

and shadows and the glory of the majesty of law. This glory of Judaism was as the shining of the moon. But love and grace and the Spirit of God as revealed in Christ and the New Testament are like the shining of the sun. Justice is deep and abiding, but love and mercy are warm, kind, and gracious. Their rays bring life and light, and warm the heart with an overwhelming desire to do the will of God and keep His commandments.

2. Who was the man-child born of the woman? Rev. 12:5. _____

The man child born to the woman was Christ. He it is who is destined to rule with a rod of iron.

“The Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron*” (Ps. 2:7-9).

The man child was caught up to God’s throne. Then, Jesus, after His victory over sin and death, ascended to His Father’s throne.

“And her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne” (Rev. 1:5) Read also Eph. 1:20,21.

That this child is Christ, would seem to admit of no question. He is to rule with a rod of iron. Of Christ it is said in Rev. 2:27, “He shall rule them with a rod of iron.”

3. What was meant by the great red dragon? Rev. 12:3, 4. _____

Rev. 12:9. “And the great _____ was cast out, that old _____, called the _____, and _____.” *Satan worked against Christ and the church through pagan, and heathen, Rome.* This

was the legally constituted power that became the tool for the “devouring” of the man child. Of pagan Rome we read in Dan. 8:25, “He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes.” As a general rule, we find the nations of earth brought to view in the Bible when they have some connection with God’s work and people. The “third part of the stars of heaven” are the angels who were “cast . . . to the earth” when Lucifer was thrust out of heaven. (Rev. 12:7).

Notice the following points:

1. The dragon had ten horns, as did the dreadful

beast of Daniel 7. This represents the ten divisions of pagan Rome.

2. The dragon was a common symbol on old Roman ensigns.
3. Rome, under Augustus, brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem to enroll for taxation, and there Jesus was born (Luke 2:1-5, 11).
4. Rome, through King Herod, tried to destroy Christ. Matt.2:3-8.
5. Rome, under Pilate, put Christ to death.
6. The tomb was sealed with a Roman seal. Matt. 27:65, 66.
7. The tomb was guarded by a Roman watch, or guard.
8. Thus Satan worked by means of the great red dragon, which was pagan Rome, against the Son of the woman.

4. What picture is given of the war in heaven? Rev. 12:7-10. _____

Michael signifies Christ. Notice these scriptures.

“Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation” (Jude 9).

“The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God” (1 Thess. 4:16).

The voice of the archangel then is the voice of Christ, and Michael is the archangel. *Satan, of course, is the “great dragon,” “that old serpent.”* So here we have the picture of conflict between Christ and Satan-conflict that began in heaven and will continue until Satan is destroyed.

When Christ came to earth, Satan assaulted Him. He sought to have Him slain as a babe (Matt. 2:13-16). He tried in vain to conquer Him in the wilderness of temptation (Matt. 4:1-11). He trailed the Saviour day and night, seeking to lead Him to sin against God’s law or to give up His plan of saving man. Satan did not rest until Jesus was nailed to the cross.

But what seemed to be victory for Satan was actually defeat. Said John, “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down” (Rev. 12:10).

At the end of the millennium Satan and his host will perish in the lake of fire after seeking to make an

assault on the camp of the saints, the city of God, the New Jerusalem, which descends from heaven. This will be Satan’s final defeat, the utter and complete end in ignominious failure. He will be annihilated, and never will he be anymore (Ez. 28:19).

5. Against whom does Satan direct his attacks? Rev. 12:11-13. _____

Satan, having failed to defeat Christ, sensed anew that both God and time were against him. As John said, “He knoweth that he hath but a short time.” Some four thousand years of battle against earth’s inhabitants lay behind him, with every passing year bringing him nearer to the day of awful retribution.

In fury Satan turned upon the church-the followers of Jesus. The apostles drank of the cup of sacrifice and martyrdom, as Jesus had predicted. Paganism, Satan’s carefully constructed system of error, was now headed by pagan Roman power. Under the emperors Nero, Domitian, Trajan and many other leaders, the early church suffered the tortures of persecution and the pangs of cruel death. Multitudes sealed their testimony with their blood, “and they loved not their lives unto death.” Not the least of these was the great apostle Paul.

6. What long period of trial comes to the church? Rev. 12:6. _____

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that *she might fly into the wilderness*, into her place, where she is nourished for a *time, and times, and half a time*, from the face of the serpent”(Rev. 12:14).

In an earlier lesson we learned that a day stands for a year in prophecy. So here we have 1,260 literal years.

“When thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee *each day for a year*” (Ez. 4:6). Read also Num. 14:34.

The following facts become apparent at once: The “saints” were persecuted for a time, times, and dividing of time. A time, times, and half a time is the same as 1,260 days, or years (Rev. 12:14, 6).

The woman is the same as the “saints” of Dan.7:25. That the woman here represents the church

during the same period as the “saints” of Daniel 7:25 is clear. This period is the 1260 years (A.D. 538 to A.D. 1798) of papal Rome’s supremacy, *during which papal Rome persecuted the saints*. Satan thus persecuted the woman (Rev. 12:13) during these dark days.

Satan was more or less successful in his assault on the early church. Persecution is not easy to endure, and popularity is often preferred. Then error crept in, and the church began to take on the color and complexion of heathen Rome.

James Wharey’s *Sketches of Church History*, Century II, sec. VII, reads: “At the end of the second century, within a little more than one hundred and fifty years after the first preaching of the gospel, it is obvious to remark the changes already introduced into the Christian church. Christianity began already to wear the garb of heathenism.”

Out of this mixture of Judaism, Christianity, and paganism came the Papacy, or papal Rome, which persecuted the saints in the centuries following pagan Rome. Satan, having filled the church itself with error, brought about the exaltation of the “man of sin” to rule over even the kings and princes. The long, dismal night of the Dark Ages came, and dragged on for century after century. The noonday of the Papacy was indeed the midnight of the world.

But the earth helped the woman. She fled into “the wilderness” regions of Europe. In the mountain fastnesses, the Alpine retreats, and the Piedmont valleys, the faithful of God sought refuge.

7. What conflict developed between the dragon and the remnant of the woman’s seed? Rev. 12:17. _____

At this point let us pause and summarize our lesson by making six simple statements:

1. Satan persecuted Christ through pagan Rome.
2. Then he persecuted the early church through pagan Rome.
3. Next he persecuted the church for 1,260 years through papal Rome.
4. Finally, he “went to make war with the remnant of her seed.”
5. The “remnant” church is the “last” church, in these last days.
6. God’s remnant church may be identified by three characteristics (Revelation 14:12).