

Earth's Last War 5 of 12

Two Women—The Bride / The Harlot

#0290

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—March 2, 1960

Tonight as we continue our study of earth's last war, foretold in the Revelation, let us turn to Revelation 12:17:

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” Revelation 12:17.

Imagine, friends, a war between a dragon on one side, and a woman and her children on the other. What a picture! One would think that the sequel could be written very quickly. But no, this is one of those unexpected terminations. Things are not going to work out as the dragon would like, as he desires. The woman is going to be victorious because Somebody is back of the woman.

I want to study with you tonight this woman of Revelation 12:17 and I want to study the other woman who opposes her as pictured in Revelation 17. These two women occupy prominent places in this book of Revelation—the woman of Revelation 12 and the woman of Revelation 17. Each has a very special part to act in this closing conflict that you and I are concerned with.

This woman is introduced in the first verse:

“And there appeared a great wonder...”

Or, the margin says, a sign.

“...in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” Revelation 12:1.

This woman represents God's church in the world. You will remember that in Ephesians 5, (if you'll just hold your place in Revelation and turn over to Ephesians 5, we'll see) Paul is writing to husbands and wives (beginning with the second verse), explaining to them their duties, each to the other. And he likens the duties and the responsibilities of the husband to those of Jesus Christ in His relationship to the church, and he likens the duties and responsibilities of the wife, to those of the church, and its relationship to Christ. He says:

“...the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is

the head of the church” Ephesians 5:23.

The wives are to be subject to their husbands as the church is subject unto Christ (Ephesians 5:24).

“Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it” Ephesians 5:25.

Then he goes on and shows how much Jesus loved the church, that He wants to wash it and sanctify it and cleanse it, and that He has made the great sacrifice of His own life, to bring this about. And so, after speaking of the intimate union of marriage, he says:

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church” Ephesians 5:32.

I’d like to read a comment on this from the Spirit of Prophecy:

“God is the husband of His church. The church is the bride, the Lamb’s wife” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, Volume 7*, page 985.

What a wonderful figure this is, dear friends, for among all human relationships there is none more close, more tender than the union of marriage. So God says to His people:

“Thy maker is thine husband...” Isaiah 54:5.

Oh, how glad we should be that the church is represented in this beautiful way.

Now, returning to Revelation 12, I call your attention to the fact that in this wonderful chapter, while we have, as it were, a history of the church from the days of Jesus, right on to the end of time, that history is largely made up of three flashlight pictures of the church. One, in the days of Christ and the apostles. Two, in the great Dark Ages period of the 1260 year persecution. And third and last: the remnant in Revelation 12:17, which we read as our opening text tonight.

You will notice that in these opening verses, the church is pictured as expecting the birth of a son—Jesus. And that the dragon is ready there to destroy Him as soon as He is born. The dragon here, of course, is the Devil. The dragon is always the Devil. But the Devil works through earthly powers, and the power through which Satan was working at that time was through pagan Rome. The dragon stands then, especially, as the symbol of paganism—a great red dragon, the third verse speaks of him; red-blood red because of the bloody persecutions which the dragon has inspired through the ages.

You will remember that finally, in the last effort to destroy Jesus, the dragon

finally did nail Him to the cross. It was a Roman governor that signed His death warrant at the behest of the Jewish scribes. Roman soldiers nailed Him to the cross, and a Roman seal was put on His tomb. How the hosts of hell gloried over their conquest, but how briefly it lasted. Early the morning of the first day of the week, the mightiest of the angel host came down the sky and rolled that stone away as though it were a pebble, and Jesus came forth triumphant, not only over Rome but over all the power of the dragon host, my friends:

“...[the] child was caught up unto God and to his throne”
Revelation 12:5.

You notice that Revelation 12:13, indicates that as the dragon sees that Christ is victorious, that he’s defeated, he turns his attention to the woman:

“...he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child” Revelation 12:13.

The sixth verse pictures her fleeing into the wilderness:

“...where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days” Revelation 12:6.

These 1260 days or literal years as symbolic prophecy represents years (a day for a year—Ezekiel 4:6), reached from the enthronement of the papacy in A. D. 538 to the defeat of the papacy and the Pope being taken into captivity in 1798. Through much of this period, the woman is in obscurity.

This is a most important point in the history of the church and in the identification of the true church. For according to this scripture, the great 1260 year period makes it clear that during that time, the true church of Christ was not that power which flaunted her authority all over Europe, and which gloried in her power and in her riches, and all that sort of thing. No. According to this Scripture, the power that did that was the face of the dragon.

The true church was in obscurity away in the deserts of Abyssinia, in the swamps and in the forests of various parts of Europe. And especially in those valleys of the Piedmont and the Alps mountains where the Vaudois or the Waldenses as they were called for hundreds of years kept alive the flickering torch of truth. Thousands upon thousands upon thousands of them witnessed to their faith as martyrs. But thank God, He never let the light go out, my friends:

“...she hath a place prepared of God that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days” Revelation 12:6.

And do you know, my friends, it is a fact, the records are there, those Waldenses recognized that they were the fulfillment of this prophecy. They

recognized that.

Passing on down from that time, we see the dragon trying to destroy the woman. We see the earth helping the woman in the 14th, 15th, and 16th verses. And finally, as we come to the last generation of time, we see the church no longer in obscurity, no longer in the wilderness. We see her right out in the open as the special object of the combined onslaughts of all the forces of evil.

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” Revelation 12:17.

That’s the picture, my friends, of earth’s last war. And you’ll notice that this woman and her seed, her children are the special objects of Satan’s attack.

I want to read a most interesting summary of what we’ve been studying, found in the book *Great Controversy*, the 1884 edition. This is old *Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 4:

“In the book of the Revelation, under the symbols of a great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamb-like horns, are brought to view those earthly governments which are especially engaged in trampling upon God’s law and persecuting his people. Their war is carried forward to the close of time. The people of God, symbolized by a holy woman and her children, are greatly in the minority. In the last days only a remnant exists. John speaks of them as those that ‘keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ [Revelation 12:17]’”
Spirit of Prophecy, Volume 4, page 276.

There you have it, friends. This woman and her children, the true church and those who accept the message of the church and identify themselves with her, the true church and her adherents, the woman and her children—these are the object of the Devil’s attack. And if we’re going to be true to God, we will meet this wrath in all its fury as it bursts upon us in the very near future.

You notice the two distinguishing marks of this woman and her children. They do what?

“...keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” Revelation 12:17.

Do you remember what we read over there in Ephesians 5, where Paul says that a wife is to respect the leadership of her husband, and the church is to respect the leadership of Christ? He puts it in the matter of being subject, of being obedient. And surely, my friends, the church has no authority to change any of the commands

of her Husband. Is that right?

That is where the Roman church proves herself to be, instead of the true church, a fallen church. She has left her lawful husband. She has gone out on her own way. She has divorced herself from her true Head. But the true church won't do that. The true church loves her Lord, and she loves to be subject to Him, and her children likewise, friends, they partake of her nature and His nature, who is Lord of all.

And let me call your attention, at this point, friends, to the feeling that exists between Christ and His church. As we've seen, it's a sacred, tender, loving union. How do you think Jesus feels toward His church? Well, we read there in Ephesians 5, Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.

I read something beautiful here in *Testimonies to Ministers* that I want to share with you, friends:

"God has a people in which all heaven is interested, and they are the one object on earth dear to the heart of God"
Testimonies to Ministers, page 41.

Yes. And then in *Volume 6*:

"Nothing else in this world is so dear to God as His church" *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 6*, page 42.

As a true husband loves his wife more than any other object in this world, so Christ loves His church. Oh, how He loves the church. But suppose the church isn't perfect. Does He love it, anyway? Why, sure, friends. Yes, He loves the church, notwithstanding all its faults. Notice this:

"Dear Brethren of the General Conference: I testify to my brethren and sisters that the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as it may be, is the only object on earth on which He bestows His supreme regard" *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 15.

This is it, friends. The church is the object of Christ's special love, His special affection. Nothing else in this world is so dear to Him as the church. The church isn't just one more organization in this world. The church is the one object on earth dear to the heart of Christ.

If we're really the children of God, then we are the children of the church. Aren't we? Yes. And what a strange thing it would be for a child to say, "Oh, I'll listen to father, but I can get along all right without mother. I'll do what father says, but I don't think I'll pay any attention to what mother says." What would father say to a child like that, friends? You know what a father would say, don't you? He would say, "Look here, child, you listen to your mother." Wouldn't he? That's right.

So friends, if we're of the seed of Christ, we are of the seed of the woman. He who would have God as his father must have the church as his mother. We need to remember that, as we go into this closing conflict.

Turning over to Revelation 17, I want you to look at that other woman. Oh friends, what a contrast. This woman, instead of being clothed with the sun, is arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls (verse 4). Instead of natural light and glory given her of God, she has chosen to array herself in a great variety of adornment—striking colors, beautiful jewels, all designed to attract attention. But what is she?

“And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY,
BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” Revelation 17:5.

She is a harlot herself, the first verse says, and her children partake of her nature. They're harlots, too, this verse says. They partake of her nature.

Now, you notice that she has wine, according to the second verse, with which she makes the nations drunken. This wine represents her false doctrines. And as the kings of this earth, as the leaders of this world and all the people drink of these false doctrines, they become intoxicated.

And friends, it's literally true. The people of this world, God pity them; they are so drunk with the false doctrines of Babylon, that it's almost impossible to get them to sober up long enough to understand the truth. We need to understand that. And if we do, we won't be so anxious to keep up with everything that's going on in this world, and know everything that the world thinks, my friends. We will have a wholesome fear of the world's ideas on religion, the world's ideas on education—the world's ideas on many other subjects. Oh friends, we need that light that comes down from the sanctuary. We need that. We need the pure truth of God instead of this wine of Babylon. What do you say, friends?

You notice that in this picture of Babylon here, it says in the second verse, that the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. She's not the wife of Christ. She is not in union with Christ. But she is in union with this king and that king and that king and this nation and that nation and that nation. In other words, my dear friends, she is a harlot. She is joined in illicit union with many, many nations. In fact, all the kings of the earth in this closing conflict link with her. Isn't it a terrible picture, friends?

The union of church and state that is represented here is soon to be a universal thing. All the kings of the earth drink of her wine. All the kings of the earth eventually unite with her in this illicit union. And, of course, this leads to persecution:

“...I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints,
and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus...” Revelation

17:6.

Think of it. Oh, what a gory spectacle, actually drunken with the blood of the saints and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. She delights; this bloodthirsty harlot delights in seeing the lives of those who oppose her, taken wholesale. All during the Dark Ages, she slew them by the millions, and she is getting ready to revive her ancient power friends. Now, she thinks, oh, she thinks that this is to be for always. She says:

“...I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” Revelation 18:7.

But the truth of the matter is, friends, her plagues are soon to come. In Revelation 17 and 18, in verse after verse, we have vividly described the awful judgments of the 7 last plagues that are coming upon Babylon. And finally, as we shall see in some of our future lessons, the masses of the people are going to rise up against her, and the very kings of the earth that have lived with her in this unlawful union, they are going to throw off the yoke. They are going to despise her. And Revelation 17:16 says that they will hate her and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh and burn her with fire.

If you want to know more definitely what's involved in that, read the chapter in *Great Controversy* called “The Desolation of the Earth.” That's almost the last chapter in the book. And if you want to read some wonderful words in comment on Revelation 17, read *Great Controversy*, page 381, and onward just a few pages there. This, of course, has to do with the warning about Babylon being fallen.

Well, there, my dear friends are the two women—the woman of Revelation 12, a beautiful pure woman, clothed with the light; the woman of Revelation 17, an impure harlot. The woman of Revelation 12, joined to Christ, her lawful Husband. The woman of Revelation 17 joined to the world in an illicit union. And the children, in each case, are like their mother.

That woman of Revelation 17, what does it say she is the mother of? Harlots. But oh, friends read the description of this seed of the woman of Revelation 12. What do they keep? The commandments of God and they have something—The testimony of Jesus Christ. In my next lesson, we shall see something interesting about that. But tonight, it's enough to notice that Jesus testifies to that woman. He testifies to those children. He speaks to them as a loving husband would to his wife, as a loving father would to his children.

And now notice in Revelation 14 speaking of these who are the seed of the woman, speaking of these who are the followers of the Lamb, and speaking of these against whom the dragon makes war and who stand in victorious array at last with the Lamb on Mount Zion. Oh, think of it, friends!

“These are they which were not defiled with women...”
Revelation 14:4.

-These fallen harlot women of Revelation 17, a mother and her daughters? No, these are the seed of the true woman, the followers of the lamb:

“These are they which are not defiled with women; for they are virgins...” Revelation 14:4.

There we have it, friends. And do you know that all the world will soon be represented, either by the harlots of Revelation 17 or these pure, true ones of Revelation 12 and Revelation 14?

“...these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth...” Revelation 14:4.

Now, I want to ask you something, friends. If this is true, what do you think of somebody starting out with a message that God’s church—the one church in the world which keeps His commandments and which He says is the one object on earth dear to His heart—that that church is Babylon, or any part of Babylon? What would you think of that in the light of this study tonight? Wouldn’t that be a terrible thing, my friends? Oh, it would indeed.

And if you want to know what Jesus thinks about it, just take this book *Testimonies to Ministers* and read the first 50 pages, friends. Read this chapter on “The Remnant Church not Babylon.” Read God’s warning against anybody who would turn the weapons of warfare against the church on earth, who would speak of her as being Babylon or a part of Babylon. Christ is indignant about anything like that. He doesn’t want people to talk about His bride, His church.

“Ah, but,” somebody says, “The church is so fallen, so weak, so defective.”

Listen, friends. Do you know what God is going to do with His church? He’s working at it now. That’s why He is appealing to you and me. He wants to have us withdraw from all allegiance to the world and purify our garments and wash them white in the blood of the Lamb.

In Revelation 19, we are given this final view of the church as she reaches the perfection and purity which Christ is working toward:

“...his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints”
Revelation 19:7–8.

Friends, is it going to happen? Will the church, as she comes to the end of her history, appear in the beauty of this white raiment? Will she? Oh, yes. Notice this in *Testimonies to Ministers*:

“Clad in complete armor of light and righteousness, she

enters upon her final conflict" *Testimonies to Ministers*,
page 17.

So, when the dragon finally comes to the last great conflict, he will find the church thus arrayed. And that's what makes him so angry. That's why the full force of his fury bursts upon the church. The purer the church gets, the more it will experience the wrath and fury of the dragon, won't it?

But oh, thank God, friends, it's going to happen. There will be that purification which will result in the church, God's church, this church, His true church being clad with the righteousness of Jesus as a garment. And when that time comes, Satan and all his hosts will be unable to do anything against them.

Let us thank God for the privilege of coming out and entirely apart from all the false doctrines of Babylon and her harlot daughters. And let us thank God for the privilege of being among those children, the remnant of the seed of the true woman, and Jesus Christ, who keep His commandments and have that wonderful testimony which witnesses that Christ recognizes His church on earth and is joined with it. Shall we do that?

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