8:44; Genesis 3:1^{xxxiii}). He is also referred to as a great sea monster (Ezekiel 29:3^{xxxiv}, 32:2-3^{xxxv}). All through Revelation we are seeing parallels with the Exodus, where Pharaoh and Egypt are a type of the devil and the nations that persecute God's people. Ezekiel 29:3 calls Pharaoh the great dragon. It is the only use of that expression in the Old Testament. We see that term used for the dragon in verse 9^{xxxvi}. It was the devil inciting Pharaoh to kill the Hebrew baby boys in his attempt to stop the coming of the Messiah who he knew was predicted to crush his head (Genesis 3:15^{xxxvii}).

The ten horns point to the fourth beast in Daniel 7:7^{xxxviii}, 24^{xxxix}. That is the nation of Rome, which is certainly how the recipients of the letter would have read this. To the persecuted church of that day, they would have thought of the emperor as the dragon and the seven hills being Rome and the ten kings the governors who would enforce the edict that Christians must declare Caesar is lord or die. Pharaoh is a foreshadow of all antichrist rulers and perhaps a leader that is coming in the last days. Chapter 17 verses 9^{xl} and 12^{xli} tell us the seven heads are seven mountains which usually represent kingdoms and the ten horns are ten kings over which the Antichrist presides. The diadems are symbols of authority on the heads.

The "seven diadems" on the heads of the dragons represent the devil's false claims of sovereign, universal authority in opposition to the true "King of kings and Lord of lords," who also wears "many diadems" (19:12, 19-21). The similarity between the descriptions in chs. 12 and 19 reveals a conscious intention to contrast those described, and comparison with 13:1 confirms this intention. The dragon's crowns represent blasphemous claims to earthly kingship by his beastly representatives in feeble imitation of Christ's true kingship (contrast 13:1 and 17:3, 7-13 with 1:5; 17:14; and 19:12-16).^{xlii}

We can clearly see the multiple aspects of the prophecy. While this is obviously speaking of Satan's attempt to kill Jesus at the time of His birth in Bethlehem and inciting Herod to kill all the baby boys there. It is a manifestation of the cosmic battle described in Genesis 3:15^{xliii}. There is enmity between the seed of the woman and the serpent. We see throughout church history the attempt to slaughter Christians and more recently by ISIS, Boko Haram, northern Nigeria, North Korea, China, and much of the Muslim world. A daily threat hangs over the heads of those who believe in many nations. This cosmic battle will only become more intense in the final seven years.

⁴ *His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore*

her child he might devour it. Revelation 12:4 Stars represent angels. Satan brought all his fallen angels, one-third of the heavenly hosts into action to try to stop Jesus from redeeming mankind. We can see that in Daniel 8:10^{xliiv}. Some people interpret this to have happened during creation. Others see Jesus' seeing Satan falling like lightning when the 72 returned from their mission as a declaration of it happening at that time (Luke 10:18^{xlv}). Others see this as an event in the last seven years. Beale, however, sees these stars as Old Testament saints that were persecuted in the captivity (Daniel 8:22-25^{xlvi}). He derives that interpretation from Daniel 8:10 in which the stars pulled down are trampled on by the beast. He points to Daniel 12:2,3^{xlvii} as a source for referring to saints as stars. *If* that is the correct interpretation, there is no validity to the interpretation that this is one-third of the angels in heaven who are now demons. He does not associate these stars with the dragon's angels in verse 7. I lean toward the interpretation the stars being angels as it seems odd that in the same book the metaphor would be mixed.

We can see throughout history Satan's attempt to stop the Messiah from being born, from the Pharaoh's slaughter of the Hebrew baby boys, to Haman's assault on the Jewish nation, to the many enemies of Israel, including Antiochus attempt to end Judaism, to Herod's command to kill the babies born in Bethlehem. Satan was personally involved in the temptation during Jesus' fast (Luke 4:1-2^{xlviii}).

I imagine that Satan and the fallen angels thought they had succeeded when Jesus was crucified. C.S. Lewis depicts this well in the Lion, Witch, and the Wardrobe when the great lion, Aslan, who represents Jesus, is slain on the stone table. The demonic realm was giddy with excitement, only to find a few days later that they had not only failed at their task but had actually helped Aslan to reach His goal of saving mankind.

The picture presented in this chapter is quite grotesque. A woman giving birth could not be more vulnerable. Birth is such an amazing event. Unique hormones cause the body to do something it never otherwise does. The woman's whole energy is absorbed into bringing this baby out into the world. But here at the scene is not a doctor, nurse, or midwife but a red dragon hoping to devour the baby that is to be born. It does represent Herod sending his army to kill the babies in Bethlehem, but in a greater way it is Satan's desire to devour every born-again child of God. Humans are weak and vulnerable. But in Christ we have His power to resist our spiritual enemy: our flesh, and the devil (James 4:7^{xlix}; 2 Corinthians 10:4,5^l).

We have seen this battle lately in our own midst as people come here seeking the truth but are led away by others playing on pride to draw them into an unbiblical version of how to live as a Christian. Satan will use every means available to stop God's kingdom from advancing. However, we are always free to choose which side we will follow. One side presents the illusion of passing pleasures or plays on our ego's desire to be special but only offers a distortion of the truth. Jesus offers us love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness and only declares truth which in turn humbles us to serve our Lord and one another in love.

Sometimes Jesus graciously protects a new Christian until he or she gets grounded, but then the onslaught begins. Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which has come upon you, Peter wrote (1 Peter 4:12^{li}). It is to grow our faith and trust in the Lord. Ephesians 6:12 ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.* We were already in a battle

from the time we were born. We just did not realize it. And we were on the losing side. Sometimes everything went along smoothly because Satan did not want us to realize we were on the lazy river to hell. But once we jumped off the float and started swimming upstream and warning others, then we became his target. He is a roaring lion going about seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8^{lii}). His legions are at work sowing doubt, division, and temptations. He hates God! But the only way he can attack God is to attack God's children. However, God uses those attacks to make us stronger and to help us trust Him completely.

⁵ *She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne*, Revelation 12:5 The phrase, "rule with a rod of iron" is from the Messianic Psalm 2:9^{liii}. We saw the reference to the nations raging in the previous paragraph which is from the beginning of that psalm. The psalm speaks of God's Son and warns nations to submit to Him or face His wrath. Herod's attempts to kill Jesus failed. After securing the redemption of mankind Jesus was caught up into heaven at the ascension. The angels declared He would return in like manner (Acts 1:11^{liv}). It is an abbreviated way of telling of Jesus' ministry and focusing on His glorious ascension while forecasting His rule with a rod of iron.

The scene was quite dramatic and would have had a message for those first readers that we can also take to heart. A woman in labor is probably the most vulnerable a person can be. Then there is this enormous blood red dragon ready to devour her child with thousands of demons assisting him. The situation could not have been worse, and yet God kept Jesus throughout His ministry and through the defeat of death and hell and to the ascension where He sits at the right hand of God waiting to reign in the earth (Psalm 110:1^{lv}). From Jesus' resurrection on, He has had the authority to reign (Acts 13:33^{lvi}; Matthew 28:18^{lvii}), and when He returns that reign will be forcefully enforced throughout the world. Sin will not be tolerated (Zech 14:17^{lviii}). Then mankind will get their wish for God to not allow evil, but will reject that like they have rejected His tolerance and grace.

We are the body of Christ. If God can deliver Jesus from such an impossible situation, He can deliver the rest of His sons and daughters in whatever impossible situations we face. I would suggest that for us in the USA, wealth luring us into apathy and the desire for worldly possessions is our impossible situation. But God can put a fire in our hearts to resist the temptation to become lukewarm like the church of Laodicea and also give us discernment to resist the abundant false teachings (3:16^{lix}).

I read the testimonies in the Voice of the Martyrs publications and see this amazing deliverance from hatred and from the love of this life, from the desire for security, and how God can deliver us from enemies who are set on ending our lives if our time has not come. But we will have an ultimate deliverance when we are raised, our bodies rising to meet us in the air when that trumpet sounds (1 Thessalonians 4:17^{lx}).

⁶ *and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days*. Revelation 12:6 There are some who would say that this was Joseph and Mary's journey to Egypt to protect Jesus. Egypt was hardly a wilderness. That may have foreshadowed what is to come, but if it is speaking of the holy family, it is out of chronological order. It is mentioned after the ascension. This gives us the clue that this is speaking of something later.

There are many ideas as to what this means. One interpretation is that it is the church's flight from Jerusalem in 70 A.D. into the canyon of the Arnon River near Pella.

But by that time, it was just a portion of the church as many Gentiles had come to faith in other regions.

Another idea is that this is the church age where we live in the wilderness of this world, fleeing from the bondage of the world system. God cares for us by feeding us spiritually so that we are not drawn back into worldliness. The three and a half years is interpreted as an indefinite period of time as it was used that way in other apocalyptic literature. The idea is true, but I wonder if it is the ultimate fulfillment of this passage?

The other interpretation is that it is the first half of the last seven years, or it may apply to both the church age and a specific period of protection during the Great Tribulation. There are numerous Scriptures that promise spiritual protection to believers. This seems to go along with the 1260 days of the two witnesses in the previous chapter and their divine protection. That protection ends at the midpoint of the last 7 years when the Antichrist makes war on the saints and overcomes them. The Left Behind series speculated that the wilderness place is Petra and that a few surviving believers will survive in that area miraculously fed by God in the manner of Israel in the wilderness.

No matter what the ultimate fulfillment is, I believe it is more important that we claim the many references to God being our refuge and fortress, an ever-present help in time of trouble (Psalm 9:9^{lxi}; Nahum 1:7^{lxiii}). I wake up in the middle of the night concerned about people and their spiritual state or situations out of my control and cannot return to sleep without casting my burdens on the Lord, reminding myself that He is sovereign and that He is good. I sing a hymn like *Leaning on the Everlasting Arms*, or the chorus of *Safe in the Arms of Jesus*.

Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast;
There by His love o'er-shaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.

Or I will review Scriptures I have memorized and find I soon fall into a restful sleep of trust in our Almighty God who is our refuge. The place prepared for the church to be nourished and protected is the body of Christ that feeds on His Word and loves one another. The Lord is my shepherd (Psalm 23:1^{lxiii})! I need to be in His flock. He will see us through whatever He allows to come our way and will see our spirits safely home forever to be in His loving presence.

Questions:

- 1 What is the imagery in verse 1?
- 2 How does this relate to Joseph's dream?
- 3 What are the birth pains?
- 4 Who is the dragon?
- 5 Why is he red?
- 6 Why ten horns and seven diadems?
- 7 What does his tail sweep? Connection with Daniel 8:10,22?
- 8 How do we fight in this battle?
- 9 What does "rule with a rod of iron" reference?
- 10 Where is our refuge in this life?

ⁱ **John 4:54 (ESV)**

⁵⁴ This was now the second sign that Jesus did when he had come from Judea to Galilee.

ⁱⁱ **Revelation 1:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Matthew 17:2 (ESV)**

² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

^{iv} **Psalms 104:2 (ESV)**

² covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent.

^v **1 John 1:5 (ESV)**

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

^{vi} **Romans 13:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

^{vii} **1 Corinthians 15:45 (ESV)**

⁴⁵ Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

^{viii} **Hebrews 10:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

^{ix} **Song of Songs 6:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ "Who is this who looks down like the dawn, beautiful as the moon, bright as the sun, awesome as an army with banners?"

^x **Revelation 21:9-11 (ESV)**

⁹ Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

^{xi} **Isaiah 62:2-5 (ESV)**

² The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give. ³ You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴ You shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate, but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her, and your land Married; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. ⁵ For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.

^{xii} **Romans 11:17-18 (ESV)**

¹⁷ But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, ¹⁸ do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.

^{xiii} **Revelation 1:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

^{xiv} **1 Thessalonians 5:7 (ESV)**

⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night.

^{xv} **Matthew 10:28 (ESV)**

²⁸ And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

^{xvi} **Genesis 37:9 (ESV)**

⁹ Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

^{xvii} **Amos 8:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ "Behold, the days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "when I will send a famine on the land— not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.

^{xviii} **Psalms 119:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

^{xix} **Matthew 6:19-20 (ESV)**

¹⁹ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and

steal,²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

^{xx} **Luke 2:25 (ESV)**

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

^{xxi} **Luke 2:36-38 (ESV)**

³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,³⁷ and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

^{xxii} **Jeremiah 4:31 (ESV)**

³¹ For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor, anguish as of one giving birth to her first child, the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands, "Woe is me! I am fainting before murderers."

^{xxiii} **Isaiah 26:17-18 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Like a pregnant woman who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near to giving birth, so were we because of you, O LORD;¹⁸ we were pregnant, we writhed, but we have given birth to wind. We have accomplished no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.

^{xxiv} **Micah 4:9-10 (ESV)**

⁹ Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in you? Has your counselor perished, that pain seized you like a woman in labor?¹⁰ Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon. There you shall be rescued; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.

^{xxv} **Micah 5:3 (ESV)**

³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

^{xxvi} **Matthew 24:8 (ESV)**

⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

^{xxvii} **John 16:19-21 (ESV)**

¹⁹ Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Is this what you are asking yourselves, what I meant by saying, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while and you will see me'?"²⁰ Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy.²¹ When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

^{xxviii} **Galatians 4:26 (ESV)**

²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.

^{xxix} **Luke 1:42 (ESV)**

⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"

^{xxx} **Revelation 6:4 (ESV)**

⁴ And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword.

^{xxxi} **Revelation 17:3-6 (ESV)**

³ And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns.⁴ The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.⁵ And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."⁶ And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.

^{xxxii} **John 10:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

^{xxxiii} **Genesis 3:1 (ESV)**

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

^{xxxiv} **Ezekiel 29:3 (ESV)**

³ speak, and say, Thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lies in the midst of his streams, that says, ‘My Nile is my own; I made it for myself.’

^{xxxv} **Ezekiel 32:2-3 (ESV)**

² “Son of man, raise a lamentation over Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him: “You consider yourself a lion of the nations, but you are like a dragon in the seas; you burst forth in your rivers, trouble the waters with your feet, and foul their rivers. ³ Thus says the Lord GOD: I will throw my net over you with a host of many peoples, and they will haul you up in my dragnet.

^{xxxvi} **Revelation 12:9 (ESV)**

⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

^{xxxvii} **Genesis 3:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

^{xxxviii} **Daniel 7:7 (ESV)**

⁷ After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.

^{xxxix} **Daniel 7:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings.

^{xl} **Revelation 17:9 (ESV)**

⁹ This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated;

^{xli} **Revelation 17:12 (ESV)**

¹² And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.

^{xlii} G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 1999), 635.

^{xliii} **Genesis 3:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

^{xliv} **Daniel 8:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ It grew great, even to the host of heaven. And some of the host and some of the stars it threw down to the ground and trampled on them.

^{xlv} **Luke 10:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

^{xlvi} **Daniel 8:22-25 (ESV)**

²² As for the horn that was broken, in place of which four others arose, four kingdoms shall arise from his nation, but not with his power. ²³ And at the latter end of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their limit, a king of bold face, one who understands riddles, shall arise. ²⁴ His power shall be great—but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does, and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints. ²⁵ By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall become great. Without warning he shall destroy many. And he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken—but by no human hand.

^{xlvii} **Daniel 12:2-3 (ESV)**

² And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. ³ And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

^{xlviii} **Luke 4:1-2 (ESV)**

¹ And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness

² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.

^{xlix} **James 4:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

^l **2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (ESV)**

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy

arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

^{li} **1 Peter 4:12 (ESV)**

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

^{lii} **1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)**

⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

^{liii} **Psalm 2:9 (ESV)**

⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

^{liv} **Acts 1:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

^{lv} **Psalm 110:1 (ESV)**

¹ The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."

^{lvi} **Acts 13:33 (ESV)**

³³ this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "'You are my Son, today I have begotten you.'

^{lvii} **Matthew 28:18 (ESV)**

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

^{lviii} **Zechariah 14:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ And if any of the families of the earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.

^{lix} **Revelation 3:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

^{lx} **1 Thessalonians 4:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.

^{lxi} **Psalm 9:9 (ESV)**

⁹ The LORD is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

^{lxii} **Nahum 1:7 (ESV)**

⁷ The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him.

^{lxiii} **Psalm 23:1 (ESV)**

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.