



YES, NO AND MAYBE

1. I do not like scary movies!
2. Dragons are real, and they still exist today.
3. The war in heaven was a literal, physical battle.
4. Satan keeps a record of all our sins.
5. The reason why we have so much social unrest today is because Satan is causing all of it.

THE WOMAN & THE DRAGON

➤ READ Revelation 12 (NIV)

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. 2 She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. 3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. 4 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. 5 She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. 6 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.

7 Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 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.

10 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. 11 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. 12 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.”

13 When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 The woman was 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. 15 Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16 But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 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.

« If God is all-powerful, why didn’t He just destroy Satan before he could wage war against humanity?

» **Vs. 1: A great sign** - that is, an object or event that has spiritual significance. As such it is a key word in the Gospel of John (see John 2:11 and throughout the Gospel, where it is translated “sign” in RSV). Here it means “an extraordinary sight,” “the appearance of an unusual (or, unique) event.”

- **Clothed with the sun** - Most likely a reference to holiness, godliness, there was no brighter light than the sun.

- **The moon under her feet** - Literally, the moon as her footstool. Coins from the time of Tiberius picture former Emperor Augustus and his wife Livia as the sun and the moon. This symbol then communicates that the woman has

DIG DEEPER



THE BIBLE LAB

DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

dominion over the rulers of this world.

- **A crown of 12 stars** - Perhaps the number twelve is suggested by the twelve tribes of Israel or the twelve apostles.

« Why do you think that God showed this “great sign” first?

» **Vs. 3: Red dragon with seven heads** - Seven heads may indicate the height of intelligence, craftiness, and deceiving shrewdness (2 Corinthians 11:3). Seven indicates fullness.

- **Ten horns** - In Revelation, horns represent political power, and the number ten connotes great power (Rev. 5:6; 17:12–14; see also Matt. 4:9).

- **Seven crowns** - The word here for crown is not *stephanos* (the victor’s honorary wreath, used eight times in Revelation), but it is *diadema*, the crown of the ruler, only used three times (Revelation 12:3; 13:1; and 19:12–16) and nowhere else in the New Testament. Seven crowns would indicate royalty, kingship, over all the kingdoms of this world or through kings, Satan exercises his power.

« Why did God show this second great sign?

» **Vs. 4: Its tail swept** - The verb translated swept (down) is the one used in John 21:8 of the disciples dragging to shore the net full of fish. So another way of saying this is “drag down.”

» **Vs. 4: That it might devour her child** - This story has roots in the enmity placed between the woman and the serpent after the Fall (Gen. 3:15) as well as alluding to Pharaoh’s edict to kill Israelite baby boys at the time of the birth of Moses (Exod. 1:15–2:10) and to Herod’s plot to kill the baby Jesus (Matt. 2:13–16).

» **Vs. 5: Rule...with an iron scepter** - The expression to rule ... with a rod of iron means to rule with complete authority, ruthlessly defeating all enemies. It is crucial to note that the word for rule is the verbal form of shepherd (*poimainein*; see Matt. 2:6).

» **Vs. 6: Be taken care of** - The verb means not only to provide food, to feed, but in a more general sense “to take care of,” “to sustain,” “to provide for.”

« In stark contrast, how do the devil’s selfish actions compare to God’s?

» **Vs. 6,14: 1260 days/Time, times, and a half time** - This is a way of designating a period of time in Daniel (12:7) equivalent to three and a half years (“time” = one year; “times” = two years; “half a time” = one half year; total = three and a half years) or the same period as the 1,260 days. It is a symbolic way of designating a limited period of concentrated attack from Satan upon the church, but the deliverance provided by God.

« Why do you think we focus more on the attacks of Satan in the last days rather than the deliverance of God?

» **Vs. 9: That ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan** - These are the two titles, the first one the Greek form, meaning “slanderer,” “accuser” (see verse 2:10), and the second one the Hebrew form, meaning “adversary,” “opponent” (see verse 2:9).

- **Vs. 10: The accuser of our brothers and sisters** - This describes the Devil either as a prosecuting attorney in the heavenly court, who tries to get God to condemn people (see Job 1:6–12; Zech 3:1–4), or else as one who appears in court to testify against the person on trial (accusers in court are mentioned in Acts 23:30, 35; 25:16, 18). Accuses may also be rendered as “tell what they have done wrong.” The phrase day and night may be rendered “continuously,” “without ceasing.”

« How has the devil successfully redefined God as the prosecutor, instead of the defender?

» **Vs. 12: He knows that his time is short** - This should not be translated in such a way as to imply that the Devil knows that he will soon die. He knows that he doesn’t have much more time to carry on his work of deceiving people (verse 9). This may be translated “he knows that he doesn’t have much more time to act,” “he knows that he will only have so much time to enact his will.”

» **Vs. 19: The serpent spewed water like a river** - That the river comes from the serpent’s mouth alludes to his lying and deception (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9–11; Rev. 2:9, 13–14; 3:9; 13:11–17).

« Why do you think so many people believe what the devil spews?

» **Vs. 17: Hold fast their testimony** - The Greek has “and have (or, hold) the testimony of Jesus,” which may be translated as TEV has it, “are faithful to the truth revealed by Jesus.”

« What is the testimony of Jesus that we are able to have and to hold, till death do us part?

MY PRAYER...

1. How is God sustaining and providing for me right now?
2. What is my testimony of Jesus?
3. What new aspect of God’s character does He want me to know?



THE BIBLE LAB