

The Woman of Revelation 12



God's Word Lays Out the Future in Advance

Throughout Scripture, God has revealed to us the things that will take place in the future. In fact, the Lord assures us that He does nothing unless He reveals His plan to His servants the prophets.

Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets (Amos 3:7).

Interestingly, the Bible has more to say about the last days than any other period in history. And today these events are unfolding before our very eyes.¹ This article will look at one of these developments through the lens of Scripture.

Global Marian Apparitions

One of the most significant trends occurring in our day is the worldwide Marian apparitions. These reported apparitions represent perhaps the greatest display of supernatural activity since the time of Christ's first advent.² If these manifestations are as prolific and widespread as reported, then we should expect that the Bible would anticipate these major global events.

¹ The Bible gives us a vivid picture of the last days. These prophecies prove that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that the return of Christ is drawing near. The following resources – which are available to view and read for free at www.eternal-productions.org – investigate many last days Bible prophecies proving God's Word true: *Countdown To Eternity* DVD; *101 Last Days Prophecies* booklet; *Messages From Heaven* book and video. Unlike any other book, the Bible contains hundreds of specific, verifiable prophecies. Therefore prophecy substantiates the Word of God.

² For an in-depth examination of these events refer to the book *Queen of All* and the book and DVD entitled *Messages From Heaven*. These resources leave no doubt that something very significant is occurring.

Interestingly, there is only one chapter in the Bible that identifies a benevolent “woman” on the scene during earth’s final days. The chapter is Revelation 12. In the first verse of this chapter we read: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”

According to many Marian visionaries this is exactly how the apparition appears. In addition, the apparition’s messages often state that she is the “woman clothed with the sun” or, more commonly, the “Queen of Heaven.” Here are two examples:

In the Apocalypse [the Book of Revelation], I have been announced as the Woman Clothed with the Sun who will conduct the battle against the Red Dragon and all his followers. If you want to second my plan, you must do battle, my little ones, children of a Mother who is Leader.³

Beloved sons, live in my peace. Today you are calling to mind my first apparition which took place in the poor Cova da Iria in Fatima. I came down from heaven as your Mother and Queen. I manifested myself to you in the splendor of my immaculate light. I appeared as the Woman Clothed with the Sun, who has the task of forming for herself her cohort, for the decisive moments of battle.⁴

The Woman of Revelation 12

Is it the Marian apparition to which God is referring in Revelation 12? Does the Revelation 12 woman anticipate the apparition’s last day’s role? How does this prophetic passage relate to the rest of the Scriptures? Let’s read the first five verses of this chapter:

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne (Revelation 12:1-5).

When we think of a woman who gives birth to “a male Child who was to rule the nations,” Mary the mother of Jesus naturally comes to mind. However, the Bible explains that “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are

³ Fr. Don Stefano Gobbi, *To The Priests: Our Lady’s Beloved Sons*, St. Francis, ME, The National Headquarters of the Marian Movement of Priests in the United States of America, 1998, p. 333. Message given to Father Gobbi who is the head of the Marian Movement of Priests. Message received on December 8, 1982.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 563. Message received on May 13, 1988, while Father Gobbi was in Marienfried, Germany.

foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

With that admonition in mind, let’s look at the context of this passage and examine the whole counsel of God’s Word to see what the Spirit of God intended.

Joseph’s Dream in Genesis 37

Throughout the Book of Revelation, the Holy Spirit uses imagery from the Old Testament. In fact, the Book of Revelation has scores of allusions to the Old Testament.⁵ Revelation 12 is no exception.

In studying the OT it is apparent that the “woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” is a direct reference to Joseph’s dream recorded in the Book of Genesis. Here is Joseph’s dream:

[Joseph] dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, “Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me.” So he told it to his father (Israel) and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?” (Genesis 37:9-10).

Joseph was one of the twelve sons of Israel. From his dream we are shown that the sun, the moon, and the twelve stars represent Israel and his family. Israel – formerly called Jacob – had twelve sons from which emerge the twelve tribes of Israel. And it is through Israel’s seed that God promises to bring forth His Son – the Messiah – Jesus Christ.

In the Book of Genesis, God repeatedly promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel) that “in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”⁶ This is a direct reference to the Messiah.

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ (Galatians 3:16).

The apostle John, who authored the Book of Revelation, was a Jewish believer. He and his first century audience would have surely understood that the sign of this woman refers back to Joseph’s dream and therefore represents Israel.

Israel Found in Revelation Chapters 7, 12, 14, and 21

In fact the entire context of the Book of Revelation demands this interpretation. For we see that prior to the Revelation 12 reference to Israel, John lists all twelve tribes of Israel by name in chapter 7. In this chapter the twelve tribes of Israel are listed and sealed by God for protection and salvation (Revelation 7:1-8).

⁵ Chuck Missler, *The Book of Revelation: a Commentary*, Coeur d’Alene, ID, Koinonia House, 2005.

⁶ Genesis 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; etc.

And I heard the number of those who were sealed. One hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed (Revelation 7:4).

They appear again in Revelation 12 – this time persecuted by, but protected from, the dragon. Then they appear in Revelation 14:1-5 as redeemed from the earth and singing before the throne of God.

Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their forehead. ... They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth (Revelation 14:1, 3).

Finally, to assure us that the woman of Revelation 12 is Israel, she appears once more at the end of the Book of Revelation – this time as the Lamb's (Christ's) bride coming down out of heaven:

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ... "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. ... And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Revelation 21:2, 9-12, 14).

Why is it important that the true Israel is presented as the Lamb's bride at the end of the Book of Revelation? How does this relate to the rest of the Scriptures?

Israel is the Lord's Wife

A review of the Old Testament will greatly enhance our understanding of these passages. In the Old Testament, Israel is often referred to as God's wife.

For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth (Isaiah 54:5).

"Return, O backsliding children," says the Lord; "for I am married to you. I will take you...and I will bring you to Zion." (Jeremiah 3:14).

I have likened the daughter of Zion to a lovely and delicate woman (Jeremiah 6:2).

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord (Jeremiah 31:31-32).

These and other references confirm that the Lord's wife is Israel.⁷ This is the imagery that John receives depicting the true Israel as the Lord's faithful and pure wife in Revelation chapter 21.

In addition, Jesus (who is God) said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). Consequently in the New Testament it is no surprise to see that Christ is also depicted as married to His church.⁸ And God's Word teaches that the church consists first of Jewish believers and then of Gentile believers.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek [Gentile] (Romans 1:16).

Therefore the Revelation 21 bride is the true Israel – consisting of Jewish and Gentile believers – united forever with the Lord. In contrast, nowhere in the Bible is Mary portrayed as the bride or wife of the Lord.

Israel Portrayed as a Woman in Labor

Further, Israel is repeatedly portrayed as a woman in labor. This is the imagery utilized in Revelation 12 to depict Israel's birth pangs in the last days. These labor pains will usher in the return of the King of the Jews. Here are some of the Old Testament passages that highlight this:

Before [Israel] was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child (Isaiah 66:7).

For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor, the anguish as of her who brings forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself... (Jeremiah 4:31).

For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, you shall dwell in the field, and to Babylon

⁷ See also: Psalm 45:10-17; Ezekiel 16:8-16; 32; Hosea 2:19-20; etc.

⁸ Matthew 22:2; John 3:29; Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2-3; Ephesians 5:25-27, 32

you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies (Micah 4:9-10).

Therefore He shall give them up, until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel (Micah 5:3).

These and other Old Testament passages picture Israel laboring with birth pangs in the final days leading to Christ's return.⁹

God Isn't Through with Israel

To further support that it is Israel which God refers to in Revelation 12, we must remember that during the Tribulation, God again deals with the nation Israel. Ezekiel 36-39; Daniel 9:24-27; Daniel 12; Zechariah 12-14; Revelation 7; 11; 14 and many additional passages underscore this fact. The period described in Revelation chapters 6-19, is even called the time of Jacob's trouble.¹⁰

Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's [a.k.a. Israel's] trouble; but he shall be saved out of it (Jeremiah 30:7).

In addition, God spends three chapters in the Book of Romans (chapters 9-11) explaining that He is not through with Israel. These chapters conclude with God's promise to deliver Israel in the last days: "And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob'" (Romans 11:26). This agrees with the deliverance we see in the Book of Revelation.

Israel's Repentance and Supplication Will Usher in Christ's Return

Zechariah chapters 12-14 provide further insight. In these chapters, we discover that it is Israel's repentance in the last days that gives birth, or literally ushers in Jesus' Second Coming. Zechariah explains that Jesus is considered Israel's firstborn Son and that during the last days the Jews will cry out to the Lord and finally recognize Jesus as their long-awaited Deliverer.

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn (Zechariah 12:10).

⁹ See also: Isaiah 26:17-18; Isaiah 66:7-13; Jeremiah 6:24; Jeremiah 13:21.

¹⁰ God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Genesis 35:10). Therefore the Tribulation period is specifically the time of Israel's trouble. Corroborating this fact, we find that the church is not mentioned once in Revelation chapters 6-19. The true church is removed prior to the Tribulation (Revelation 3:10; 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:9; 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; etc.).

Israel's supplication and mourning for their only Son, their firstborn Son, Jesus Christ, will usher in His return. This is why the dragon hates the woman in Revelation 12. If he can destroy the Jewish nation, then Jesus will not return. Of course we are assured that the enemy will be defeated and God and His people will triumph!

More Confirmation that Revelation 12 Refers to Israel¹¹

There are additional clues that confirm that the Revelation 12 woman refers to Israel. For instance, Michael the archangel and his angels fight with the dragon and his angels – casting them down to the earth (Revelation 12:7-9).

It is no coincidence that the Old Testament Book of Daniel identifies Michael as “the great prince who stands watch over the [Jewish people]” (Daniel 12:1). How fitting then it is to have Michael fighting on behalf of the people of Israel in Revelation 12.

More affirmation is found in Daniel chapter 9. In verses 24-27 we are told that the final seven years of history will be the time that God again deals with the Jews. This final week, or seven-year period, will commence when the antichrist confirms a peace covenant for seven years. But in the middle of the week (at the 3 ½ year mid-point), antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews and persecute them (v. 27). This corresponds with Revelation 12:6 where the woman (Israel) flees to the wilderness for one thousand two hundred and sixty days – or 3 ½ years (see also: Revelation 12:14).

Finally, the flood that the serpent spews out of his mouth to cause the woman to be carried away represents the antichrist's persecution of the Jews during the Tribulation. Both the Book of Revelation (Revelation 12:15-16) and the Book of Daniel (Daniel 9:26; 11:22) use the same imagery of a flood to represent the trouble and persecution that will come upon the nation during this period.

In fact the imagery of a flood signifying enemy forces against God's people is used regularly in the Word of God.¹²

Who is this coming up like a flood, whose waters move like the rivers?
Egypt [Israel's adversary] rises up like a flood, and its waters move like the rivers; and he says, “I will go up and cover the earth, I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.” Come up, O horses, and rage, O chariots! And let the mighty men come forth” (Jeremiah 46:7-9).

¹¹ There are many more reasons that the Revelation 12 woman cannot be Mary or the church. For example, the woman of Revelation 12 cannot be the church because this woman is pregnant with child (v. 2). Scripture tells us that Christ is espoused to a chaste virgin (2 Corinthians 11:2) – who is the church (Ephesians 5:25-27, 29). Revelation 19:7-9 assures us that when Christ's espoused virgin is presented to Him for marriage, she will be clean and white. It would make no biblical sense for Jesus to marry a pregnant woman (Matthew 22:2). Furthermore, we are told in Revelation 12:2 that this woman is in pain. This directly contradicts the Catholic doctrine that Mary, as sinless, did not experience the consequences of the curse, namely, that she was exempt from pain and death. Genesis 3:16 explains that pain in childbirth is a direct result of the curse. Therefore, if Mary is sinless, she cannot be the woman of Revelation 12 who is experiencing pain. Of course, the Bible states that all are sinners, but Catholics who hold this position must acknowledge that they cannot have it both ways.

¹² See also: 2 Samuel 22:5; Psalm 18:4; Psalm 69:1-2; Isaiah 59:19; Jeremiah 47:1-2; etc.

Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them the waters of the River, strong and mighty – the king of Assyria and all his glory; he will go up over all his channels and go over all his banks. He will pass through Judah, he will overflow and pass over, he will reach up to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings will fill the breadth of Your land, O Immanuel (Isaiah 8:7-8).

Of course the flood of anti-Semitism is not new; it is found throughout the history of the Bible. Ever since God declared that He would bring forth His Savior through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and the nation of Israel, we find that over and over again “Satan stood up against Israel” (1 Chronicles 21:1).

The enemy will try once again to thwart God’s plan, but the Book of Revelation confirms his defeat.

Catholic Theologian Agrees

Roman Catholic theologian Father Hubert J. Richards agrees that the Revelation 12 woman refers to Israel. His book, *What The Spirit Says to the Churches: A Key to the Apocalypse of John*, carries the Nihil obstat and Imprimatur of the Roman Catholic Church.¹³ Concerning the woman of Revelation 12, Father Richards writes:

The vision proper, then, begins with the figure of a Woman clothed with the sun and the stars. We think naturally enough of our Lady, to whom this description has traditionally been applied. After all, we say, of whom else could John be thinking when he speaks of the mother of the Messiah? However it is clear from the rest of the chapter that this interpretation will stand only if the verse is isolated: what follows has very little relevance to our Lady. Nor is it any honor to Mary to apply any and every text to her without thought....

Who then is she? The source to which John has turned for his imagery throughout this book is the Old Testament. There, the Woman, the bride of God who brings forth the Messiah, is Israel, the true Israel, the chosen people of God. It is quite certain that this is what is in John’s mind when he begins his description with a quotation from Gen. 37:9-10, where the sun and moon and twelve stars represent the twelve-fold Israel.

This Woman will later be contrasted with the Harlot (the collective personality of Rome, opposed to the true Israel), and will be specified at the end of the book, again appearing in light and splendour for her marriage with the Lamb, as the twelve-gated Jerusalem which forms the new Israel. In fact the number twelve occurs so frequently in the Apocalypse in reference to Israel that it cannot have a different meaning

¹³ The Nihil obstat and Imprimatur are a declaration that a book is considered to be free from doctrinal and moral error. It is not implied that those who have granted the Nihil obstat and Imprimatur agree with the contents, opinions or statements expressed.

here. All the early Fathers of the Church interpreted these verses as about the Israel of God.¹⁴

While there are some who insist that Mary is the symbol and model of the church and Revelation 12 refers to both Mary and Israel, this conjecture disagrees with the rest of the Scriptures. In reviewing God's entire Word it becomes crystal clear that the Revelation 12 woman depicts Israel, not Mary or the church.

Exposing the Apparition

If Revelation 12 does not detail Mary's role in the last days as the apparition declares, then the apparition's claim to be Mary must be deceptive. And because we know that God would never send Mary back to deceive us, this apparition appearing as a glorious queen must be an impostor.

Remember that according to God's Word the woman of Revelation 12 is the only benevolent woman on the scene during the last days. Who then is behind these global apparitions? Do the Scriptures anticipate and expose a female last days' impostor?

Yes! As God has promised, His Word has warned us in advance. In surveying the entire Bible, there are several passages in both the Old and New Testaments that indicate that a woman – who is a deceiver – would be on the scene during the end times.

The Bible warns of an alluring woman and queen who will deceive God's people in Christ's name (Revelation 17). God's Word identifies a lady who will seduce the nations claiming to be our mother (Isaiah 47). And Scripture cautions of a woman who will be associated with a curse who flies throughout the earth during the last days (Zechariah 5).

Though these Scriptures will only be touched on in this article, they are examined thoroughly in the book *Queen of All: The Marian apparitions' plan to unite all religions under the Roman Catholic Church*. The book and DVD *Messages From Heaven*, also examine the apparition's messages and actions in-depth – providing overwhelming documentation that these manifestations are not Mary but rather a demonic deception.¹⁵

Counterfeiting Scripture

If God's Word identifies a last days deceptive woman who comes in Christ's name (Revelation 17), and if the Bible warns that many of God's people will be ensnared by this queen (Revelation 18:4-7), would it make sense for this entity to counterfeit the Scriptures in order to deceive multitudes?

Consider the following Marian message received by Father Don Stefano Gobbi – the head of the Marian Movement of Priests.

I am the Virgin of Revelation...I will bring you to the full understanding of Sacred Scripture. Above all, I will read to you the pages of its last book, which you are living. In it, everything is already predicted, even that

¹⁴ Hubert J. Richards, *What the Spirit Says to the Churches: A Key to the Apocalypse of John*, New York, P.J. Kenedy and Sons, 1967, pp. 93, 94.

¹⁵ These are available to read and view for free at: www.eternal-productions.org

which must still come to pass. The battle to which I am calling you is clearly described, and my great victory is foretold.¹⁶

In this message and many others, the apparition portrays herself as the woman of Revelation 12. Even more revealing, she says that she will bring her followers to the full understanding of Sacred Scripture. Not surprisingly, this claim also contradicts God's Word:

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2).

The Woman and Her Persecuted Followers

If the apparition is using the Scriptures to deceive her followers, will she attempt to fulfill the Revelation 12 scenario? Does she claim to be the persecuted woman of Revelation 12? Yes, as the following messages will demonstrate.

I am the great sign which appeared in the sky: I am the Woman Clothed with the Sun, with the moon beneath my feet, and with a crown of twelve stars upon my head...And so, close to the great sign of the Woman Clothed with the Sun, there appears also that of the Red Dragon, of the ancient serpent, of Satan, who is now manifesting himself in all his extraordinary power. It appears that the great Dragon has won his victory...But in the furious struggle of these last times, this struggle between heaven and earth, between the heavenly spirits and the demons, between the Woman and the Dragon, I appear as a great sign of my greatest victory...For this great victory, I have formed for myself the cohort of all my little children who, from every part of the world, have responded to me with a yes. With my Marian Movement of Priests, I have brought my invitation to the farthest confines of the earth, and I have formed for myself my victorious army."¹⁷

The Dragon [Satan] and the Beast [Antichrist] can do nothing against those who have been signed with my seal. The Star of the Abyss [Satan] will persecute all those who are signed with my seal, but nothing will be able to harm the souls upon whom I myself have impressed my image. By the blood which many of them will have shed, divine justice will be appeased, and the time of my victory will be hastened...¹⁸

In these messages, the apparition asserts that she is the great sign in the sky – “the Woman Clothed with the Sun.” She also declares that she and her children will be

¹⁶ Fr. Don Stefano Gobbi, *To The Priests: Our Lady's Beloved Sons*, St. Francis, ME, The National Headquarters of the Marian Movement of Priests in the United States of America, 1998, pp. 260, 261. Message given to Father Gobbi, April 24, 1980, in Rome, Italy.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 923, 924. Message given to Father Gobbi, Oct. 13, 1996, while visiting Tokyo, Japan.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 308. Message given to Father Gobbi, Nov. 12, 1981, while visiting Puebla, Mexico.

persecuted by the Revelation 12 dragon, but assures her followers that her victory is guaranteed. The apparition even declares that she will seal her followers, thus imitating the Revelation 7 prophecy.

Of course Revelation 7 states that God (not the woman of Revelation 12) will seal the 144,000 Jewish believers (not Marian followers). This is therefore one more example of the apparition misapplying Scriptures in order to carry out her deceptive agenda. By coming in Christ's name and twisting the Scriptures those who do not know the Word of the Lord will be led astray.

The Most Cunning Deception

At present, the apparition has formed her enormous army. The Marian Movement of Priests – representing just one Marian group – consists of over 100,000 priests and millions of lay followers worldwide. If you add in all the other Marian groups, her followers easily number in the tens of millions.

Sadly, by misapplying the Scriptures, the apparition seeks to ensnare many to follow her rather than the Jesus of the Bible. This is diabolical because the apparition comes in Christ's name and proclaims many biblical truths. However if a person does not repent, turn toward God, and place their faith in Jesus and His Word exclusively, then the enemy's deceptive ploy has succeeded (Acts 20:21).

This has always been Satan's agenda. In fact the Bible warns that "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel [messenger] of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:14-15).

Remember, Satan is the most cunning creature (Genesis 3:1). He also quotes Scriptures when deceiving (Matthew 4:6). And the Bible tells us that he will deceive the whole world (Revelation 12:9). In fact Jesus warned that the last days deceptions would be so clever that if it were possible even the elect would be deceived (Matthew 24:24). And the apostle Paul echoes Christ's warning in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11.

Therefore, we should expect that the apparition will attempt to misapply any and all of the prophetic Scriptures in order to lead souls astray. For example, we should expect a time when she tells her followers to flee to the wilderness as described in Revelation 12:14.

God's Word Warns of this Deception

Thankfully, God has given us the clear light of His Word. As He promised, He has warned us in advance so that we would not be led astray. Let's now examine two of the prophetic passages that anticipate this deception.

In Revelation chapter 17, the apostle John is shown a beautiful woman who is in the wilderness riding the beast into power (v. 3-4). Though she appears outwardly as an alluring queen, God reveals her true nature as the Mother of Harlots (v. 5).

Here are the first 6 verses of this chapter:

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, with whom the kings of the earth

committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement (Revelation 17:1-6).

The term “harlot” is frequently used in the Bible to describe those who profess to follow God, but instead are unfaithful and follow after false gods.¹⁹ In the Bible, when God’s people went astray, we are told they played the harlot. They still claimed to be married to one husband (the Lord), but instead pursued other lovers (false gods). So it is very enlightening that this queenly woman is called the Mother of harlots.

In addition, Babylon is where false religion originated (Genesis 11). Babylon is found throughout the Bible. Though outwardly striking, she is always opposed to God and His people (Isaiah 47). So it is no surprise to see Mystery Babylon on the climactic end-times scene. Her counterfeit worship in the name of the Lord is prophesied to rise one more time before her final destruction.

Therefore, though the woman of Revelation 17 has the appearance of being Christ’s beautiful bride and queen, in reality, she is the counterfeit bride – heading up the counterfeit church. She comes in Christ’s name, claiming to be His bride, but is in fact playing the harlot.

At the beginning of her reign she has many followers from all over the world (Revelation 17:15; 18:4-7). However, the concluding verses of Revelation 17 reveal that the beast and his ten kings will eventually turn on her to burn and destroy her (v. 16-17). At this point, the beast will consolidate his power base – no longer sharing his control with the woman’s religious system.

Therefore, though the woman begins by reigning over the earth (v. 15, 18), she will eventually flee from the beast and his ten kings who seek to destroy her. Where does she flee? The answer is found in another last day’s prophecy.

The Zechariah 5 Wicked Woman

There is a peculiar prophecy in Zechariah 5 that describes a wicked woman who flies throughout the earth (v. 5-7). This woman is related to a global curse (v. 2-4) and called “Wickedness!” (v. 8). Her final destination is the land of Shinar (v. 10-11), the location of ancient Babylon. This chapter also indicates that the woman will eventually be forcibly carried to Babylon (v. 7-11).

It is important to realize that Zechariah’s prophecy was made after Babylon had been conquered by the Medes and Persians. This would indicate that Babylon must reemerge

¹⁹ 2 Chronicles 21:11-13; Psalm 73:27; Jeremiah 3; 13:27; Ezekiel 16; 20:30; 23; 43:7-9; Hosea; etc.

in the last days. Therefore, this prophecy is yet future. And today, with the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, Babylon – located in the deserts of Iraq – is positioned to reemerge on the global scene.

Here is Zechariah's prophecy:

Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying scroll. And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits." Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' according to this side of the scroll; and, 'Every perjurer shall be expelled,' according to that side of it." "I will send the curse," says the Lord of hosts; "It shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it, with its timber and stones." Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and see what this is that goes forth." So I asked, "What is it?" And he said, "It is a basket that is going forth." He also said, "This is their resemblance throughout the earth: Here is a lead disc lifted up, and this is a woman sitting inside the basket"; then he said, "This is Wickedness!" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead cover over its mouth. Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there were two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven. So I said to the angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?" And he said to me, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, the basket will be set there on its base." (Zechariah 5).

From this passage we learn that in the last days a house will be built in Babylon for the fleeing woman. Interestingly, the Hebrew word translated "house" is *bayith* which literally means a *palace, temple, or prison*. Though the woman begins by flying throughout the earth, she will eventually be carried to her temple (prison) in the desert of Iraq.

That the Zechariah 5 worldwide judgment is related to a wicked woman is quite provocative. And these people (her followers?) are judged because they swear falsely by God's name (v. 4). This indicates that those who will be judged speak in the Lord's name. They profess to be followers of the Lord, as Marian followers do, yet they speak incorrectly concerning the one true God.

Here is something else to consider related to this chapter. It is no secret that the apparition of Mary – known as the Queen of Heaven – is the mother of the Catholic Church which has its headquarters in Rome. Therefore it is quite interesting that some commentators believe that Mystery Babylon refers, first and foremost to Rome, and then secondly to Babylon.

Is it possible that the Queen's Church will begin her reign in Rome, but end in Babylon? Commentator John Phillips offers this insight:

In the prophetic application of the vision, the woman Zechariah saw can be identified with the woman in Matthew 13:33 and the scarlet woman in Revelation 17. ...Apparently, after the Antichrist destroys the Roman religious system (17:16) the spiritual uncleanness it has harbored will be carried back to rebuilt Babylon (18:2), where it will meet its final doom.²⁰

Come Out of Her!

To summarize: Zechariah 5 and Revelation 17 reveal that a wicked, but alluring woman, who has many followers, comes in Christ's name, claims to be a queen, but who is in fact representative of a global curse, will be on the scene in the last days.

Though this woman reigns as queen at the beginning of the Tribulation period (likely from Rome), she will eventually flee and be forcibly carried to the desert of Iraq, to her temple in Babylon where she will meet her demise.

Do you now see the apparition's clever ploy? By impersonating the Revelation 12 prophecy she is attempting to convince her followers that she is the benevolent woman of Revelation 12 who will be persecuted and flee into the wilderness.

However, this ploy will only work if a person chooses the apparition's word over God's Word. The good news is that God desires to save all who will heed His call to come out of her.

Come out of her, My people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues (Revelation 18:4).

The Importance of God's Word

As this deception reveals, it is vital for those who profess to follow Christ to know and obey God's Word. May we heed the Lord's Word and abide in the Word of the Lord:

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Luke 4:4).

But why do you call Me "Lord, Lord," and do not do the things which I say? (Luke 6:46).

If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free (John 8:31-32).

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth (John 17:17).

From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:15).

But take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand (Mark 13:23).

²⁰ John Phillips, *Exploring The Minor Prophets*, Grand Rapids, MI, Kregel Publications, 2002, p. 280.