

A Cosmic Struggle in Heaven and on Earth

Revelation 12



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. 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!” ¹³ 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.



Revelation 12:1



- **And a great sign**

This very language alerts me to the reality that I will be dealing with figurative and symbolic language.

Sign Defined

**something material or external that
stands for or signifies something
spiritual**

Merriam-Webster



Revelation 12:1



- And a great sign appeared in heaven:

Heaven

The place beyond the earth where God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, His angels and all the dead saints of God have there being.

This text presupposes the truth of heaven as a real place.



Revelation 12:1



- a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

She has something under her foot and a crown.

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**This woman rules; she is
clothed in radiance and
has her foot on the moon
and wears a crown.**



Genesis 1:26,28

- Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let **them have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”
- And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, **and have dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”



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**This woman is in
pain and agony.**



Revelation 12:2



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

Skip to vs. 5

Revelation 12:5



- She gave birth to a male child [Jesus], one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron [Ps 2], but her child was caught up to God and to his throne [ascension],

Who is the woman?

**Is the woman one particular
person?**

**Is the woman one particular
ethnicity?**



This woman symbolically represents ALL the people of God in agony. She is:

- **Eve promised an offspring and enmity with the ancient serpent.**
- **Israel described as both pregnant, the bride of God and in pain and agony.**
- **Mary who gives birth to the Messiah.**
- **The church described as the bride of Christ and persecuted by dragon.**



My Thesis

John's vision serves to remind the people of God that the conflict on the earth the one that they are part of and the one from the beginning of time (the Garden of Eden) has its origin from a larger more cosmic struggle between God and Satan. A struggle God has sovereignly permitted to display His glory.



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Remember

**We don't read this
letter as Christians in
America.**



Revelation 1:9



- I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

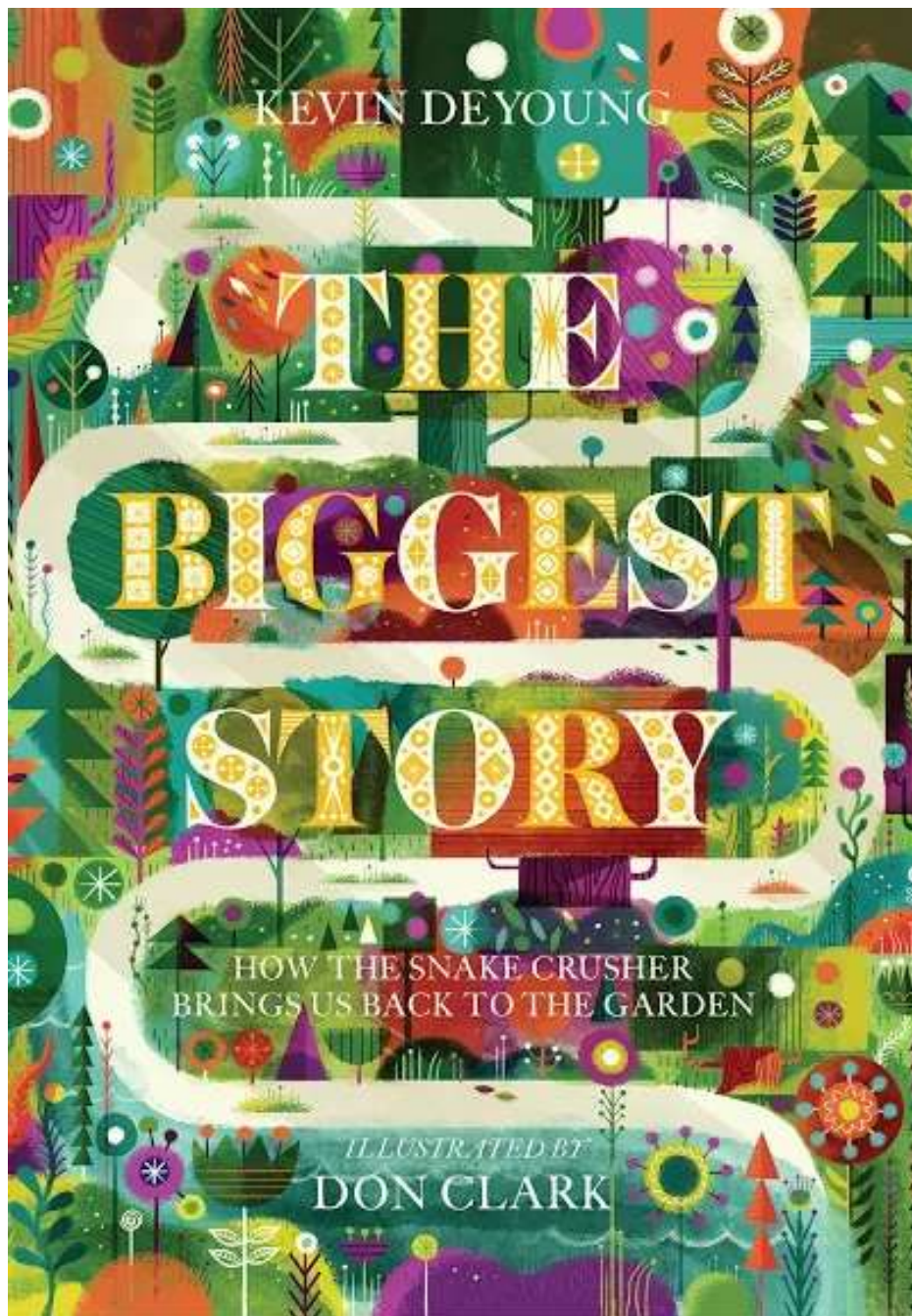
The Woman of Revelation 12

1. Eve the woman given the snake crusher birth promise
2. Israel the true people of God in OT
3. Mary the woman who gave birth to the Messiah
4. The church the true people of God in the NT

The four: Eve, Israel, Mary, and the church all experience pain, agony, sorrow, and suffering.

Progressive Parallelism





If you are not familiar with the snake crusher language I want to encourage you to buy this children's book by Kevin DeYoung and read it to yourself, your children, your grandchildren and anyone old enough to listen.



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.”



Genesis 3:16a

- To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply **your pain in childbearing**; in pain you shall bring forth children.



Genesis 37:9

- Then he dreamed another dream and 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.”



Isaiah 26:17–18

- Like a pregnant woman who writhes and cries out in her pangs when she is near to giving birth, so were we because of you, O LORD; ¹⁸ we were pregnant, we writhed, but we have given birth to wind. We have accomplished no deliverance in the earth, and the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.



Micah 4:10

- Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you shall go out from the city and dwell in the open country; you shall go to Babylon. There you shall be rescued; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.



Matthew 1:20–21

- But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take **Mary** as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ **She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus,** for he will save his people from their sins.”



John 15:20

- Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' **If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.** If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.



Ephesians 5:23–24

- For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.



Revelation 19:9

- And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the **marriage supper of the Lamb.**” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”



Revelation 12:3



- And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon,

Vs. 9 makes it clear who the great red dragon is

Revelation 12:9



- 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.

The Great Dragon; that Ancient Serpent

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Gen 3:1 | Serpent (12x) |
| Job 1:3 | Satan (our adversary/accuser) (53x) |
| Mt 4:1,3 | The devil (slanderer) (34x, NT); the tempter (2x) |
| Mt 12:24 | Beelzebul, the prince of the demons |
| Mt 13:19 | The evil (or wicked) one (10x) |
| Jn 8:44 | A murderer...a liar and the father of lies |
| Jn 12:31 | The ruler of this world (3x) |
| 2 Cor 4:4 | The god of this world |
| 2 Cor 6:15 | Belial (wicked or worthless) |
| Eph 2:2 | Prince of the power of the air |
| 1 Pet 5:8 | Your adversary...like a roaring lion |
| Rev 12:9 | The deceiver of the whole world |
| Rev 12:10 | The accuser of our brothers |

BTW

**If there isn't an evil one—how
do you explain the level of
extreme evil and unbelievable
atrocities that have been
perpetrated upon societies from
the beginning of time?**



Revelation 12:3



- And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

This image of Satan is a parody of Christ; who is described as having seven horns and many diadems on his head (Rev 5:6, 19:12).

This is an antichrist.



Revelation 5:6, 19:12



- And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.
- His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.

The 7 heads, 10 horns, and the 7 diadems (crowns) symbolize the manner in which Satan rules and executes his schemes and plans through human pharaohs, kings, emperors and other evil men.



Daniel 7:20–21

- and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions. ²¹ As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them,



Revelation 12:4



- His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth.

**V. 7 makes it clear the stars
are angels.**

Revelation 12:4b



- And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

**How many attempts did
Satan make to destroy the
lineage of the Messiah
(Israel) and then the
Messiah (Jesus, the Christ)
Himself?**



There is no Messiah/Savior if

- **God does not spare Noah**
- **Sarah can't get pregnant**
- **Joseph doesn't become the prime minister and save Israel from starvation**
- **All the Hebrew male infants are killed at birth**
- **Pharaoh destroys Israel at the Red Sea**
- **Goliath kills David**
- **Saul kills David**
- **Judah does not return from Exile**
- **Haman has his way in the book of Esther**
- **Herod kills baby Jesus**
- **Jesus sins in the temptation**
- **Jesus bypasses the cross as Peter suggests**



Revelation 12:5



- She gave birth to a male child,
one who is to rule all the
nations with a rod of iron,

Psalm 2 Again

¹ Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, ³ “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” ⁴ He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. ⁵ Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, ⁶ “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” ⁷ 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.”** ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.



Revelation 12:5



- **but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,**

‘Caught up to God’ describes the ascension; John will describe Christ’s work on the cross in v. 11

Now we need to look at the identity of the woman in v. 6 again.

If the woman is only a reference to ethnic Israel during the final 1260 days of the final Great tribulation then the early church is not addressed or encouraged by this letter written to them.



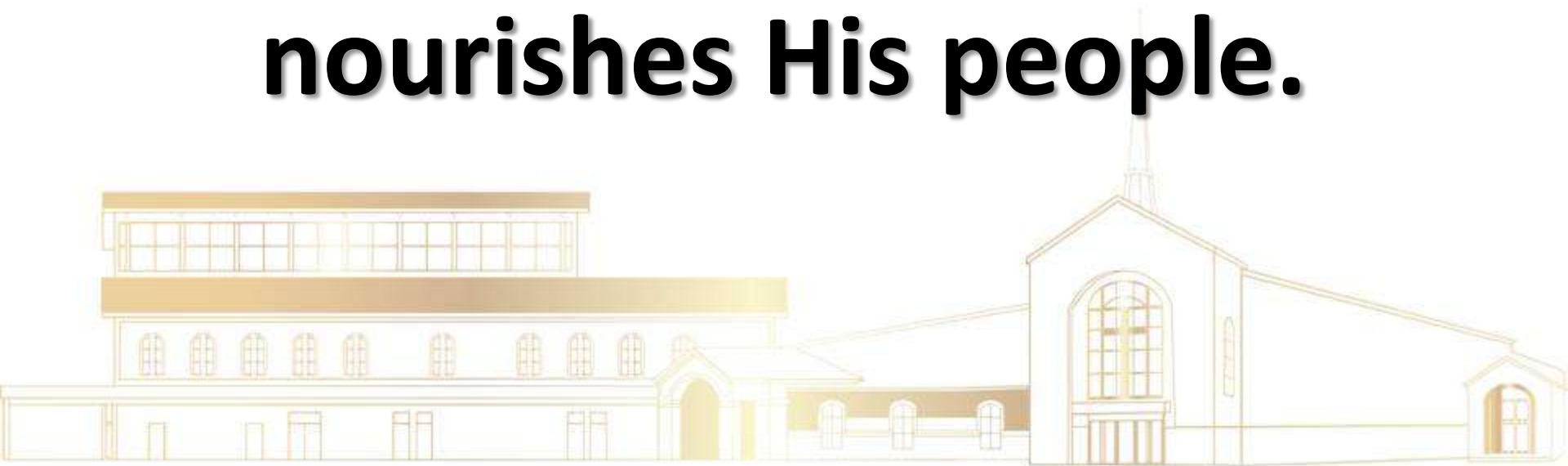
Revelation 12:6



- 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.

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**The wilderness is the place
prepared by God where He
protects, sustains, and
nourishes His people.**



Nehemiah 9:19-20

- you in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud to lead them in the way did not depart from them by day, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way by which they should go. Forty years you sustained them in the wilderness, and they lacked nothing. Their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell.



Luke 1:80

- And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and **he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.**



John 11:53–54

- So from that day on they made plans to put him to death. ⁵⁴ Jesus therefore no longer walked openly among the Jews, **but went from there to the region near the wilderness,** to a town called Ephraim, and there he stayed with the disciples.



God Nourishes His People in the Wilderness

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Gen 3-4 | God provided for Adam and Eve to be able to survive outside the Garden of Eden a type of wilderness |
| Gen 37 | God cared for Joseph in the wilderness |
| Ex 2-3 | Moses' life was preserved from death in the wilderness |
| Ex 14 | God saved Israel from Pharaoh in the wilderness |
| Ex 15-16 | God gave Israel water and manna in the wilderness |
| 1 Sam 23 | God protected David from Saul in the wilderness |
| 1 Kg 17 | God cared for Elijah in the wilderness |
| Mt 3 | Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt to save baby Jesus |
| Lk 1 | Jesus grows up in the wilderness |
| Mt 4 | Jesus is nourished by angels in the wilderness |
| 2 Cor 11 | Paul was preserved from danger in the wilderness |
| Rev 12 | God nourishes and protects his people in the wilderness |

Revelation 12:6



- 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.

Are these 1260 24 hours days?

Since the time Christ established his church with the Apostles there have been over 700,000 days (365 x 2000) of human history.

If the promise of protection is limited to just 1260 literal days then the text is promising protection and nourishment for 0.18% of the days of church history.

Like the 1260 days of chapter 11, I think the text is promising the church sustainment and nourishment from the ascension of Christ until His glorious return in a symbolic wilderness.

Look @ v. 14



Revelation 12:14



- 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.

I told you my thesis is:

The purpose of this vision is to remind the people of God that there was/is a cosmic struggle behind the conflict on the earth under God's Sovereign control.

Look @ v. 7 & 8



Revelation 12:7



- Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon.

Vs.

- And the dragon and his angels fought back,

Daniel 10:13

The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days, **but Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me**, for I was left there with the kings of Persia,

Daniel 12:1

“At that time shall arise **Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people**. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.



Revelation 12:8



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

When Christ rose from the grave Satan was defeated.

Revelation 1:17–18

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, **“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”**



Revelation 12:9



- And the great dragon was thrown down,

Luke 10:18

- And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.



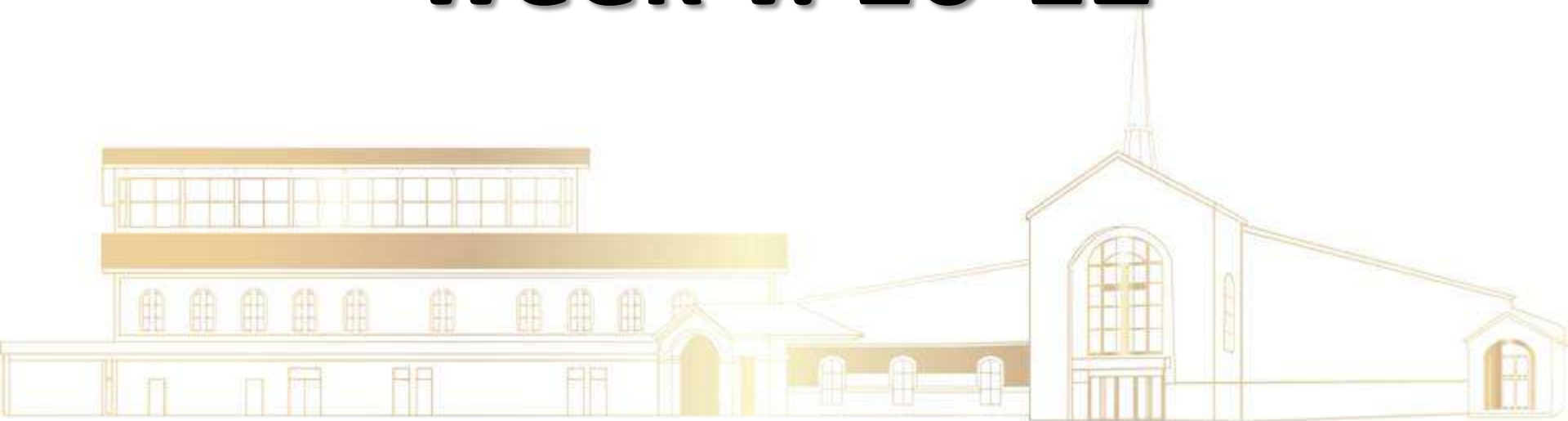
Revelation 12:9



- 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.

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**I want to look at what
the loud voice said next
week v. 10-12**



Revelation 12:13



- 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.

Revelation 12:14



- 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.

What kind of language is 'two wings of a great eagle' giving a woman the ability to fly somewhere?

**It is the same language used in
Exodus 19:4.**



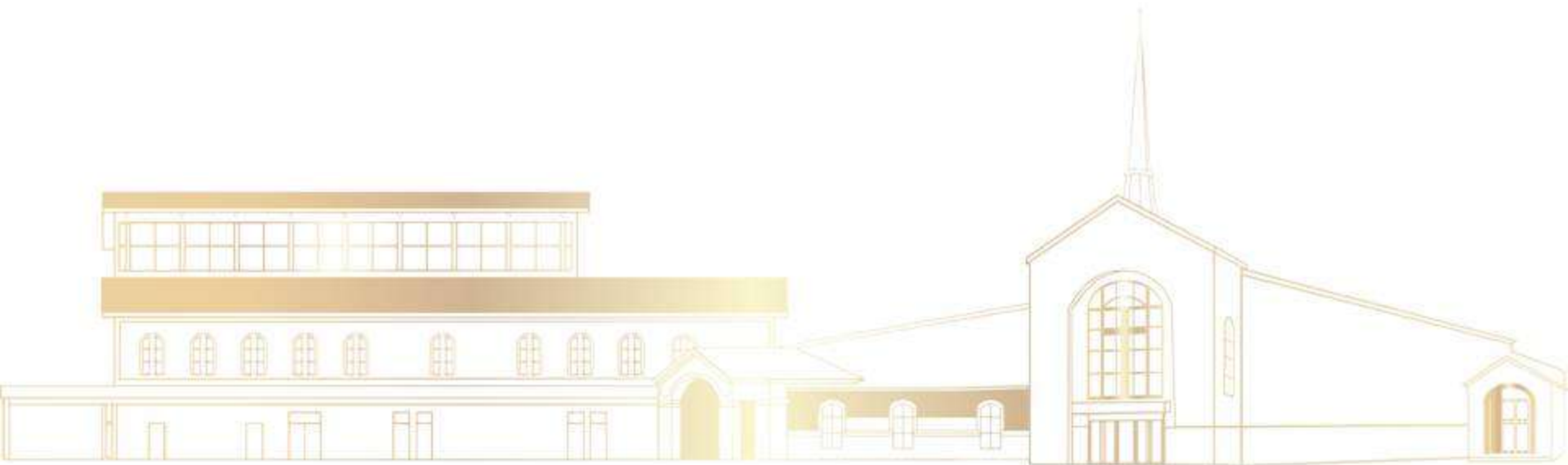
Exodus 19:4

- ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, **and how I bore you on eagles’ wings** and brought you to myself.



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Look @ v. 15 & 16



Revelation 12:15



- The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood.

Revelation 12:16



- 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.

**What do we see being
communicated in this vision
with this colorful and
metaphorically symbolic
language?**



Revelation 12:17



- 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.

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**Next week I want to
look closer at
v. 10, 11, 12 and 17**

