**Chapter 12**.

**Overview.**

**Vv: 1-2: The Church Militant is glorious, even giving birth to the Savior (David’s Son yet David’s Lord).**

**Vv. 3-4**: **The devil desires to be as God, hence, the number seven, with God’s plenary (Almighty) power (the number 10) and through these ruses attempts to destroy God’s Savior (Herod sought to murder the Messiah). Waited to devour the Child, combat between heaven and hell (Hymn).**

**V. 5**: **The Church gives birth to the Messiah who shall rule the world with a rod of iron (Psalm 2).**

**V. 6: The Church flees in God’s Safety and Security of the Gospel (cf. Moses: God’s Secret Place) for the remainder of the New Testament era.**

**Vv. 7-9**: **War in heaven (Gen. 3:15): A. St. Michael his angels assist the Savior against the Devil (cf. Daniel 12). B. Devil and his angels cast out of heaven (cf. St. John 12) by Jesus, a Man. C. Because a Man cast the devil out of heaven, men remain in heaven and don’t follow the devil into hell. D. The Devil (Satan, the Great Dragon) cast out into the earth, namely, the earth is where on earth the Gospel is not or is present but not believed.**

**V. 10-12: Salvation is come: A. The Messiah fulfills His Promise of Salvation on the Cross. B. Accuser cast down (St. John 12) by the justification of men by the Gospel through faith (can’t accuse an Absolved sinner and a righteous man). C. Overcame the devil by the Blood of the Lamb (the Passion of Christ) and their testimony (The Apostolic Office of the Word and the Sacraments, i.e., the Gospel).**

**V. 12: A. Rejoice heavens (includes Church in glory and Church on earth). B. Woe to inhabitants of the earth (places where the Gospel is not or is present but not believed) and the sea (the nations and their tumult of sin) devil seeks whom he can devour while his time is short.**

**V. 13: When dragon sees he is cast to the earth (outside the Gospel and saving faith), he persecutes the church because of the Child Christ.**

**V. 14: Woman given wings to fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished throughout the NT era from the face of the serpent.**

**V. 15-16: A. Serpent cast out water to carry her away. B. The earth opened it’s mouth and swallowed up the water, namely, the Lord uses creation (cf. beasts in earlier chapters) to shield the Church.**

**V. 17. The dragon was angry and waged war against the remainder of the saints.**

*1. 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:*

**A. The woman is the Church, the Mother of the Messiah**: The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt writes: “This great dragon takes his position before the woman to devour the child as soon as it is born.[[1]](#footnote-1)1 So then in this scene the holy Seer becomes witness to the birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Christ was born from the people of God, the Church of Israel.” [[2]](#footnote-2)2

**B.** **And there appeared a great wonder in heaven**: The Church is a great wonder in the Kingdom of Heaven because she is a miraculous creation of the Passion of Christ through the Gospel. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes, “Faith is not the product of human deliberation, self-decision, or concurrence, etc., but as much a creative work of God as the calling forth of light out of darkness at Creation (2 Cor. 4:6).”[[3]](#footnote-3)3

**C. a woman clothed with the sun with the moon at her feet:** The Twelve Stars are the Apostolic Ministry of the Twelve Apostles, the Gospel. The Gospel restores the woman’s (the Church) governance over the entirety of God’s creation, which Adam cast away in the Garden of Eden when he followed the doctrine of the evil. Man once again governs the whole spectrum of creation indicated by the sun, “the greater light” (**Genesis 1:16)**, and the moon, “the lesser light” (**Genesis 1:16**).

The Church is a great wonder and glorious because she is the Bride of Christ by the Gospel through faith.

*2. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.*

“The woman’s child (Rev. 12:2 ff.) is Jesus Christ, our Savior. ‘The cry of travail fills the whole Old Testament. “Oh, that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down!” Is. 64:1. It is the constant longing and “waiting for the Consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25), which is here represented as about to be fulfilled.’”[[4]](#footnote-4)4

The Church gives birth to the Messiah because God becomes man in Christ.

*3. 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.*

**A. Another wonder in heaven:** Wonder indicates spiritual matters. The great

wonder is the Church. The devil is a wonder only because these struggles occur in the spiritual realm, i.e., the realm of the Gospel, Absolution and faith. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.” **Ephesians 6:12**.

Men become spiritual through Absolution and faith because men receive God the Holy Spirit through Absolution and faith. The Apostle St. John writes of men receiving God the Holy Spirit through Absolution and faith: “Then said Jesus to them again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on *them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost; Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* ye retain, they are retained.” **St. John 20:21-23**.[[5]](#footnote-5)5 The Lutheran Church confesses that the Gospel is Absolution and faith: “Moreover, the power of the keys administers and presents the Gospel through absolution, which [proclaims peace to me and] is the true voice of the Gospel. {German text: The word of absolution speaks peace to me and is the Gospel itself.} Thus we also comprise absolution when we speak of faith, because *faith cometh by hearing*, as Paul says Rom. 10, 17. For when the Gospel is heard, and the absolution [*i.e.*, the promise of divine grace] is heard, the conscience is encouraged and receives consolation.”[[6]](#footnote-6)6Hence, the struggle lies in the realm of the spiritual, namely, the Work of the Holy Spirit of Absolution and faith, i.e., the Gospel.

The Greek word used for wonder in both instances is *semeion* and fits well with the understanding that these are wonders because they occur in the spiritual realm.“*a sign* consisting of a *wonder* or *miracle*, an event that is contrary to the usual course of nature. **a**. *miracle* of divine origin, performed by God himself, by Christ, or by men of God ... . **b**. *miracle* of a demonic nature, worked by Satan and his agents ... .”[[7]](#footnote-7)7Regarding the latter, the Apostle St. Paul writes: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints ... .”[[8]](#footnote-8)8

**B. and behold a great read dragon**: The dragon is the devil and is colored red

because from the beginning he was a murderer, a shedder of blood. “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lite, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” **St. John 8:44**.

Herod attempted to murder Jesus through the slaughter of the innocents: “Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.”[[9]](#footnote-9)9

Jerusalem did not rejoice at Christ’s Birth but rather was troubled. Martin Chemnitz writes:

Although earlier they [the magi] had entered Jerusalem with that hope that they would find especially that city filled with celebration over the newborn King of the Jews, they saw that Herod was disturbed, that the people were shaken1[[10]](#footnote-10)0, but that no one was concerned about looking for the Child nor did anyone dare to seek out that King for fear of Herod, although they [the people of Jerusalem] not only knew the Scripture regarding the birth, person, and office of the Messiah but could even point it out and explain it to others. In fact, the magi had this great and dangerous temptation amid the very beginnings of their faith: that they saw that people who had been uniquely promised the Messiah and to whom He had been born were so cold.1[[11]](#footnote-11)1 ... Herod, however, was troubled without reason, for He who grants heavenly kingdoms does not take away earthly ones. Although the magi had thought they were bringing the Jews very pleasing news about the rising of their King, whom they had awaited for so many centuries as their Messiah, the evangelist says: ‘And all Jerusalem was troubled.’ What Matthew adds: ‘... was troubled along with Herod’ shows that Herod and the city were similarly disturbed. Thus, people prefer external tranquility to the kingdom of Christ because the latter brings the cross with it. Afterwards, therefore, no one from either the scribes nor from the people joined himself to the magi as their companion to seek the new born King with them, for fear of the savagery of Herod.1[[12]](#footnote-12)2

**C.** *seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.* Seven and ten are numbers of fulness. In this case, the devil holds all the power because he has plenary (full) power as ruler of this world. No man is above him save the Lord Himself, who cast him out and broke his rule over men by His Passion to save them from his wicked rule. “Jesus answered and said, ... Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signfiying what death he should die.” **St. John 12:30**, **31-33**.

*4. 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 was ready to e delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.*

**A. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth:** A third part of the stars of heaven cast to the earth in order to destroy the Messiah indicates that the devil is of great power and might. He, however, captures only a portion of all the power in existence because a third is certainly not the entirety of the power of heaven. That alone belongs to God the Holy Trinity.

1/3 also indicates that while the devil tries to be God, he is not Trinity but quite upside down, representing a minor or inferior power as noted in the previous paragraph.

**B. and the dragon stood before the woman was ready to e delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born:** As noted above, King Herod, the agent of the devil, sought out the Child not to welcome Him but rather to slay Him as soon as He were born.

“Ancient mythologies have a number of stories of a woman with child who is pursed b a monster or dragon. {Extrabiblical myths also contain a similar evil monster. The Babylonian myth Enuma Elish tells how Tiamat, the water monster, is cut in two by Marduk, the young god of light. In Canaanite lore the great seven-headed monster of the deep, the dragon, was knows as Lotan/Litan, a form of Leviathan. In Egyptian lore the red dragon Set-Typhon pursues Isis and is later killed by her son Horus. In Greek mythology the pregnant goddess Leto is pursed by the dragon Python. She gives birth to Apollo, who turns on the dragon and kills it.1[[13]](#footnote-13)3} ... These myths provide evidence that ancient peoples had heard the truth of a woman whose Child would deliver the human race from the forces of evil and darkness, embodied in the ancient serpent or dragon. These myths originated from the original promise God gave to Adam and the woman when he said that the Seed of the woman would crush the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:14-15). By the time that these ancient myths were recorded in the extrabiblical literatures in which they are preserved, they had already been distorted and given shape by pagan ideas and influences. Nevertheless, in their core they witness to the one true, original story of a Child from a woman who would rescue the human race. Joh, the author of Revelation, would know of some of these storeis, and in this retelling of the ancient story of the woman with Child and the dragon, he sets the record straight. There was an original true promise of a woman and her Child, the Child who would save the human race from the clutches of the dragon. And that Child is the Christ Child.”1[[14]](#footnote-14)4

1. 1And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.” **St. Matthew 2:13-15**. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt, *Exegetical Lectures on the Revelation of Saint John*, tr. the Rev. H. W. Degner, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, no date, p. 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, p. 514. “For God, who commanded teh light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” **II Corinthians 6:4**. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4*Revelation*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, *Concordia Heritage Series,* rpr. 1987, p. 156. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5Compare also becoming spiritual men through Holy Baptism because in Holy Baptism God the Holy Spirit is given: “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to yoru children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.” **Acts 2:38-39**. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article XII. (V.)**.39, *Triglotta*, pp. 261, translation from the German in braces is mine. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trs. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, second edition, eds. F. Wilbur Gingrich, Frederick W. Danker, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 748, **s.v.** “*semeion*”. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8**Ephesians 6:10-18**. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 9**St. Matthew 2:16-18**. “The entire context of ch. 31, beginning ch. 30:20 and continuing to ch. 33:26, is Messianic. The four chapters speak of the approach of the Lord’s salvation, of the coming of Messiah to reestablish the Kingdom of David in the form of a new covenant, of which forgiveness of sins is to be the foundation (ch. 31:31-34); a kingdom in which every weary and sorrowful soul shall be fully comforted (vv. 12-14, 25). As an example of this comfort the Lord introduces the consolation to e extended to mothers who had suffered great loss for the sake of Christ, the cruel murder of their infant sons. For in close connection with the tragedy and the resultant sorrowful weeping of heartbroken Rachel, described in v. 15, we read words of sweetest comfort in vv. 16-17. These little babes murdered for Christ’s sake, the first martyrs, are not lost to their mothers nor to the kingdom of Israel, the Church. God tells them that their work shall be rewarded. What they have done, their labor in bearing children, shall not be in vain. Their children are not annihilated. They still are members of His covenant nation. They shall come against from the land of the enemy, the enemy of the New Testament Church, death (cp. 1 Cor. 15:25-26). ‘There is hope in thine end,’ for th end. ‘Hope for’ always indicates the one for shoe welfare there is hope; and ‘end’ here means either ‘future,’ as in ch. 29:11, or as it is used in several passages, ‘your posterity,’ offspring (cp. Ps. 37:38; 109:13; Dan. 11:4). In both translations the hope of resurrection is expressed. So they shall come to their ‘own land,’ the new heaven and earth, of which the Promised Land, Canaan, was a pledge and guarantee (Heb. 11:14-16). The true Israelites regarded themselves merely as sojourners and pilgrim sin the land of Canaan (Gen. 17:8; 23:4; Ps. 39:12).” The Rev. Dr. Theodore Laetsch, *Concordia Classic Commentary Series*: *Jeremiah*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, rpr. 1988, pp. 251, 252. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 10“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his start in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.” **St. Matthew 2:1-3**. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 11*The Harmony of the Four Evangelists* .... *Volume One, Book One*, tr. Richard J. Dinda, Malone, TX: 2009, p. 196, first amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 12Martin Chemnitz, *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists* .... *Volume One, Book One*, tr. Richard J. Dinda, Malone, TX: 2009, pp. 196, 192, first amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 13Brighton, *Revelation*, p. 320. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 14Brighton, *Revelation*, pp. 320, 330. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)