

The Apocalypse of St. John

Chapter Eleven (Pt B)

& Chapter Twelve

In the last section the third woe was announced (verse 11:14, corresponding to the seventh trumpet). This section begins with the blowing of that seventh and final trumpet. This is a major point of transition in the Book of the Apocalypse (see following note):

Orthodox Study Bible (OSB) Note 11:15

Cf: Rev. 10:7 "...but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel... the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets."

Jn 12:31 "...Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out..."

Add: So the book of Revelation will point now to the judgment of God upon the world. According to Protopresbyter Fr. Thomas Hopko: What we have, in chapters 12-18, is an apocalyptic vision of the great CLASH between Satan's world and God's world.

Read 11:15-16

Add: Notice that the note on 11:15 mentions the scene shifts from earth back to heaven. The words (v. 15), "He shall reign forever and ever" is literally "unto ages of ages." This shows this to be a heavenly liturgical setting.

OBS The seventh trumpet is the signal that the End is at hand. P-128

Read 11:17-18

Add: Notice also how this heavenly liturgical prayer begins? Does anyone know the Greek word for "Give Thanks?" The Greek word used by St. John is: εὐχαριστοῦμέν which comes from the Greek word:

εὐχαριστέω eucharistéō, yoo-khar-is-teh'-o; from [G2170](#); to be grateful, i.e. (actively) to express gratitude (towards); specially, to say grace at a meal:—(give) thank(-ful, -s).

The Greek for Almighty (v.17) is "Pantocrator" (in the Old Testament, in Hebrew this is "El Shaddai," God almighty).

OSB Note 11:16-18

Orthodox Bible Study (OBS): The 24 elders fall on their faces in worship of God, in awe of His Majesty and His coming Kingdom (as we pray "Thy Kingdom come"). Early in the book God is described as He "who is, who was, and who is coming" (1:4); but here the reference to the future [in most translations] is omitted. In other words this future kingdom (which all Christians pray for) has arrived.-P.128

Underlining this whole doxology is Psalm 2 which is a celebration of God's power over the nations and a proclamation that the Messiah will... put down all godless resistance to His kingdom." -See P.128 & 129 for more background info.

Read 11:19-12:2

OBS, "The ark of His covenant," in the Old Testament, was the Presence of God in the midst of Israel. They would carry the Ark into battle singing the Canticle of Moses, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered" (Num 10:35). So the appearance of God's Ark symbolizes the battle is commencing. The flashes of lighting, peals of thunder, earthquake and hail indicate God's wrath will violently descend from heaven. -P.129

Add: The word beginning 12:1 translated "Now" in Greek is "kai." It is a conjunction (meant to join two thoughts together) and is usually translated "and." Many of the Church Fathers see a connection between the Ark of the Covenant and St. Mary the Theotokos. What did the Ark contain in it? The Word of God known as the Ten Commandments. The Theotokos had Jesus who is the Word of God within her. The Ark had Aaron's rod which miraculously budded. St. Mary gave birth to Jesus who is called the root and branch of Jesse (cf. Zech 3:8 & Is 11:10). The Ark had the manna

known in the O.T. as the Bread of Angels. The Mother of God gave birth to Jesus who said that He is the true bread which comes down from heaven. So the Church recognizes that this "Woman clothed with the Sun" has a connection with Jesus' Mother as well as God's Church.

OSB Note 12:1

OBS More specifically on The Woman: A great "sign" (Gk. semeion) -a Johanine literary trait (e.g., the "Book of Signs" from the Gospel of John. This sign is an omen or portent of the coming persecution. But as the people of God are destined for glory, she is radiant with divine glory, clothed with the sun; she is exalted above all the earth, so that the moon is under her feet, and she wears a heavenly crown of twelve stars, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, of which she is both daughter and queen (since her son is King). P. 131

Fr. Lawrence Farley writes, "The image reminds of us of the Mother of God. Even if the Woman clothed with the sun is the People of Israel, nevertheless she wears the face of Mary the Theotokos, because Israel gives birth to the Messiah only through her. She is the true daughter of Sion (Zech 2:10). Such a beautiful Marian picture of the Church is only to be expected from St. John, who had the care of Mary from the time of the Cross until her repose" (Jn 19:27). P. 131.

Read 12:3-4

OSB Note 12:3, 4

OBS More specifically on The Dragon (v.3): Behold = a sudden appearance. The dragon is red to symbolize its bloody and murderous intentions. The dragon is a symbol of the devil (v.9) who works through kings and governments to accomplish his terrible work. The seven heads (based on 17:9) stand for seven Roman emperors reigning from the seven hills of Rome. Some think the ten horns symbolize nations of the Roman empire. The diadems on the head symbolize the Empire's centralized power. By identifying the dragon with Rome, the Apocalypse reveals that the State which opposes God becomes the instrument of the devil. P.132

OBS "...to devour her child as soon as it was born..." (v.4) reminds us of what male child who was nearly destroyed at birth?

Read 12:5-6

OSB Note 12:5

OSB Note 12:6

OBS "fled to the wilderness..." The wilderness here symbolizes not just a place of desolation, but also the place where God may be found. Just as he led Old Testament Israel out into the desert to protect them from Pharaoh and his armies. The dessert becomes a place of safety and divine provision. P. 133

Protopresbyter Fr. Thomas Hopko states this also shows the Church has no lasting place in this world. Our true homeland is with God in heaven.

Read 12:7-8

Read 12:9

OSB Note 12:7-12a

Add. Historically we know a large number of angels fell and evil entered the world from the spiritual realm. But here a cosmic battles is going on and the Devil and his angels are cast down from heaven (Gk. ouranos = to cover or encompass; refers to the spiritual realm encompassing earth).

OBS: This casting out symbolizes that the rout of the evil forces is complete, and the heavenlies are fully cleansed of their evil presence. P. 134

OBS: Notice that John also identifies the dragon with the ancient serpent, the Tempter who brought death to the human race in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1f), He is called devil (Gk. diabolos, "slanderer" or "accuser" and Satan (Gk. satanas, "adversary"), the one who deceives the world to worship false gods [just as he did our first parents]. P. 134

BREAK-----

Read 12:10

Read 12:11-12

OSB Note 12:7-12b

OBS: In the Book of Job, Satan is depicted as accusing Job before God (Job 1-2, Zech 3:1f). But now, Satan "the Accuser" has been conquered (Gk. Nika = nee'-kay = **νίκη**) through the blood of Christ. All our sins have been forgiven and the Devil no longer has access to God, being once for all cast from the heavenly court down to earth. P.134

Add: The "word of their testimony" is literally, "by the word of their witness or martyria (μαρτυρία)." The ultimate witness of faith is martyrdom.

OBS: These Martyrs are said to have conquered Satan by (1) the word of their testimony (declaring God's truth to the world like prophets) and (2) by not loving their lives "to the death" --for refusing to deny their Lord, even though it cost their lives! To the world it may seem the martyrs were victims conquered by the might of Rome, but the angels know the truth -the martyrs are the ones who have conquered the dragon through the blood of Christ. -P. 135

OBS: Realizing his expulsion from heaven means his end is drawing near, the devil is determined to do his worst through the persecution by the government. -P. 136

Read 12:13-14

Read 12:15

OSB Note 12:13-16a

The two wings (v.14) may also refer to the Imperial Symbol of the Roman Eagle which enabled the Church to find its providential security. For a brief time Christians were spared persecution from the Jews by the Romans (as shown in Acts). -P. 138

OBS: "a time and times and half a time" is the "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" referred to as "the place prepared by God" in 12:6 and the treading of the Holy City underfoot by the Gentiles for "forty-two months" in 11:2. In other words this is the entire time of the persecution. Just as Israel was nourished in the wilderness after escaping Pharaoh, so the New Israel (the Church) will be nourished and sustained by God even in these times of intense persecution. P. 137

OBS The water spewing from the serpent's mouth symbolizes a powerful flood -indicating more widespread destruction and overwhelming persecution. -P.137

Read 12:16

OSB Note 12:13-16b

Add: This OSB ref (to Mt 24:15-21) refers to our Lord's words about the coming destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. These passages, known as "Little Apocalypses," foretell the destruction of Jerusalem for the people's rejection of their Messiah. Likewise at the time Revelation is written, Christians were under intense persecution from the Jews. So the destruction of Jerusalem for its faithlessness and persecution of the Church functions as a "type" for succeeding generations (like the upcoming Roman persecutions) and for every generation. It also has a final fulfillment at the end of time.

OBS What is described here is the persecution and attempted destruction of the Church by the same demonic powers of the world that attempted to devour [the Woman's] child, Christ, soon after His birth. This prophecy of the persecution of the Woman in the wilderness was fulfilled in the persecution of the Church by the Jews in the first century, as recorded in the Book of Acts. There Satan, through the Jews, attempted to sweep away the Church in a flood of persecution (see Acts 8:1; 21:30).

Notice the dragon (v. 17) doesn't give up. Instead he goes away to make war with the rest of her seed (offspring). This war will be described in the following chapters as St. John shows the rise of the beast. -P138,139.

Read 12:17

OSB Note 12:17

Here we close with a good definition of what a Christian is. The dragon goes out to make war against the rest of the Woman's offspring. How are the Woman's offspring described? They are those "who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus..." Revelation again points to the importance of faith in Jesus Christ and the living God's truth. This is in direct contradiction of those who were described at the end of chapter 9, who refused to repent of their murders, sorceries, sexual immorality and thefts. Christians are sinners too, but we know through our

faith and testimony in Christ that we are called to keep His commandments. When we fail, as we all do, we know we must repent of our sins and turn back to God.

Ultimately this is what St. Peter wrote about in his 1st Epistle:

"...let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a busybody in other people's matters. Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter. For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?" (1 Pet 4:15-17).