

# Revelation

Chapter 12

Lesson 13

# Ancient Combat Myths

- ◆ Apollo and Python

# Revelation 12:1-2

- ◆ <sup>1</sup> And a great sign appeared in the heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, <sup>2</sup> and she was pregnant and crying out in birthpangs, and in torment of giving birth.

# Woman in Labor as Israel

- ◆ Isaiah 26:17-18 Like a woman with child, who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near her time, so were we because of you, O LORD; <sup>18</sup> we were with child, we writhed, but we gave birth only to wind. We have won no victories on earth, and no one is born to inhabit the world.
- ◆ Isaiah 66:7-9 - Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered a son. <sup>8</sup> Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be delivered in one moment? Yet as soon as Zion was in labor she delivered her children. <sup>9</sup> Shall I open the womb and not deliver? says the LORD; shall I, the one who delivers, shut the womb? says your God.
- ◆ Micah 4:10 - Writhe and groan, O daughter Zion, like a woman in labor; for now you shall go forth from the city and camp in the open country; you shall go to Babylon. There you shall be rescued, there the LORD will redeem you from the hands of your enemies.

# Isaiah 27:1

- ◆ On that day the LORD with his cruel and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea.

# Revelation 12:3-4

- ◆ <sup>3</sup> and another sign appeared in the heaven, and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven crowns, <sup>4</sup> And his tail swept the third of the stars of heaven and cast them upon the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman, the one being about to give birth, in order that when her child was born he might devour it.



# Revelation 12:5-6

- ◆ <sup>5</sup> And she gave birth to a son, a male, who is about to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod and her child was snatched away to God and his throne. <sup>6</sup> And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has there a place having been prepared by God, in order that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.



# Revelation 12:7-8

- ◆ 7 And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels waged war against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels waged war, <sup>8</sup> and he was not strong enough neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven.



# Revelation 12:9-10

- ◆ <sup>9</sup> And the great dragon, the ancient serpent, the one called the devil and the Satan, the one deceiving the whole world, was thrown out, he was thrown upon the earth, and his angels with him. <sup>10</sup> And I heard a great voice in heaven saying, "Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our brothers was thrown down, the one accusing them before our God day and night."

# Revelation 12:11-12

- ◆ <sup>11</sup> “And they have conquered him through the blood of the lamb and through the word of their testimony, and they loved not their life (until) more than death. <sup>12</sup> Therefore rejoice, you heavens and all those dwelling in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil was thrown down to you having great anger, for he knows that he has a short time.”

# Revelation 12:13-14

- ◆ <sup>13</sup> And when the dragon saw that he was thrown onto the earth, he pursued the woman which had given birth to the male child. <sup>14</sup> And the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, in order to fly into the wilderness unto her place, where she might be fed there for a time, and times and half a time away from the face of the serpent.



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# Early Interpretations

- ◆ Oecumenius, whose 6th-century commentary is the oldest extant Greek commentary on Revelation, said, in the words of Arthur Wainwright, “The woman is Mary; the dragon’s attempt to destroy her child is Satan’s activity in leading Herod the Great to plot against the infant Jesus; and her flight into the wilderness is Mary’s journey with Jesus and Joseph into Egypt.”
- ◆ Arthur W. Wainwright, *Mysterious Apocalypse: Interpreting the Book of Revelation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), 28, 45.

# Revelation 12:15-16

- ◆ <sup>15</sup> And the serpent threw out of its mouth, after the woman, water like a river, in order to sweep her away. <sup>16</sup> And the earth helped the woman and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon threw out its mouth.





# Revelation 12:17-18

- ◆ <sup>17</sup> And the dragon was angry with the woman and he went away to make war with the rest of her seed, the ones keeping the commandments of God and the ones having the testimony of Jesus. <sup>18</sup> And he was standing upon the sand of the sea.

# Isaiah 66:7-10, 22

- ◆ Before she was in labor she gave birth; before her pain came upon her she delivered **a son**.<sup>8</sup> Who has heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall a land be born in one day? Shall a nation be delivered in one moment? Yet as soon as Zion was in labor she delivered her children.<sup>9</sup> Shall I open the womb and not deliver? says the LORD; shall I, the one who delivers, shut the womb? says your God.<sup>66:10</sup> Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her; rejoice with her in joy, all you who mourn over her—<sup>66:22</sup> For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, says the LORD; so shall your descendants and your name remain.

# Targum of Isaiah 66:7

- ◆ Before distress comes to her she shall be delivered; and before shaking will come upon her, as pains upon a woman in travail, her king will be revealed.
- ◆ Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum, The Aramaic Bible series, Vol. 11* (Collegeville MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), p. 127.

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