

Revelation 12. Let me start with the letter this week. The 12th letter in the Hebrew Alphabet is Lamed. It means teaching and learning. It is very appropriate for this chapter. There is a ton of symbolism in this chapter. People have gone nuts over the years trying to decide what it all means. Sadly, people don't pay much attention to Tanakh. The answers to, really, all of the symbolism in Revelation comes from scripture. There's no reason to guess. As much as we are meant to know has already been given. So, going into the explanation of this chapter I will share what seems to be most commonly agreed on in Messianic Jewish teachings, and maybe a few side notes if there's time. But they all agree that if you read the Old Testament, it isn't that hard to figure out what all of this stuff means. Let's take it verse by verse.

Revelation 12 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.

So, here we refer to ^{CJB}Genesis 37:5-11 ***5 Yosef had a dream which he told his brothers, and that made them hate him all the more. 6 He said to them, "Listen while I tell you about this dream of mine. 7 We were tying up bundles of wheat in the field when suddenly my bundle got up by itself and stood upright; then your bundles came, gathered around mine and prostrated themselves before it." 8 His brothers retorted, "Yes, you will certainly be our king. You'll do a great job of bossing us around!" And they hated him still more for his dreams and for what he said.***

9 He had another dream which he told his brothers: "Here, I had another dream, and there were the sun, the moon and eleven stars prostrating themselves before me." 10 He told his father too, as well as his brothers, but his father rebuked him: "What is this dream you have had? Do you really expect me, your mother and

your brothers to come and prostrate ourselves before you on the ground?"

¹¹ His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Alright, after reading this it should be pretty clear that the woman is Israel. Jacob and Rebekah are the mother and father of Israel, the twelve tribes. Jacob and Rebekah are the Sun and the Moon. The twelve tribes are the twelve stars. There are lots of Old Testament, Tanakh, reference to Israel as a woman, as YHWH's bride. Here is one example:

^{CJB} Isaiah 54:1 "Sing, barren woman who has never had a child! Burst into song, shout for joy, you who have never been in labor! For the deserted wife will have more children than the woman who is living with her husband," says ADONAI. ² Enlarge the space for your tent, extend the curtains of your dwelling; do not hold back, lengthen your cords, make your tent pegs firm.....

⁵ For your husband is your Maker, ADONAI-Tzva'ot is his name. The Holy One of Isra'el is your Redeemer. He will be called the God of all the earth. ⁶ For ADONAI has called you back like a wife abandoned and grief-stricken; "A wife married in her youth cannot be rejected," says your God.

⁷ "Briefly I abandoned you, but with great compassion I am taking you back. (Isa. 54:1-7 CJB)

So, no really big surprises here. This reference back to the beginning of the nation of Israel tells us that we are looking at a broad sweeping prophetic vision here. This is massively Midrashic Eschatology where patterns are repeating and history as well as present and future are being told.

² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

If the woman is Israel, the birth pangs are the history of Israel leading up to the birth of Christ. The child is very special. The child is ben adam. The Son of Adam, the son of Man. He is born to replace the current ruler of the world, Satan, who was given dominion of the world by Adam at the fall. Satan doesn't want the child to be born.

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.

This says "another sign appeared in heaven." Remember what the first sign was? It was the revealing of the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark is a never ending memorial of the Abrahamic Covenant. It is a reminder that God is still actively keeping His covenant promises with Israel and that the rule and redemption of the world, the salvation of the world, will be through Israel. The "great, fiery, red dragon" is a sign. What does a sign do?

Here's a theory. Signs warn us? Signs give us direction. Signs inform us. Think about Y'shua's birth. The Magi came from the far East. They had been watching the heavens for a sign. There is a whole other study on this, but I will tell you that there is a difference between Astrology and Horoscopes which use the movements of the stars and planets to predict the future and dictate your actions which is witchcraft and expressly forbidden by scripture, and Jewish Astronomy which watches the stars and planets for signs to appear that let us know when something prophesied is happening or about to happen. The Magi were taught all of Daniel's prophecies about the coming Messiah. Daniel was the head Astronomer and Wise man for the Babylonian Empire, and the Persian Empire. He was a Eunuch. He had no children. The theory is that his wealth was used to continue to fund these Astronomers who would continue to watch for the Messiah and bring Him the gifts that Daniel had prepared for Him at His birth. Those

gifts allowed Mary, Joseph, and Jesus to escape from Herod and avoid the slaughter of the innocents. That consortium of astronomers had been watching for signs which appeared in the heavens at the time of Jesus birth for 500 years. Those signs are likely to appear again when Jesus returns.

Okay, back to the verse. The fiery red dragon is named in verse nine as Satan. No guess on who he is. He has seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns on his heads. These are all numbers of completion. They mean that he has had rule over all the earth. One theory took all of the beasts from the book of Daniel, all of their heads, and all of their crowns and added them all together to form this one dragon with the same number of heads, horns, and crowns. The agreement, though, is that the numbers, seven, ten, and seven, are the most important thing.

⁴ 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.

There are multiple theories on the tail and stars. The two main ones can both be correct. By the way, I should say this about scripture. There is no relative interpretation of scripture. You can't look at scripture and say, this is what it means to me because it makes me feel this way or that. There is one absolute interpretation of scripture and that is the interpretation that agrees with all scripture from beginning to end. There are lots of theories. But only one of them can be correct and we will only know that when it happens. In the meantime, we have to look at what has already been proven absolutely true and use that as the foundation of what we think will happen.

That being said, his tail will draw a third of the stars of heaven and throw them to earth. This is both past and future. Satan did rebel against God. He did draw a third of the angels of heaven and cast them to earth along with himself. Jesus said, I saw Satan fall like lightning. But the word "will" tells us that this is a coming event. We know from

Job that Satan had access to at least two areas of heaven. Paul, in Ephesians 6, tells us to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and mentions spirits of wickedness in the heavenly places. There will be a time when Satan and the third of the stars of heaven will be trapped on earth with no access to heaven and they will rage before they are thrown into the lake of fire. You'll see that in a minute.

⁵ 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.

The reference to the Son of Man who will rule all nations with a rod of iron is from Psalm 2. It is a messianic prophecy Psalm.

^{CJB}Psalm 2:7-9 ⁷ "I will proclaim the decree: ADONAI said to me, 'You are my son; today I became your father. ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance; the whole wide world will be your possession.

⁹ You will break them with an iron rod, shatter them like a clay pot."

Ruling with a rod of Iron doesn't mean ruling as a tyrant. It means that he will rule strictly according to God's Torah law. The law is God's way of creating harmony between heaven and earth. We are way out of alignment with heaven right now. God's law brings us into alignment with heaven which is why it needs to be strictly observed. One of the things that all of the messianic Jewish teachers agreed on was the importance of Torah in the book of Revelation.

The child was "caught up" to God and his throne. It is the same word that has inspired theories of the rapture. Jesus was caught up, ascended, in Acts 1. He is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end. Guess where we get all that from? Anyway, the dragon is pretty angry about losing his rule. Remember the temptations of Christ in Luke. Also, in Mark, you can see that Jesus is constantly undoing

Adam's rebellion and taking authority, big word for Mark, over all the earth.