

Advanced Bible Studies

for
Seventh-day Adventists

The Woman of Revelation 12:
God's True Church in Every Age



*“Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things;
hold fast that which is good.”—2 Thessalonians 5:19, 20*

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The text for this study
was excerpted from the original publication
by V. T. Houteff entitled,
The Shepherd's Rod, Vol. 2, pp. 65-82.

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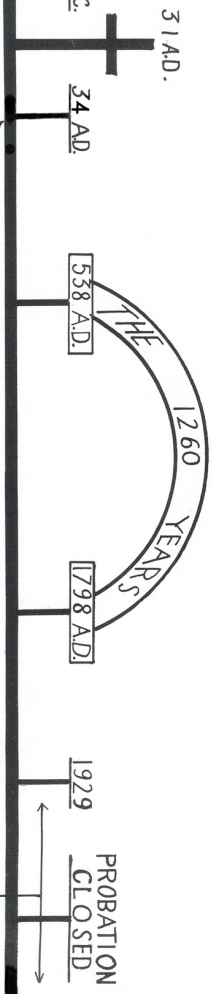
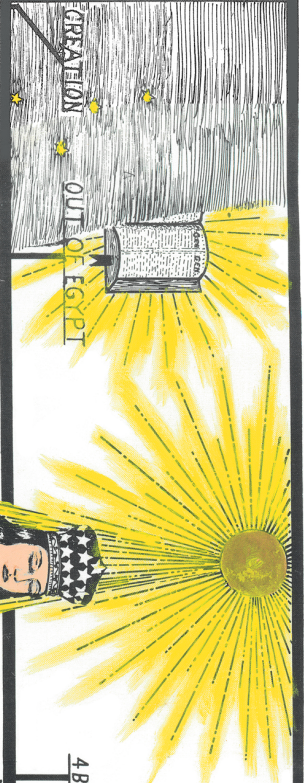
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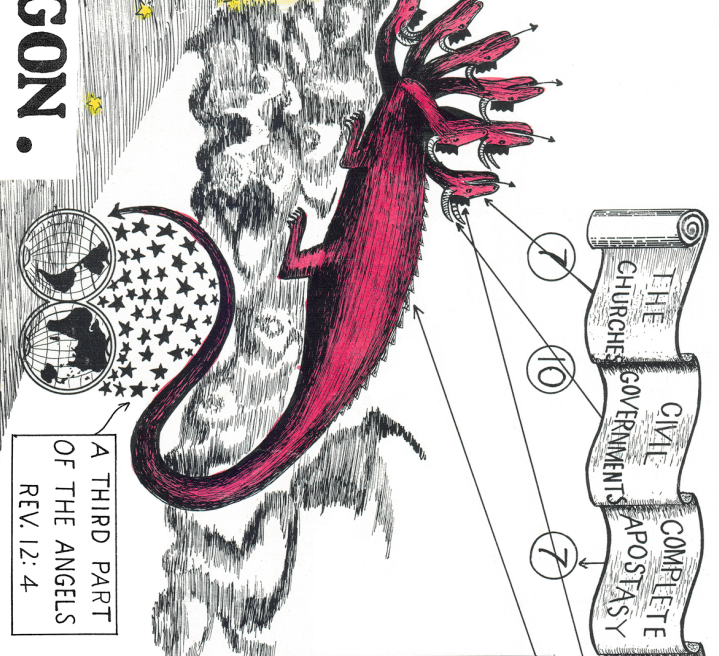
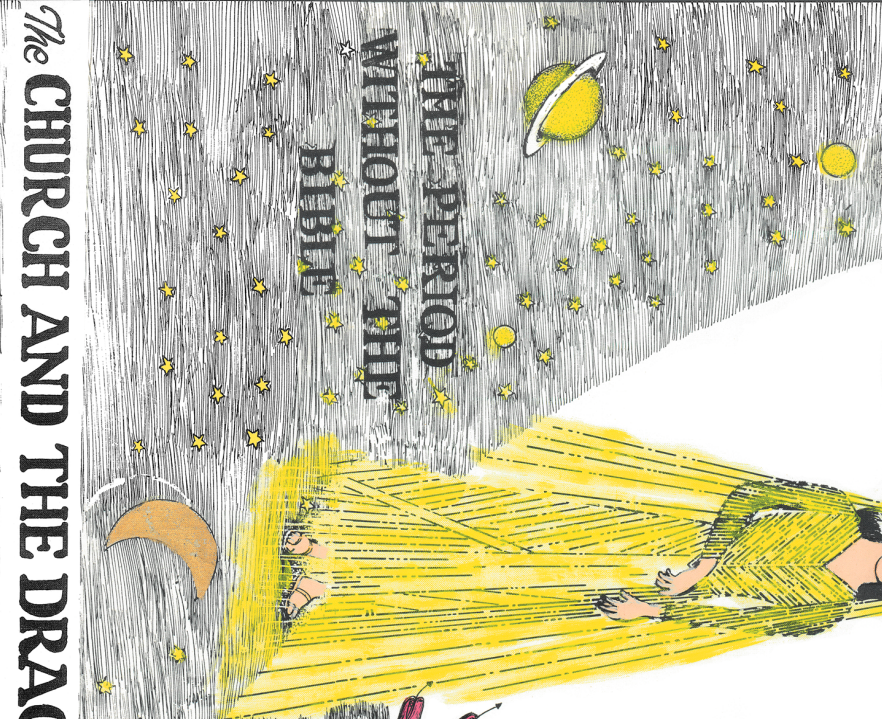
THE PERIOD WITH THE BIBLE



THE DRAGON STOOD BEFORE THE WOMAN

THE DRAGON SAW HE WAS CAST OUT (V. 13) AND PERSECUTED THE WOMAN. THE ACTS, 8:1.

THE TIME FOR THE DRAGON TO PERSECUTE HER SEED. VERSE 17.



The One true Church in all ages. Rejected with the sun (in Bible) at the departure from Egypt. The Great Apostasy, and the Birth of Christ. Satan Cast Out of Heaven, and the Great Persecution against the Church. The Authority of the Church. Rev. 12.

The CHURCH AND THE DRAGON.

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THE RED DRAGON REV. 12:3

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. . . . And the great dragon was cast out that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (Verses 1-4, 9.) The dragon was seen in heaven and being “cast out,” it is obvious that the symbol is of heavenly origin. Of him it is said: “That old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan.” Note that the dragon is a symbol of Satan, even as the Lamb having “seven horns and seven eyes” is a symbol of Christ. (Rev. 5:6.)

Since the numerous beasts form an unbreakable chain of the world empires, the dragon cannot intersect between the links as the symbol of a separate earthly system; thus he represents just what the Scripture says: “The Devil, and Satan.” The figure is given to reveal Satan’s scheme at a certain time in our world’s history.

The “woman clothed with the sun” is understood to be God’s church. The child to which she gave birth was Christ. The twelve stars that comprise the woman’s crown were originally symbols of the twelve patriarchs. This will be made plain in another study. Therefore, we shall endeavor to make clear the time of the dragon and his work. It will be noticed that the dragon stood ready to devour the child (Christ) as soon as He was born. It is evident, that the old serpent armed himself with seven heads and ten horns prior to the birth of Christ.

“**And his tail drew a third part of the stars of Heaven.**” The Scripture is self explanatory as to who the symbolical stars are, for Inspiration says: “He was cast out into the earth, and his **Angels** were **cast out with him.**”

Therefore, the “third part of the stars” represent the angels who were deceived by Satan’s controversy. Quoting “Testimonies for the Church,” Vol. 3, p. 115: “Satan, in his rebellion, took a third part of the angels. They turned from the Father and from His

Son, and united with the instigator of rebellion.” The question may arise: Why draw them with his **tail** and not some other way? The symbol is perfectly capable of indicating the manner in which Satan drew them to the earth. Had it been done with claws, it would denote that Satan defeated Michael (Christ), and by force dragged out a third of the angels. But since he drew them with his tail, the significance is that a third part of the angels joined him in rebellion against Michael. For when the dragon was cast out naturally he was coming head first, and as he drew them with his tail, it reveals that they voluntarily followed him. Thus Christ could do nothing for them.

War In Heaven

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was there place found any more in heaven.” (Verses 7, 8.) The conflict was in heaven. The name “Michael” means **who is like God**; hence it is one of the many titles of Christ. Daniel calls Him “Michael the **Great Prince** which standeth for the children of thy people.” (Dan. 12:1.) Christ has numerous titles, each bearing a definition of a certain phase, or character of His work. The angel said to Joseph, “and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for he shall save His people from their sins.” He is also called “Emmanuel”, meaning, “God with us.” etc.

Time Cast Out

Satan could not have been cast out of heaven immediately after he sinned, or when he deceived Adam and Eve, for in Job 1:6, 7, we read: “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it.” “The sons of God” are the representatives of unfallen worlds; equal to Adam before he sinned, created by the hand of God, and representatives in the same capacity as Adam could have been had he not fallen from his throne by sin. Quoting from The Spirit of Prophecy: “The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused **God** and **His Son**, the **representatives of those sinless realms** over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion.”—“The Desire of Ages,” p. 834.

Satan still had access to heaven in Job's time. Therefore, he must have been cast out at a later date. Says John: "And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child." (Rev. 12:13.) The next necessary step is to find when the dragon first persecuted the "woman" (Christian Church); we shall then have the truth of the time Satan was cast out. That time of persecution is recorded in The Acts 8:1, "And Saul was consenting unto his [Stephen's] death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles." Thus the great persecution against the church was about 34 A.D. It is true that Satan persecuted Christ before that time, but Christ is not the "woman." He is the "Child" whom Satan wished to "devour." Therefore, Satan was cast out immediately after Christ ascended on High. The Spirit of Prophecy speaking of the occasion says:

"All are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King. . . . He presents to God the wave-sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. . . . The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are 'accepted in the Beloved.' Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified.

"Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The **last link** of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken."—"The Desire of Ages," pp. 833, 834, 761.

The time he drew a third part of the stars (angels) from heaven, and the time of the war in heaven, were two distinct occasions. He drew the angels when they followed him from heaven to earth and sought to devour Christ. "And when the dragon saw that he was cast out into the earth;" that is, after Christ was crucified, Satan at his return

to heaven was forbidden an entrance. Thus he "saw"—understood that he was cast out. Then he persecuted the church.

The Dragon's Horns And Heads

The only possible time for the application of the symbolical horns, heads, and crowns would be with the closing of the **old** dispensation, and at the commencement of the New. For, the dragon appeared in that form when Christ was to be born. The horns represent the same as they do on any symbolical beast. Being ten in number the symbol denotes that the effect of his scheme was universally felt. It also signifies that Satan had obtained full control of the nations which were symbolized by the ten horns of the non-descript beast of Daniel 7; and thus he moved upon Herod to kill the children at the birth of Christ with the hope of destroying the Saviour—devouring the "Child."

Let us not overlook the fact that all the horns, heads, and crowns, were present when he stood ready "to devour her Child." Consequently, whatever the meaning by these symbols, all must be in existence at the same time. Had this not been so, the symbols of heads and horns would have so indicated by coming up one after another like the beasts, and also like the horns of the ram and of the goat of Daniel 8. The same is true with the non-descript beast of Daniel 7:7, from which **three** of the **ten** horns were "plucked up by the roots." Where systems and governments do not all exist at the same time, the symbols appear one after another in their correct order. Thus we see that Inspiration is perfect in every respect, and faultless in revealing the truth intended. Therefore, it would be inconsistent for one to conclude that the "horns" as well as the "heads" could represent a consecutive order of systems as long as they all appear in a group, and in oneness with the beast that carries them.

It is also impossible that both horns and heads could represent civil governments, or kings. If the horns stand for political systems, then the heads cannot. If the wounded head on the leopard-like beast of Revelation 13:1-3 represents a religious organization, then all the heads must stand for religious systems. However, there is an exception with the four-headed leopard of Daniel 7:6, for he is without horns and his heads are proven to be civil by the four horns of the goat. It is an unmistakable fact that the symbols are intended to reveal the civil and religious phases during the period represented by the non-descript beast in both his stages—imperial and papal Rome.

As crowns denote civil authority and as they appear on the heads instead of on the horns, it is evident that the church in that period was using civil dictatorial power to propagate her dogmas. Thus the lessons embodied in these symbols are far greater than we can comprehend in a moment. As the facts brought forth regarding the nature of the symbols cannot be questioned, we have a positive foundation for their application.

The dragon with his seven heads and ten horns, with the crowns on the heads, appeared at the birth of Christ as previously explained, and occupies the period parallel with the non-descript beast. The heads are represented by the Biblical number seven,” meaning “completeness,” and embrace every religious system in the days of Christ. As the dragon represents the devil who controls the heads, the symbol unmistakably denotes a complete apostasy. It is not intended to reveal that the pagan system of worship was headed by the devil, for it has never been otherwise. It was the Jewish church that had apostatized, and that is what made the Biblical number “seven heads.” Just such an apostasy had gripped the world in the days of Noah; and its wickedness made the continuation of the world impossible. Therefore, necessity, for the good of mankind, brought about the flood. The terrible apostasy of the Jews made unavoidable another disaster similar to the dreadful deluge. As God could not overthrow the world by water the second time, and yet keep His never failing promise to his faithful servant Noah, He sent His Son to die in the world’s stead. Therefore, the world perished not because of the supreme sacrifice of the Son of God; and the world exists today because Christ arose from the dead.

The Dragon’s Crowns

Next we note the crowns and their significance. It has been explained that the crowns denote civil authority. The heads being crowned, it reveals that the churches of that time employed the civil arm of the state. Had this not been true, the Jews could not have crucified the Lord of glory; neither could they have stoned Stephen, or beheaded and killed the others. It was the civil arm of Rome, headed by the dragon, through which the Jews committed these terrible crimes; resulting in their own destruction.

The Accuser Of The Brethren

After the dragon was cast down from heaven according to the vision says John: “And I heard a

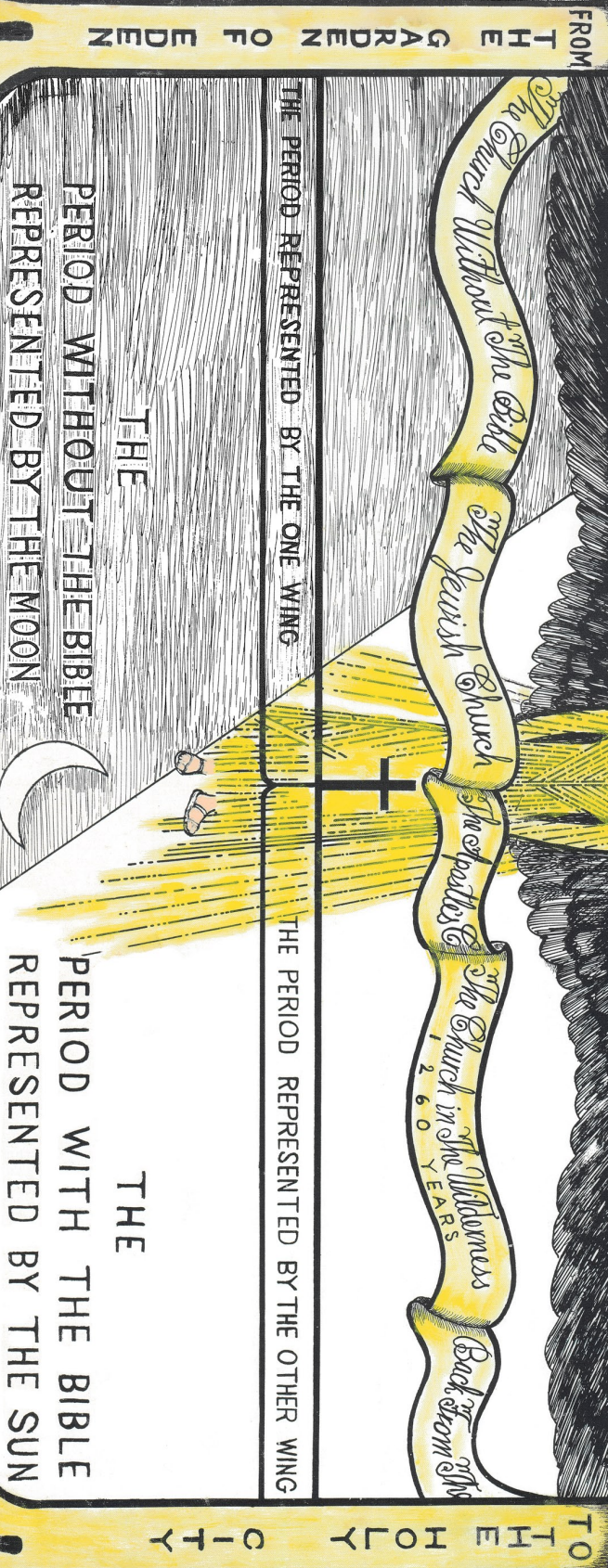
loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.” (Rev. 12:10.) “Satan’s accusations against those who seek the Lord are not prompted by displeasure at their sin. He exults in their defective characters; for he knows that only through their transgression of God’s law can he obtain power over them.”—Prophets and Kings, pp. 585, 586. When the Spirit of God prompts to reprove, He will reveal sin and rebuke the sinner. But Satan, encourages the sinner to unconsciously commit himself in transgression, then he accuses him before the great Judge **in Heaven**, as “being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin,” to secure his condemnation. God’s people must learn to detect the voice of the Spirit of Christ, as well as the spirit of Satan. When the two clash, the One will strive for obedience to God’s Word, but the other will excuse the sin and sympathize with the sinner. In this way Satan gains ground, for the sinner loves his sin.

THE CHURCH OF GOD IN SYMBOL OF A WOMAN REVELATION 12

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew a third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days.” (Verses 1-6.)

Note that the objects shown in the vision were in heaven, not on earth. Therefore, what ever these symbols may imply, they must be of a heavenly origin. Again note that her only clothing is the sun, and that her crown in composed solely of “**twelve stars.**” Observe that she is **not standing** on the “**moon,**” for the Revelator says, She had “the moon **under** her feet.” We must carefully study the

And there appeared a great wonder... a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and... a crown of twelve stars. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle. Rev. 12:1, 14.



THE LIVING CHURCH

character of these symbols, for thus only can we learn their significance. Also mark that she was to be delivered of a man child, and that the same was “caught up to God and to His throne.”

It is an admitted fact that the child was Christ, Who ascended on High after His resurrection. (Mark 16:19.) The symbol being of heavenly origin, the “woman” cannot represent Mary, the mother of Christ, but she denotes the church (“woman”) that was to bring forth, or into which Christ was to be born. Thus John in vision was looking back beyond the birth of Christ.

It has been taught by some that the “woman” is a symbol of the Christian church, and that the moon under her feet is to denote the Mosaic dispensation or sacrificial ceremonial system that had passed away, and being clothed with the sun, to mean the glory of the gospel in the new dispensation. According to the following, these claims prove incorrect.

If the “woman” represents the Christian church, how could the same church (woman) travail in birth with Christ, by whom the church was founded thirty years later? If we say she represents the Jewish church, how could she fly into the wilderness and remain there from 538 to 1798, in the Christian dispensation? If the “moon” under her feet indicates the end of the Mosaic sacrificial system, why did it not end before the birth of Christ, since the moon stood under her feet before He was born. If it had ended at that time, could it have been a symbol of the death of Christ? If her garment of sunlight is a symbol of the gospel in the Christian dispensation, how could the church (woman) be clothed with it years before the gospel dispensation began, having been clothed with it before the child was born? Which one of the two churches, Jewish or Christian, gave birth to Christ? If it were the Jewish church, then how could the light with which she was clothed be applied to the Christian church? If these questions cannot be answered, then we are obliged to go deeper into the subject.

The idea advanced that the “woman” is a symbol of the Christian church only, and the “moon” of the Jewish ceremonial system, proves incorrect. The Christian church was founded about 31 A.D., or not earlier than 27, at which time Christ began to preach; being about thirty years of age. Therefore the symbol points back at least thirty-one years before the beginning of the Christian church, for the “woman” (church) “was travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”

Thus it was the Jewish church that “brought forth” the Son of God and not the Christian.

Therefore, “she [the Jewish church] being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered”; that is, the promise was made to Israel that the Messiah was to be born through that nation by that particular church (“woman”). The old dragon, knowing the channel through which the “child” was to come, closely watched with the intention of destroying the promised **One** as soon as **He** was born. It was then, that the dragon by the hand of Herod, “slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof,” hoping to do away with the coming King. (See Matt. 2:16.)

The evidence proves that the symbol of the “woman” takes in both periods, B.C. and A.D. Therefore, as the moon was under her feet **before** the birth of Christ, it must be a symbol of a period of time which had preceded the Jewish church. As the “woman” was “**clothed** with the sun” before she brought forth the “Child,” it is evident that the symbol, “clothed with the sun,” was fulfilled before the birth of Christ. If the moon is symbolical, then, the symbol of the “sun” must be the main object, for, the “moon” depends on the sun for light, and the “woman” was clothed with it. Thus, “sun” and “moon,” must be taken into consideration. In Genesis 1:16, we are told that the sun and the moon are to rule the day and the night. The “sun” therefore must denote a period into which God’s church had been given great light, and the “moon” must be a symbol of the preceding period. The great light cannot be the gospel of Christ in the New Testament. Neither can the “moon” represent the ceremonial system under the Jewish economy, for the “woman” was clothed with the “sun,” and the “moon was under her feet” while the ceremonial system was yet in existence, for the child was born after the “woman” had been clothed with the “sun.” Christ Himself, by **eating** the **Passover** just before His crucifixion, established the fact that the ceremonial law was still in existence 34 years after His birth. (See Matt. 26:18-21.)

If the above statement is correct, then we must find two such periods that would perfectly fit the symbols. The first is the one before the Bible came into existence, and the second is the one with the Bible—“clothed with Light”—the written Word of God. Thus symbolically, the first period may be called, night, ruled by the “moon,” and the second, day, ruled by the “sun.” Therefore, the “woman clothed with the sun,” and “travailing with child,” is the period after Israel went out of Egypt, and at that time the period without the Bible, “moon,” was passing away.

We shall bring forth another proof from a

different angle, making doubly sure of the idea that the “woman” represents both periods—before and after Christ. Revelation 12:14 states: “And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and a half a time, from the face of the serpent.” Note that she was given **two** wings of a **great** eagle. If the wings were not symbolical, what their object? As the wings of the lion and the four-headed leopard of Daniel 7 represented periods, as previously explained on pages 33-34, then the two **great** wings must denote two great periods of church history. The eagle being king of birds, and as it is emphasized that they were of a “**great eagle**,” it is evident that the symbol must apprehend each period from its beginning. Thus one of the wings takes in the entire church history from the fall of Adam to the crucifixion of Christ, and the other from His crucifixion to the end of this present world (His second coming). Thus it proves that there is only **one** true church in all ages.

Her crown of **twelve stars** originally represented the twelve **patriarchs** and later the twelve tribes after they went out of Egypt, at which time the wonderful light shining from the writ-ten Word of God (the Bible), clothed the church (woman) while she was travailing with the “**child**” (the promise of the Messiah). But the crown of **twelve** stars in the New Testament period stand for the twelve apostles. Number twelve is a symbol of government. Jesus said to them: “Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matt. 19:28.) This fact is proven by the type (the twelve tribes). It will be noticed that in the reckoning of the tribes of Spiritual Israel (the 144,000) by the type (Israel after the flesh) as in Revelation 7:5-8, the tribe of Dan is missing, and instead the tribe of Manasseh, the first born son of Joseph is numbered. The type corresponds perfectly with the anti-type, for Judas Iscariot being one of the “twelve apostles,” was cast aside, of whom Dan is a figure. And in his stead Paul of Tarsus was added, of whom Manasses is a figure. Therefore, we see perfect harmony in type and anti-type. The lesson in this instance by these unmistakable symbols, teaches that God has had only one church, one truth, and one way of salvation for all generations. The same is also expressed in the words of Paul: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; **one** Lord, **one** faith, **one** baptism, **one** God and Father of all.” (Eph. 4:4-6.)

God’s church has been symbolized also by earthly objects; we speak of the symbols by women; namely,

Hagar, and Sarah. The former is a symbol of the Jewish, and the latter of the Christian Church. (See “The Shepherd’s Rod,” Vol. 1, p. 136.) These earthly symbols point out God’s church in different sections and conditions. But the “woman clothed with the sun” and her “eagle’s wings” being of heavenly origin, denote God’s true church (truth) in one continuous line, and her Child, our only Saviour and Redeemer in both periods—before and after Christ.

The Crown Of Twelve Stars In The New Testament Period

John’s vision in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, deals with two main subjects; namely, the “woman clothed with the sun,” and the “red dragon.” The latter has been explained. (See pages 65-69.) The symbol of the “woman” in the New Testament time covers three divisions: 1st, the apostolic period; 2nd, her absence from civilization (in the wilderness) for 1260 days (years of papal persecution, verses 6, 14); 3rd, the last period of the church while in conflict with the dragon. (Verses 12:15-17.) The first and second period shall be explained in connection with another study. An explanation of the third period is found in “The Shepherd’s Rod,” Vol. 1, pp. 151, 152.

Therefore, our intention in this chapter is to briefly visualize the lesson taught by her “crown of twelve stars.” We ask the question: Who appointed these present day self-styled apostolic authorities? It is said that after the apostles passed away, another set of the same number have a right to be apostles. Suppose the claim is true; there are hundreds of churches, and if each one of them had twelve apostles, there would be a multiplicity of thousands of them at one time, and if that act had been repeated in every age, there would be an innumerable multitude of apostles at the appearance of Christ. If there have been thousands of apostles, it is evident by the following Scripture that they shall never enter into the city of God as apostles, for Inspiration says: “And the wall of the city had **twelve** foundations, and in them the name of the **twelve** apostles of the Lamb.” (Rev. 21:14.)

What is the difference between an apostle and a minister of the gospel? If there is no difference then there should have been more than twelve apostles in the early church, for there were more than twelve engaged in the ministry. Christ had appointed twelve, but Judas was counted out leaving only eleven. After Christ ascended on high, the eleven agreed to appoint another in Judas’ place: “And the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with

the eleven apostles.” (The Acts 1:26.) Therefore, they made up the number. Now if Matthias took Judas’ place, then there must be thirteen such men according to Romans 1:1, “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, **called** to be an **Apostle**, separated unto the gospel of God.”

Mark carefully that the “woman’s” crown has only “twelve stars” and in the foundation of the city there are **only** the names of the **twelve** apostles. Which one of the two, Matthias or Paul, is not recognized by Him, who laid the precious foundation of the Holy City? If we say Paul, we make him a liar. If we say Matthias, then his ordination by the eleven had no effect in appointing an apostle. What then? In The Acts 1:26, is the first and last we hear of Matthias, but not so of Paul. If Matthias is the apostle, then he surely is not as worthy as Paul. Which one of the ordinations would be most honorable? Is it Paul’s by Christ Himself as He met him on the way to Damascus, or Matthias’, by the hands of the apostles?

The question is clear. No man’s hands are qualified to ordain an apostle, regardless of his high standing in connection with the gospel. The holy hands of Christ and His personal presence only can appoint one for such an office. This is unimpeachable evidence, for the “woman” has a crown of only “twelve stars.” Therefore, who has the power to ordain another and thus multiply the “stars”?

What is an apostle? Answer.—One that is “separated unto the gospel of God.” But if this is the only meaning of the title, then all who are engaged in the proclamation of the gospel, being separated, must be apostles. Therefore, the word, “apostle,” must have a special significance and a deeper meaning than simply separated unto the gospel of God. The apostle Paul was called to be an apostle for the Gentiles. Thus he, with the eleven became the earthly founders of the church of the Gentiles, and Christ the divine head. Speaking of the gifts in the church, apostles are the first, for without a founder there would be no organization, thus the rest of the gifts follow. (See 1 Cor. 12:28.)

The crown is her glory, and the stars (twelve apostles) are her only earthly authority. Here is a striking evidence that the present day apostles are falsely so-called. A prophet may claim authority as a prophet but never as an apostle. However, there is a difference between the prophets of the Old Testament and the ones of the New; the latter being under the authority of the former; in other words, he may be an interpreter or revealer of the Bible: “For all the prophets and the law[ceremonial—

in type] prophesied until John.” (Matt. 11:13.) Interpretation is correct only when inspired by the same Spirit, thus timely utterances are revealed. Not only do the annals of history prove this, but the Bible is very emphatic on the subject, for it plainly says that we are, “Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.” (Eph. 2:20.) Again we read: “Howbeit **when** He the Spirit of **truth**, is **come**, He will guide you into **all truth**: for He **shall not** speak of **himself**; but whatsoever He shall **hear**, **that shall** He speak; and He will **shew** you things to come.” (John 16:13.) Where is the need for such apostles? Are not the words of the apostles in the Bible? If we should appoint a set of such men, would we not set aside the “woman” and her “twelve star crown”? If we set aside the “crown” by voluntary election of apostles, what will we do with the gospel committed to the church by Christ’s ordained apostles? Hear the authority by the crown of stars: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any **other** gospel unto you than that which **we** have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8, 9.) “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.” (2 Cor. 11:13.) The world is filled with so-called apostles and sects of every kind, is it not? It is time for God’s people to fall on their knees before their Creator, and study the Scriptures for themselves, that they may know what is truth. Why should one accept the decision of another? By so doing we are robbed of an experience of our own. If so, may we not ask the question, What is the future outlook of the world? No one is saved because he may admit the evidence of the truth, or because he may belong to the right church, or creed. It is only by an experience of his own, based upon evidences of truth, received into the heart, that can renew the mind, and regenerate the soul, so that he can walk in newness of life. It is utterly impossible to enter into the kingdom of Christ without a personal touch of divine glory. Jesus said: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3.) The following Scriptures bear the same evidence. “For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” (Rom. 2:28, 29.)

“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is

nothing, but the **keeping** of the **Commandments** of God.” (1 Cor. 7:19.) “And rend your **heart** and **not** your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of evil.” (Joel 2:13.) “For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by **good words** and **fair speeches** deceive the hearts of the **simple**.” (Romans 16:18.)

Returning to our original thought: The eleven were allowed to perform the ordination of Matthias for a lesson to this present day with its new-modeled religion, showing that God has committed to no man apostolic authority—save to the **twelve**. The commission to the ministry is: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. 28:19, 20.) “So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at **my** mouth, and warn them for **Me**. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if **thou** dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall **die** in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at **thine** hand.” (Ezek. 33:7, 8.)

In reality the twelve “stars” on the “woman’s crown” originally represented the twelve patriarchs; later the twelve tribes of fleshly Israel, after that the twelve apostles, and last the twelve tribes of Spiritual Israel (the 144,000). Thus again it proves number “four” to be an important number, and that by the “woman” these four periods are represented.

God who foresaw the selfishness of men, commanded the prophet to write the following: “Ye eat the fat, and Ye clothe you with wool, Ye kill them that are fed: but Ye **feed not** the flock. The diseased have ye **not** strengthened, **neither** have ye healed that which was sick, **neither** have ye bound up that which was broken, **neither** have ye brought again that which was driven away, **neither** have ye sought that which was lost; but **with** force and with cruelty have ye **ruled** them. And they **were** scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through **all** the mountains, and upon **every** high hill: yea, **My** flock was scattered upon **all** the face of the earth, and **none** did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; As I live, saith the Lord God surely because My

flock became a prey, and **My** flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was **no** shepherd, **neither** did **My** shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed **themselves**, and **fed not My** flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, **I am** against the **shepherds**: and **I will** require **My** flock at **their** hand, and cause them to **cease** from **feeding the flock**; **neither** shall the **Shepherds** feed **themselves any more**; for I will **deliver** my flock from their **mouth**, that they may **not** be meat for **them**. For thus saith the **Lord God**; Behold, I even I, will both **search** my sheep, and seek them out.” (Ezek. 34:3-11.)

As a comparison the Spirit of God drew a literal picture from the flock of sheep and shepherds; God’s people as the flock; and the ministry as the shepherds. God’s true people **will** imitate the sheep, and His watchmen will imitate the good shepherd who cares for his sheep. Anything less than this is an abomination in God’s sight. If we are to learn the lesson intended we must first acquire a clear understanding of the type (shepherds and flocks), for, the anti-type (ministers and church members) are asked to copy after the pattern.

The picture is drawn from the ancient method of herding the flock. The open pasture of the mountains and hills required the shepherd’s continual care over the sheep. The vast territory drew the sheep and shepherds a considerable distance from home, and the continual moving over the landscape made it impossible to obtain a permanent shelter of any kind for the sheep, or shepherds. Consequently, other help was needed. Each shepherd had a certain number of dogs, depending on the size of the flock, for the safety of the sheep from man and beast. As one thing called for another, an ass was used to carry the necessary supplies for the sheep, dogs and shepherds. These consisted of clothing, night coverings, food for the shepherds as well as for the dogs, medicine, bandages, etc. The faithful animal carried the load on his back throughout each day of the year. At the end of the day the shepherd counted his sheep. If one was miss-ing, he went to search for it at once, as it was not safe for one to wander apart from the flock.

The excellent condition of the sheep was the evidence of the shepherd’s fidelity and worthiness of his hire. He not only had to seek good pasture, but act as veterinarian as well. Often a sheep would break its leg and it was the shepherd’s duty to skillfully set, splinter and bandage the wound. In traveling over the rough surface of the land, where there were rocks and brush, accidents were

frequent. Sometimes a thorn would prick the flesh, or other minor injury occur, that probably caused no pain, and would not be noticed by the shepherd, yet a fly might have deposited her eggs in the open sore, and larva would soon develop and work their way under the skin and to the bone; this was a common occurrence. At such a time the shepherd's attention is turned to the ailment of the sheep and he must then give it special care and bandage the wound.

When a lamb, or even a sheep was sick and too weak to follow the flock it was the shepherd's duty to care for and carry them. If he should have a lamb in his arms, the mother sheep is constantly by his side gazing at, and speaking to it. These noble creatures care, feed, and keep their lambs spotlessly clean. Are you mothers doing as much for your children? Are you shepherds (ministers) of the flock of God doing all the ancient shepherd did for his sheep? Or do you feed and care for yourselves more than you do for the flock of God? Are you worthy of your hire?

The ancient shepherd had to give a complete account of the flock, even to the smallest details. Do you think God will require less of you? Are not His sheep of much greater value? David risked his life for a lamb, but God delivered him from the lion and the bear. David, for God's honor, and for the safety of His people, endangered his own life, faced the Giant Goliath, but God delivered the Philistine into David's hands, and made David king over His nation. Do you think He will do less for you, if you, too, imitate the Good Shepherd?

Said Jesus: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth **his life for the sheep**. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The **hireling fleeth**, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am **known of mine**. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life **for the sheep**." (John 10:11-15.)

The prophet Isaiah looking forward to the present day conditions says: "Yea, they are greedy dogs which **can never have enough**, and they are shepherds that **cannot understand**: they all look to their own way, **every one for his gain**, from **his quarter**." (Isa. 56:11.)

The text for this study was excerpted from the original publication entitled, *The Shepherd's Rod*, Vol. 2, pp. 65-82. (<http://www.upa7.org/PDFs/Original-Scans/2SR-book-s.pdf>)

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