

A STUDY OF REVELATION 12

R:54-56, R:304-307, R:3570

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Opening Statement:

First let me say that this is an ambitious undertaking for 2 hours. We will probably not get through the material we have to cover so we have made copies of a number of historical quotations.

Prophecy dear brethren, is a gift. It's a loving gift from God to those that love Him, believe in Him and that want to know more about what He is doing.

Now in this study Revelation 12 we are probing very hard to understand material. We know that amongst brethren there are differing conclusions. We prefer dialogue over dogma and working together as brethren in Christ in an attempt to better our understanding of this book of prophecy. This is a study that involves interpretation of entirely symbolic illustrations and as such while we are satisfied, and encouraged with many of the answers we have arrived at in interpreting these symbols we are not insistent with them. We do stress the need to allow liberty of thought. We are students of prophecy and our goal today is to share our thoughts and findings for our mutual learning and our mutual encouragement. And that is the spirit with which we undertake this study. We hope that you share this sentiment.

Give a brief overview of the lesson of this chapter:

Generally, it is a study of history. The history of the early church and what lead to the falling away, the apostacy. Prophecy is history told in advance, so we take history as it is recorded and overlay it on the prophecy and see how it compares. Most particularly it deals with the thousand two hundred and three score days, the 1260 years, the time times and half a time. What lead up to that point and what happened during that period. How things developed between papacy and Rome and the true church.

What sequence do you notice occurring, if any?

A repeat of information.

vs.1-6 (33 Pentecost through 1260 days in wilderness)

vs.7-10 (313-325 War in heaven through 800 elevation of papacy begin false millenium)

vs.11-17 (313-325 early persecution of the women and again fleeing into the wilderness time times 1/2 time.)

We find it very exciting to see that there is a sequence of prophetic events that tie in directly with recorded prominent dates of history. These 5 prominent dates of history are.... (313, 325, 539, 800, 1799).

What do you see as the greatest benefit in understanding the contents of this chapter?

A:13-14. "No work is more noble and ennobling than the reverent study of the revealed purposes of God--"which things the angels desire to look into." Its object evidently is to make the consecrated child of God acquainted with his Father's plans, thus to enlist his interest and sympathy in the same plans, and to enable him to regard both the present and the future from God's standpoint. When thus interested in the Lord's work, he may serve with the spirit and with the understanding also; not as a servant merely, but as a child and heir. Revealing to such what shall be, counteracts the influence of what now is. The effect of careful study cannot be otherwise than strengthening to faith and stimulating to holiness."

Vs.1.) Identify:

Woman = True church members. Eph.5:23-24, Rev.21:9.

Woman = The Covenant or Promise or Arrangement. Rev.21:2, Heb.12:22-23, Gal.4:26,30. The covenant goes back to the garden Gen.3:15 but is here embellished or adorned with the law & prophets, gospel & apostles.

Sun = Mal.4:2, Lk.1:79, Matt.4:16, Lk.2:32, Jn.1:4-5,8:12.

Moon = Col.2:16-17, prophesied of Christ sac. & reign. Jesus slain at full moon.

12 Stars = Matt.10:1, 19:28, Mk.3:14, Rev.21:14.

Clothed w/the Gospel of Jesus, the robe of Christ, and supported by the moon (O. Test.). Being led and taught by the guiding light of the 12 Apostles.

When complete however there will be no need of these lights as guides (Rev.21:22) for while we see through a glass darkly we shall then see plainly. 1Cor.13:12.

Vs.2.) What is suggested by the woman "being with child"?

Here the woman is impregnated with those that have the spirit of lordship Rev.2:6. The embryo here is the man-child. More on this point in vs.5. 1Jn.2:18-19, Act.20:29-30, 2Thes.2:7, Rev.2:6, 1Cor.4:8-10, Rev.2:10.

What comparison, in terms of time, can be made with natural childbirth?

Church began at Pentecost in 33ad. Adding the period of gestation, 280days brings you to 313 as the time which the man-child was to begin being born. It later developed in stages at 539ad and became a full man of sin by 800ad.

Who impregnated the woman? Satan; Matt.13:25,28,39, 3Jn.9. This is the spirit of lordship. To share the seat of Christ as head of the church.

Vs.3.) Identify the great red dragon.

The word translated "dragon" only appears in the book of Revelation in the entire New Test. and mostly in the 12th chapter. This vs. is the only time that we see the term "great red dragon". So we must interpret what is meant by what we learn about it in Revelation.

Now First Off What About This Dragon Being Red?

We know that before Christianity, the Emperor was the head of state, but was also the Pontifex Maximus or chief religious head.

This RED dragon was a combination of Civil and Religious melded together, much like we later see in the holy Roman Empire, only it was one unit and so it operated more smoothly.

They offered blood sacrifice, and forced Christians, as a litmus test, to offer sacrifice to the emperor, as well as had a sacrificing priesthood. His angels of vs.9.

Or- As a RED blood stained government. Isa.63:2. They had the blood of the saints on their hands.

DURANT C&C:The New Gods:93 Of early B.C. Rome he quotes one of the early senators who is speaking about the adoption of the Greek pagan religious model "I believe that the government has adopted this course for the sake of the common people. This might not have been necessary had it been possible to form a state composed of wise men; but as every multitude is fickle, full of lawless desires, unreasoned passion, and violent anger, it must be held in by invisible terrors and religious pageantry". "Finally the Senate decided that if it could not prevent superstition it would organize and control it".

C&C:Stoic Rome:The Priests:63 speaking of the pagan priesthood "To appease or enlist the aid of these gods Italy employed an elaborate clergy. In

his home the father was priest; but the public worship was conducted by several collegia-associations-of priests, each filling its own vacancies, but all under the lead of a pontifex maximus elected by the centuries... In the third century before Christ the main pontifical college had nine members... In performing the official ritual the pontiffs were aided by fifteen 'flamines'-kindlers of the sacrificial flames (reminds us of the college of cardinals)... Minor pontifical colleges had special functions... The college of the Vestal Virgins tended the state hearth, and sprinkled it daily with holy water from the fountain of the sacred nymph Egeria. These white clad, white veiled nuns were chosen from among girls 6-10 years of age; they took a vow of virginity and service for thirty years... The most influential of the priestly colleges was that of the nine augures who studied the intent of will of the gods, in earlier times by watching the flight of birds, later by examining the entrails of sacrificed animals... As priests were occasionally open to financial persuasion, their pronouncements were sometimes adjusted to the needs of the purchaser... The ritual of worship aimed merely to offer the gods a gift or sacrifice to win their aid or avert their wrath. To be effective, said the priests, the ceremony had to be performed with such precision of words and movements as only the clergy could manage. If any mistake was made, the rite had to be repeated, even to thirty times... (re:sacrifice) Holy formulas pronounced over the victim turned it into the god who was to receive it; in this sense the god himself was sacrificed... Prayer was still imperfectly evolved from magic incantations; the words for - carmen - meant not only a chant but a charm; and Pliny frankly reckoned prayer as a form of magical utterance... Victorious Christianity, half surrendering, wisely took over much of the faith and ritual; and, under new forms and phrases, they continue in the Latin world to this day."

C&C:656 Speaking of Constantine Durant says "During the earlier years of his supremacy he carried out patiently the ceremonial required of him as pontifex maximus of the traditional cult; he restored pagan temples, he used pagan as well as Christian rites in dedicating Constantinople, he used magic formulas to protect crops and heal disease."

Now this is significant to know because it helps us to grasp why it is here only called a "red" dragon, and what really changed was the religious aspect of it was stripped away by papacy, while the dragon as a civil power remained on the scene.

What significance is there to the crowns being upon the heads?

Rev.13:1-2

The most telling vs. to me is in Ch.13:2. It is the dragon (not red here) that gives power to the beast. And we know that the beast at this point is under the direction and headship of Papacy but is given its sword of power by the civil (dragon) arm of the empire. This is the same distinction we notice in Dan.2 of the feet partly of iron partly of clay.

Vs.4.) Why would the dragon desire to devour this child as soon as it was born?

DURANT C&C:146 Speaking of Juilus Ceasar he says "The ancient faith, which had once served family discipline and social order, had lost it's hold on the educated classes of Rome. Ceasar smiled indulgently as he played pontifex maximus at the banquets of the priests..."

DURANT C&C:656 Speaking of Constantine's motives for conversion in 313. "A real believer would have been a Christian first and a statesman afterward; with Constantine it was the reverse. Christianity was to him a means, not an end. As a young man being trained in military tactics he noted the unshakable fervor of the Christians being put to death. He felt that if he could harness that kind of dedication in the Roman Legions he would be invincible and hence thought to incorporate such a religion into his Roman kingdom. He had seen in his lifetime the failure of three persecutions; and it was not lost upon him that Christianity had grown despite them. Its adherents were still very much in the minority; but they were relatively united, brave, and strong, while the pagan majority was divided among many creeds, and included a dead weight of simple souls without conviction or influence. Constantines support of Christianity was worth a dozen legions to him in his wars against these men. He was impressed by the comparative order and morality of Christian conduct, the obedience of Christians to their clergy, their humble acceptance of life's inequalities in the hope of happiness beyond the grave; perhaps this new religion would purify Roman morals, regenerate marriage and the family, and allay the fever of class war. The Christians, despite bitter oppression, had rarely revolted against the state; their teachers had inculcated submission to the civil powers, and had taught the divine right of kings. Constantine aspired to an absolute monarchy; such a government would profit from religious support; the hierarchial discipline and ecumenical authority of the Church seemed to offer a spiritual correlate for monarchy. Perhaps that marvelous organization of bishops, and priest could become an instrument of pacification, unification, and rule?

Who were the “third part of the stars of heaven”?

The 1/3 consistently apply in Revelation to truly faithful followers. We find this throughout the trumpets of chapters 8 & 9. Dan.8:10.

The Tail of the dragon = power to gather together and then to crush. He used this power to gather in the first ecumenical council and having presided over the council crushed the minority view.

DURANT:C&C:656 "Throughout his reign he treated the bishops as his political aides; he summoned them, presided over their councils, and agreed to enforce whatever opinion their majority should formulate... While Christianity converted the world, the world converted Christianity. Cyprian complained that his parishioners were mad about money, that Christian women painted their faces, that bishops held lucrative offices of state, made fortunes, lent money at usurious interest, and denied their faith at the first sign of danger. Eusebius mourned that priests quarreled violently in their competition for ecclesiastical preferment... In those same years Alexandria saw the rise of the most challenging heresy in the history of the Church (referring to the teachings of Arius)..."

Next we see Durant here missing the ironic twist so that he takes the position that Arius was in fact the heretic influenced by earlier pagan philosophers rather than the other way around. "Christ said Arius, was not one with the Creator, he was rather the Logos, the first and highest of all created beings. Bishop Alexander protested, Arius persisted. If, he argued, the Son had been begotten of the Father, it must have been in time; the Son therefore could not be coeternal with the Father. Furthermore, if Christ was created, it must have been from nothing, not from the Father's substance; Christ was not "consubstantial" with the Father... We see in these (Arius') doctrines the continuity of ideas from Plato through the Stoics, Philo, Plotinus, and Origen to Arius; Platonism, which had so deeply influenced Christian theology, was now in conflict with the Church. Bishop Alexander was shocked not only by these views but by their rapid spread even among the clergy..."

Throughout the Asiatic provinces clergy as well as laity divided on the issue, and made the cities ring with such tumult and disorder... Constantine sent both Alexander and Arius a personal appeal to imitate the calm of the philosophers, to reconcile their differences peaceably, or at least to keep their debates from the public ear. The letter, preserved by Eusebius, clearly reveals Constantine's lack of theology, and the political purpose of his religious policy."

(excerpts from the letter)

"I feel strongly that if I could induce men to unite on that subject, the conduct of public affairs would be considerably eased. The cause seems to be quite trifling, and unworthy of such fierce contests... a question in itself entirely devoid of importance."

"The letter had no effect. Constantine resolved to end it by calling the first ecumenical - universal - council of the Church. He summoned all bishops to meet in 325 at Bithynian Nicea, and provided funds for all their expenses. Not less than 318 bishops came, attended by a vast concourse of the lower clergy. The Council met in the hall of an imperial palace. Constantine presided and opened the proceedings by a brief appeal to the bishops to restore the unity of the Church.

(Then we read of the debate that resulted in the forming of the Creed). Only five bishops, finally only two, refused to sign this formula. These two, with the unrepentant Arius, were anathematized by the Council and exiled by the Emperor. An imperial edict ordered that all books by Arius should be burned, and made concealment of such a book punishable with death".

(A lesson for us. Arius laid out his case before 318 bishops probably expecting to prevail with truth and reason. Only 5 sided with him and then only 2 refused to sign the creed. He could have felt that God had abandoned him and been discouraged. Even when you or your cause of speaking truth is actually going down in defeat, as it was with Arius be mindful that while it may seem inconceivable, it may be exactly as the Lord had planned..)

(The Council also decreed that all churches should celebrate Easter on the same day, and that this should be promulgated by the Bishop of Rome. The council also dealt with the question of celibacy and issues of priests that were married prior to ordination.)

"The council signaled the conviction of the ecclesiastical majority that the organization and survival of the Church required a certain fixity of doctrine; and in final effect it achieved that practical unanimity of basic belief which gave the medieval Church its Catholic name. At the same time it marked the replacement of paganism with Christianity as the religious expression and support of the Roman Empire... A new civilization, based on a new religion, would now rise over the ruins of an exhausted culture and a dying creed. The Middle Ages had begun.

Vs.5.) When was this man-child brought forth, give a date if possible?

Brought forth by a process as with natural child birth. 313-325. We might liken Constantine's conversion and the Edict of Milan to the beginning of the delivery as he was testing the political waters. As he "stood ready" he watched to make his next move, which he made in 325, the full delivery of the birth as he sealed his commitment to Christianity.

DURANT:C&C:661 Speaking of the council of Nicea 313, Durant says this "committed Constantine to a more definite alliance with Christianity than ever before."

What does a "man or male-child" become with time?

The man-child would in time grow up to become the man of sin. Suggestive of the role of the male, father figure that would be found in the pope (papa) as counter to the false church at large that stays with the female role and appears as an harlot while she associates with the kings that hold the male role in that symbolism. 2Thes.2:2-7.

What is meant that he was to rule with a rod of iron and to be caught up to God and to His throne?

2Thes.2:2-4, Dan.11:36, 2Cor.11:13.

When he was to rule, who would give this man-child his power to rule?

Dan.7:5-14, Dan.8:24, Rev.13:2.

On Dan.8?. Early in the chapter Dan. is given a vision of a ram with 2 horns and a he-goat with one notable horn which was broken off. And in it's place came up four notable horns, and out of one of those horns came up a little horn which magnified himself even to the prince of the host and took away the continual sacrifice. Dan. inquires of this vision and in vs.19 he is told "behold, I will make thee know". He is then told that these visions are of Medo Persia and Greece.

Then read vs.22-24.

Vs.7.) Identify the characters in this verse, Michael and the dragon.
What is meant by “war in heaven” and when did this war take place?

The false Michael begins his fight in 313 for control of the ecclesiastical realm. Constantine had accepted Christianity but succeeding emperors wanted to return to the pagan gods. This battle was over who's religion would survive.

2Thes.2:6 NIV

May relate to the actions of the 1st seal going forth to conquer Rev.6:2.

CONSTANTINE’S CONVERSION A BATTLE BUT THE WAR WAS NOT OVER.

Constantine nearing death, called his sons and nephews to him to divide up the kingdom. His sons ConstantineII, Constantius, and Constans. His nephews Julian and Gallus. After the infighting that you can imagine took place the sons all died or were killed finally leaving the domain to Julian. Now Julian had been raised a Christian had seen some pretty rotten things done in the name of Christ both in his family and among his subjects. For example riots between Arians and Athanasians had broken out and resulted in the death of 3000. Christian against Christian. (See Durant:AF:3.)

DURANT:AF:Christians and Pagans:8 "Probably more Christians were slaughtered by Christians in the years 342-3 than by all the persecutions of Christians by pagans in the history of Rome".

The new emperor Julian concluded:

"there were no beasts more ferocious than Christians". And "at last he proclaimed his paganism to the world".

Now Julian was actually a very moral and self disciplined man and was very interested in philosophy. So bottom line:

"He gave orders that the pagan temples should be repaired and opened, that their confiscated property should be restored, and their accustomed revenues renewed". "He hoped to supplant and destroy Christianity. He called for new blood into the pagan priesthood, organized a pagan Church with him as it's head, and importuned his pagan clergy to rival and surpass the Christian ministry, in providing instruction to the people, distributing alms to the poor, offering hospitality to strangers, giving examples of the good life. He established in every town schools for lectures and expositions of the pagan faith".

Vs.8.) How was it that the dragon “prevailed not” in this battle?

Dan.8:8-10.

In a word, Justinian Code.

DURANT:AF:112 Speaking of the Justinian Code "This Code, like the Theodosian, enacted orthodox Christianity into law. It began by declaring for the Trinity, and anathematized Nestorius, Euthyches, and Apollinaris. It acknowledged the ecclesiastical leadership of the Roman Church, and ordered all Christian groups to submit to her authority." Pg.75 "An intimate and trustful worship of saints replaced the cult of pagan gods, and satisfied the congenial polytheism of simple or poetic minds. Statues of Isis and Horus were renamed Mary and Jesus; the Roman Lupercalia and the feast of the purification of Isis became the Feast of the Nativity; the Saturnalia were replaced by Christmas celebrations, the Floralia by Pentecost, and ancient festival of the dead by All Souls Day, the resurrection of Attis by the resurrection of Christ. Pagan altars were rededicated to Christian heroes; incense, lights, flowers, processions, vestments, hymns, which had pleased the people in older cults were domesticated and cleansed in the ritual of the Church; and the harsh slaughter of a living victim was sublimated in the spiritual sacrifice of the Mass."

DURANT:C&C:671: When Christianity conquered Rome the ecclesiastical structure of the pagan church, the title and vestments of the pontifex maximus, the worship of the Great Mother and a multitude of comforting divinities, the sense of supersensible presences everywhere, the joy of solemnity of the old festivals, and the pageantry of immemorial ceremony, passed like maternal blood into the new religion, and captive Rome captured her conqueror. The reins and skills of government were handed down by a dying empire to a virile papacy. On May 11, 330 paganism was officially ended.

DURANT:AF:35 "The pagans of Italy made a last effort in 393, risking all on revolution... Theodosius marched into Rome, and compelled the Senate to decree the abolition of paganism in all its forms 394."

Vs.9.) What is meant by the great dragon being cast out into the earth?

The dragon as the **pagan** religious order (red) was ousted by 539, which left only the civil to control the earth. Justinian still held authority over the religious papal powers. But as time went on that control slipped until

eventually it was the pope that made and unmade the civil rulers. One pope demonstrating his superior position kicked the crown off of the king's head, picked it up with his feet and placed it back upon the head of the king. The king was then invited to kiss his great toe.

The dragon was cast out of the ecclesiastical heavens and took its subordinate role responsible for maintaining earthly order. We find examples such as the following:

DURANT:AF:680 Pope Clement V wrote to Edward II king of England regarding some prisoners the pope had ought against: "We hear that you forbid torture as contrary to the laws of your land. But no state law can override canon law, our law. Therefore I command you at once to submit those men to torture'. Edward yielded".

Vs.10.) What kingdom is here spoken of? At what date would this occur?

The papal false millennium begins.

DURANT:AF: Papal Politics:524 Due to the inability of Constantinople or Ravenna to protect the papal estates in Italy from Lombard assaults Pope Steven II turned to Pepin:

"The Pope, in a move fraught with political consequences, turned to the Franks. Pepin the Short came, subdued the Lombards, and enriched the papacy with the 'Donation of Pepin', giving it all central Italy 756; so was established the temporal power of the popes. This brilliant papal diplomacy culminated in the coronation of Charlemagne by Leo III, 800; thereafter no man could be accepted emperor in the West without anointment by a pope." "Step by step the clergy of France subordinated its kings; and while the empire of Charlemagne collapsed, the authority and influence of the Church increased."

Pg.526 "Starting from the premises then accepted by all Christians that the Son of God had founded the Church by making Peter her first head, and that bishops or Rome inherited their power from Peter in direct line, Nicholas reasonably concluded that the pope, as God's representative on earth, should enjoy a suzerain authority over all Christians, rulers as well as subjects, at least in matters of faith and morals... To kings as well as prelates Nicholas wrote as one having supreme authority."

Vs.11) Who overcame by the blood of the Lamb? Who loved not their lives unto the death?

Rev.6:2, 2Thes.2:11.

Vs.11 appears to take us back to the early beginning of the church again. Papacy, beginning with Peter, claimed the early martyrs as their predecessors, those that gave their lives for the truth, to conquer the pagan religion. This set the stage for the false Michael in the heavens (ecclesiastics) to take control and cast the dragon down to the earth. The war in heaven of vs.7-8.

Vs.12 would also be placed in the time just as the dragon is being cast down, that he would be cast down in a “short time”.

Vs.13.) What is the action of the dragon against the woman and where would you say is the man-child during this persecution?

Rev.2:13, Dan.8:23-25, Dan.11:31,33.

The dragon persecuted the "woman" the true church, not the man-child the false church.

Vs.14.) What are the two wings of a great eagle?

Rev.11:3 Here they are spoken of as two witnesses. In Rev.11:4 they are spoken of as two olive trees, and two candlesticks.

Why were they given to the woman as opposed to her child?

What does the wilderness condition suggest?

She was driven by persecution into the wilderness, outside of the orthodox arrangements. Outside of the "city". Rev.11:8 where the two dead bodies lay in the street.

Dan.12:7 Tells us that the power of the holy people would be scattered during this time.

C:68,82 Papacy crushed the truth which was the power of the holy people.

How long is she in this condition?

Same as in vs.6, 1260. Dan.7:23-25

“Times” Change of times and seasons is relating to an establishment of the kingdom before the proper time.

“Laws” Also changed the laws of God from that of what the Lord had given.

Check various translations for the thought of what manner of protection she is afforded from the serpent during this time?

NIV "out of the serpents reach" not necessarily physically out of reach, but with the support of the Scriptures her heart and spiritual life could be safely protected from the papal arm.

Vs.15-17.) What is meant by casting out a flood of water?

Waters in Revelation are either peoples, Rev.17:5 or truth, Rev.1:15, 8:10, 11:6.

2Cor.11:14 Satan appears as an angel of light.

When might this have occurred? Consider and discuss three possibilities.

a. 313 ad

b. 539 ad

c. 1799 ad

This flood may have been 313 or 539 or 1799.

313- Would require that vs 15 is a throw back to the beginning of the chapter. A point that seems a bit weak for the flow. But looking back, we see that over and over again, the Roman emperor Constantine (Dragon), cast out the flood of muddied truth by replacing paganism with Christianity, and indeed the earth opened up to the new creed and it was, swallowed up by the earth. Satan's goal was to sweep away the true church by polluting the truth. The flood was cast out to destroy the woman with internal confusion and corruption.

539- Justinian, as the head of the dragon cast out a flood, forcing the Christian religion by law upon his subjects. Again, Satan's goal was, truth when cast out in this manner stirred up much debris and dirt to muddy the waters of truth to confuse the woman (vs.10). The earth swallowed and became nominal Christians, and thereby helped the woman by making Christianity acceptable by the nations. Remember, the whole chapter is focused mainly upon the 1260 yrs. of false Christian development. Also consider Dan.12:7. This is very likely where this text in Revelation is lifted from. There we are shown that the flood is concurrent with the 1260 days

once again. Therefore it follows nicely in order, that it would be at the beginning of the 1260 days, 539, under the Justinian Code that the dragon was wroth with the woman. Wroth against those that would not align themselves with the orthodox, political machinery.

1799 works well as a sequence following the end of the 1260 days. This would be the flood of liberty designed by the serpent to bring about a state of anarchy (which did occur), called "the reign of terror". The serpent calculated that the sought for liberties would result in revolution and anarchy, which would lead the masses to conclude, "as bad as the priesthood and kings are, that's better than anarchy", and re-submit to the old order; the lesser of two evils. That is why the serpent would take a considered risk in casting out a flood of water or truth.

C:66 "this sudden flood of waters (truth) was designed to act as an emetic, to lead to the casting out of the food of liberty already being received by the people from the Bible, as the result of the Reformation, and thus to force rulers and teachers to oppose the truth through fear of anarchy."

The problem with this view is that vs.14 really resets the time frame for us back to 539. In sequence, the dragon being wroth with the woman, and going to make war, is the next event, which did actually happen in 539, whereas we have yet to see any evidence of this since 1798.

The 12th chapter is concerned more with "the 1260 days", and it is really during the 1260 days that the dragon was wroth with the woman, at the behest of the papacy.

Finally, we have a real riddle to figure out, quite possibly the most difficult passage of the entire chapter. That is, the dragon was wroth with the woman, and yet the dragon did not go to make war with the woman, or with the remnant of the woman. It says that he went to make war with "the remnant of her seed".

Who is the seed that is spoken of here? There are several possibilities.

You could say that the woman was the early church, and that she had within her the *Michael seed*, which was the false church. This reasoning would then say that the woman also had *other seed*, which would represent the later stages of the true church. This view seems to be taking some liberty.

One could say, no, the only seed spoken of in the entire chapter is Michael. Therefore, the remnant must have something to do with the false church.

This could suggest that the dragon was sent by the papacy to persecute the remnant portion that were once a part of the system, yet tried to "reform" her and thereby incurred her wrath.

Or possibly the woman is not the church individuals but rather the church collective, or the covenant that the church comes out of. And the seed that come from that covenant when fertilized by the spirit of begettal are the prospective members of the church. This allows for the "remnant" to represent a smaller, latter portion of the spirit begotten to be persecuted by the dragon. This could fit with any of the time frames already considered. We also can look at several other scriptures to support the concept of the "woman" representing a covenant or that which carries the hoped for (eggs) of the new creation.

Gal.4:19, 26, 30, Rev.17:18, 21:9-23,

One final point. While the false church is conceived and brought forth (premature of the Lords plan), the remnant spoken of in vs.17 are still in the seed condition. That is they are still waiting for the appointed hour for their birth as new creatures in Christ.

CONCLUSION

What do we come away with from this study? Foremost we see that the church went into a steep, almost unbelievably bad decline from its earliest days. We see that secular history well agrees with the prophecy and documents the diametrically opposed path's, that the false church and the true church walked down. And we recognize that the Lord in heaven oversaw the course of both, taking a careful account, and knowing what would be, and what yet will be, the outcome. He that knows the end from the beginning, permitting all that has happened for the ultimate greatest good for His creation, in keeping with His divine plan.