

I have viewed the Season of Advent as a time to demonstrate the Bible as a unified whole and not just a collection of 66 individual books. This understanding of the unity of Scripture's message bolsters and strengthen our faith, or so it should. One theme of this unity is especially seen in the promises of God in the Old Testament which are fulfilled in the New. That is the theme of this year's advent series: Promises Made, Promises Kept. The first Advent message comes from a highly symbolic book with more symbols in this chapter than we have time for in this message.

Revelation 12:1-17—*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.*

² *She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.*

³ *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.* 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.* 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,* 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.* ⁷ *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,* ⁸ *but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.* 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.* ¹⁰ *And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.* ¹¹ *And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.* ¹² *Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”*

Revelation 1:3—*Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.*

In this chapter there is a loud voice from Heaven which declares “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come,”

With this announcement we see the promise of salvation for God's people realized, the believer's destiny secure by the finished work of Jesus, and inaugurated is the beginning of the end in earnest for our adversary, the Satan. Believe that as God

provided all that was necessary for our salvation as promised, He will see us through to the promise of the new heavens and earth and our victory over the Devil and all evil fulfilled, too.

THE PREGNANT WOMAN

Verse 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.

Joseph-Genesis 37:9—*he 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.” His father Jacob chides him asking, Genesis 37:10—Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?”*

She is pregnant, and in agony with birth pains, a reminder of the curse that God pronounced on childbearing after the fall of Adam and Eve. Her child is the promised Christ, the One who will rule the nations. This glorious woman recalls the OT promises of a child who will be born to a Virgin, “Immanuel,” God with us, of Isaiah 7. The ultimate source for this image is the promise stated in the Garden after the Fall of our first parents. God pronounces curse on the Serpent and **Genesis 3:15**—*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.*”

But, the birth of the Christ will be fraught with suffering for the people of God. That suffering comes at the influences of the Dragon.

THE DRAGON

³ *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.* ⁴ *His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.*

The image of the dragon calls attention to the ancient enemy of God and His people, the serpent in the Garden, Satan, the Devil. But there is more. Commentators Beale and Campbell declare, **“Without exception, the imagery of the dragon is used throughout the OT to represent evil kingdoms who persecute God’s people. Often, the wicked kingdom of Egypt is portrayed by this emblem. God is spoken of as defeating Pharaoh as a sea dragon at the exodus deliverance and at later points in Egypt’s history** (Pss. 74:13-14; 89:10; Isa. 30:7; 51:9; Ezek. 29:3; 32:2-3; Hab. 3:8-15).

Shorter Commentary (p. 245). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition.

Beale, G. K.; Campbell, David. Revelation: A

THE MALE CHILD

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,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.*

This is a very clear allusion is to Psalm 2:7-9—I will tell of the decree: *The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”*

THE WAR IN HEAVEN

⁷ *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,⁸ but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. Daniel 10:5-6—I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist.⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.*

⁸ *but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.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.*

Revelation 12:13-17—*And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.¹⁵ The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood.¹⁶ But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.¹⁷ Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.*