



THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

Revelation 12

The failed dragon stands on the shore of the sea and contemplates his failures. Obviously, he needs help. If he is going to wage war on the people who “keep the commandments of God and bear the testimony of Jesus,” he needs a means by which he can either conquer or subvert their life of faith. He will attempt both. The dragon’s quarrel is not with the race of Adam, as such, but with the people of faith whose lives are marked by God-obedient actions and Jesus-witnessing words. Since it is not against creatures that he will mount his assault but against creatures of Christ, he requires a strategem that will deflect their obedience and falsify their witness. He will frighten them into disobedience; he will deceive them into illusion.

EUGENE PETERSON, REVERSED THUNDER

Revelation 12 begins a third cycle of visions that consist primarily of histories of key symbolic characters: the Dragon, the Woman, the Beast, the False Prophet, the 144,000, the angelic announcers, and the Son of Man. Unlike the seven seals and trumpets, these visions have no explicit numbering, but they follow the pattern of the other visions by leading up to the Second Coming. Like the first two cycles, this one consists of four parts: (1) an opening scene introducing the characters (12:1-17), (2) six symbolic histories (13:1-14:11), (3) an interlude (14:12-13), and (4) a seventh, climactic history (14:14-20). The first half of the book of Revelation focused on the Church’s suffering in the world. The last half of the book focuses on the spiritual dynamics affecting the Church. In Chapter 12, we are introduced to the concept of spiritual warfare: *We are caught up in the midst of a great spiritual war between Christ and Satan where our only hope of victory rests in the finished work of Christ.*

I. **The Woman:** The Church, the people of God from all times and all places

II. **The Dragon:** The Devil, Satan, the accuser of God and His people

III. **The Son:** The Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords

IV. **The Offspring:** The Church during the “last days” - from the first coming of Christ to the Second