

*hope. peace. joy. love.*

Advent *at* Greenfield



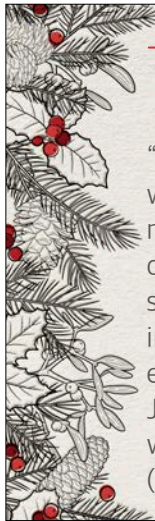
## Our Advent Hope: The Woman, the Dragon, & the Messiah

Revelation 12:1-7 - December 4, 2023 - Tyler Williams



### The Woman, the Dragon, & the Messiah

“It is St. John’s Spirit-appointed task to supplement the works of St. Matthew and St. Luke so that the nativity can not be sentimentalized into coziness, nor domesticated into drabness, nor commercialized into worldliness.... The splendours of creation and the agony of redemption combine in this event, this centre where God in Christ invades existence with redeeming life and decisively defeats evil.... St. John takes Jesus in a manger surrounded by shepherds and wisemen and puts him in a cosmos attacked by a dragon” (Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*, 121-22).



### The Woman, the Dragon, & the Messiah

- This vision continues where the seventh trumpet left off (11:19), but also goes back to the beginning: the birth of the Messiah.
- Introduces a series of Seven Signs (12:1-15:4) that detail how God is going to judge “those who destroy the earth” (11:18).
- Full of allusions and echoes to the OT, as well as other ancient stories and myths.





## The Woman, the Dragon, & the Messiah

“Describes in mythological terms this heavenly warfare. It explains to God’s people on earth why they must face such satanic evil and persecution; but it assures them that in reality Satan has already been conquered and they are therefore able to conquer him by the blood of the Lamb” (G.E. Ladd, Revelation, 166).

## The Woman, the Dragon, & the Messiah

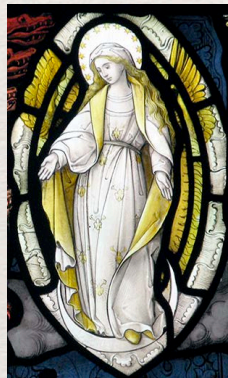
### Three Characters & Three Scenes

- **Scene 1:** The Woman, the Dragon, the birth of the Messiah (12:1-6).
- **Scene 2:** War in Heaven; the Victory of the Lamb (12:7-12).
- **Scene 3:** God’s Providential Protection of his People (12:13-17).

## Scene I: The Radiant Woman

“A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head” (12:1).

- Represents Mary (12:1-2), but as the vision progresses, symbolizes the faithful people of God (12:13; 17).
- Twelve stars = the 12 tribes (Gen 37).



## Scene I: The Red Dragon

“An enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads” (12:3).

- A mosaic of OT images (Job 41:1; Ps 74:13; Isa 27:1; Dan 7:7-8).
- Horns and the crowns portray his power as “the god of this age” (2Cor 4:4).





## Scene 1: The Messianic Child

“She gave birth to a son, a male child, who ‘will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre.’ And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne” (12:5).

- A condensed version of the Christ event, from birth to ascension.
- He is the Messiah, who will shepherd the nations with a rod of iron.



## Scene 2: War in Heaven

“The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan...” (12:9).

- “Ancient serpent/snake” - deceives Eve (Gen 3:1, 13, 15).
- The devil - slanderer; lion-like adversary (2Pet 5:8); and tempter (Matt 4).
- Satan - the accuser (12:10); “masquerades as an angel of light” (2Cor 11:14), is “the father of lies” (John 8:44); who “leads the whole world astray” (12:9).



## Scene 2: War in Heaven

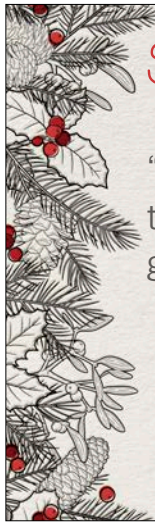
- Because of Satan’s defeat...
- Salvation wrought by God is manifest in Christ (12:10).
- Satan is filled with wrath (12:12; see also 1John 3:8, Col 2:16, Heb 2:14, Eph 6).
- “The suffering of the church in the world is not a sign of Satan’s victory. It is a sign of his realization of defeat” (Darrell Johnson, Discipleship on the Edge, 237).



## Scene 2: Victory of the Lamb

- Because of Christ’s victory, his followers can experience victory.
- The followers of Christ triumphed over evil “by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death” (20:11; 17).





## Scene 3: Providential Protection

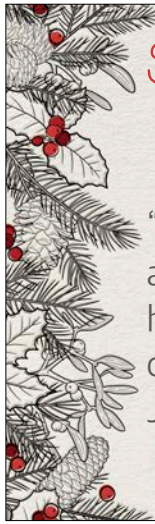
“When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child” (12:13).

- A Second Exodus: the deliverance with eagle’s wings (12:14) and fleeing into the wilderness (12:5, 14), recall the exodus from Egypt (Exod 19:4; Deut 32:10-12; Isa 40:31).



## Scene 3: Providential Protection

- The woman will “be taken care of for 1,260 days” (12:6), or “for a time, times, and half a time” (12:14) = describes the church age (cf. 11:3, 9).
- The waters spewing from his mouth (12:15) and the earth swallowing it up (12:16), also alludes to the earth “swallowing” the Egyptians when they pursued the Israelites through the Red Sea (Exod 15:12); or to the venomous lies that spew out of the serpent’s mouth (Gen 3:1).



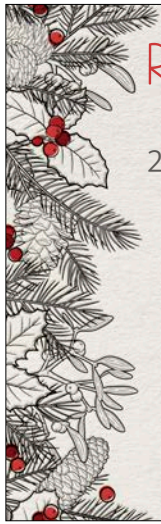
## Scene 3: Providential Protection

“Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus” (12:17).



## Response

1. We are in the midst of a Spiritual War.
  - Evil is at work in this world, both personal evil, as well as structural or systemic evil (Eph 6:12; Col 2:25).
  - And the compromises we make with “empire”, we are really aligning ourselves with the forces of evil, against God.



## Response

2. Christ's Victory is Accomplished!
  - Satan was defeated in the death and resurrection of Jesus the Messiah, he was thrown down from heaven.
  - Satan no longer has access to “accuse the brothers and sisters” (12:10), but rather Jesus is interceding for us (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).
  - We must persevere and “keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus” (12:17).



## Response

3. Our Hope is Certain
  - The Advent season is lived with Hope in between the first coming and second coming of Jesus.