

## Entry-Level Bible Study on Revelation 12:1–5

Revelation 12:1–5 gives a dramatic heavenly vision of the great spiritual war behind the coming of Christ. A glorious woman, representing God’s covenant people Israel, is about to give birth to a royal Son. A terrifying red dragon—Satan himself—waits to destroy the child the moment He is born. Yet God snatches the child away to His throne, keeping Him safe. The scene shows that from the very beginning Satan has tried to stop God’s plan of salvation, but Jesus was born, lived, died, rose, and ascended in complete victory. Believers today can take heart: the same enemy who could not touch Christ in the end cannot ultimately overcome those who belong to Him.

### Discover (Uncovering the Meaning of the Text)

1. What details in verse 1 show that the woman is glorious and connected to God’s promises (sun, moon, twelve stars)?
2. Why does the dragon stand ready to “devour” the child as soon as He is born (verse 4)? What does this tell you about Satan’s hatred for Jesus?
3. According to verse 5, what two things are said about the child (His future rule and what happens to Him immediately)? How do these show God’s protection?

### Dig (Going Deeper)

4. Read Genesis 37:9–11. How does Joseph’s dream help explain the picture of the woman with the sun, moon, and twelve stars?
5. Herod’s killing of the babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16–18) happened soon after Jesus was born. In what ways does this event look like the dragon trying to devour the child?
6. The child will “rule all the nations with a rod of iron” (verse 5). Look at Psalm 2:7–9. What does this tell you about the kind of King Jesus will be when He returns?

### Apply (Living the Truth)

7. When you face opposition or feel spiritually attacked, how does remembering that Satan could not stop Jesus encourage you today?

8. The woman endured birth pains before the child was safely taken to the throne. Where in your own life are you experiencing “labor pains” while waiting for God to bring deliverance?
9. Since Christ is already seated on the throne, what specific step of trust or obedience could you take this week knowing that His victory is certain?

### **Verse-by-Verse Commentary**

**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.***

John sees a “great sign” (Greek *sēmeion*)—a symbolic portent that points to spiritual realities rather than a literal woman in the sky. The woman represents Israel, the covenant nation through whom the Messiah came. The sun speaks of majestic splendor, the moon under her feet of dominion, and the crown (*stephanos*—a victor’s wreath, not a royal diadem) of twelve stars pictures the completed twelve tribes of Israel. Conservative expositors widely note that this woman cannot be the church (which is born out of Christ’s work) nor Mary alone, but the covenant people of God who, across centuries, carried the promise of the coming Seed. The heavenly setting reminds us that God’s redemptive plan originates in His sovereign will, not in earthly circumstances.

**Revelation 12:2 *She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.***

The woman’s labor pains vividly portray Israel’s long centuries of suffering and expectation while awaiting the Messiah. These pains reflect the travail spoken of in Old Testament prophecy, as well as the intense national distress surrounding Christ’s birth under Roman oppression and Herod’s threat. The Greek words for “crying out” (*krazei*) and “agony” (*basanizomenē*) convey intense distress, yet they are the necessary prelude to deliverance. Just as physical birth requires pain before joy, so God’s greatest redemptive acts often come through seasons of deepest suffering—culminating in the arrival of the promised Ruler.

**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.***

A second sign appears: a “great red dragon,” explicitly identified in verse 9 as “that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan.” The color red (Greek *pyrros*) suggests blood and murderous intent, and his ongoing accusation against the saints.

**Revelation 12:4 *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.***

The dragon's tail sweeping a third of the stars likely pictures Satan's original rebellion, when he drew a portion of the angelic host with him in his fall, which was Satan's attempt to destroy the Messiah at His arrival. Throughout Israel's history Satan sought to prevent the birth of the Seed—through Pharaoh's slaughter of Hebrew boys, Haman's plot, and countless other attacks—yet God preserved the line of promise.

**Revelation 12:5 *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.***

The woman successfully gives birth to a "male child" (Greek *huios arsen*, emphasizing both sonship and maleness in fulfillment of Genesis 3:15). This child is unmistakably the Lord Jesus Christ, described with the exact Messianic title from [Psalm 2:9](#)—He will "rule" (literally "shepherd") all nations with a rod of iron, a promise repeated in [Revelation 19:15](#). Despite Satan's fury, the child is "caught up" (Greek *harpazō*—the same word used for the rapture in [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#)) to God and His throne. This summarizes Christ's ascension after His resurrection victory. Satan could not destroy Him at birth, nor keep Him in death; instead, Jesus is exalted to the place of ultimate authority, guaranteeing His future return to crush the dragon and establish His kingdom. This verse is a powerful declaration that Christ's victory is already secured.