

## Revelation or Apocalypse of John, chapters 12-13

(NIV translation)

Some questions to ask as you read: In what forms do the evil opponents of God appear in these visions? What stories are associated with the opponents of God? Who is the dragon? How is this depiction of evil connected with earlier traditions?

### *The Woman and the Dragon*

**12** 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. <sup>2</sup>She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. <sup>3</sup>Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. <sup>4</sup>Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. <sup>5</sup>She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.”<sup>a</sup> And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. <sup>6</sup>The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

<sup>7</sup>Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. <sup>8</sup>But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. <sup>9</sup>The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

<sup>a</sup> 5 Psalm 2:9

<sup>10</sup>Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

“Now have come the salvation and the power  
and the kingdom of our God,  
and the authority of his Messiah.

For the accuser of our brothers and sisters,  
who accuses them before our God day and night,  
has been hurled down.

<sup>11</sup>They triumphed over him  
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.

<sup>12</sup>Therefore rejoice, you heavens  
and you who dwell in them!  
But woe to the earth and the sea,  
because the devil has gone down to you!  
He is filled with fury,  
because he knows that his time is short.”

<sup>13</sup>When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. <sup>14</sup>The woman has been given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach. <sup>15</sup>Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. <sup>16</sup>But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. <sup>17</sup>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.

### *The Beast out of the Sea*

**13** The dragon<sup>a</sup> stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup>The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. <sup>3</sup>One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup>People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?”

<sup>a</sup> 1 Some manuscripts *And I*

<sup>5</sup>The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup>It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. <sup>7</sup>It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. <sup>8</sup>All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast — all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Whoever has ears, let them hear.

<sup>10</sup>"If anyone is to go into captivity,  
into captivity they will go.  
If anyone is to be killed<sup>b</sup> with the sword,  
with the sword they will be killed."<sup>c</sup>

This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.

### *The Beast out of the Earth*

<sup>11</sup>Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. <sup>12</sup>It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. <sup>13</sup>And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. <sup>14</sup>Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. <sup>15</sup>The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. <sup>16</sup>It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads, <sup>17</sup>so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.

<sup>18</sup>This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man.<sup>d</sup> That number is 666.

<sup>a</sup> 8 Or *written from the creation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb who was slain*    <sup>b</sup> 10 Some manuscripts *anyone kills*    <sup>c</sup> 10 Jer. 15:2    <sup>d</sup> 18 Or *is humanity's number*