

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Biblical, Traditional, Congregational

Lord's Day Worship for
December 22, 2024



trinityreformedct.org

"For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;" – Colossians 2:9-10

“*” = Please stand if you are able.

Welcome, Greeting & Announcements

Call to Worship – Philippians 2:3-13

Leader: *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves*

People: **Which was also in Christ Jesus,**

Leader: *Who, although He existed in the form of God,*

People: **Did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,**

Leader: *But emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant,*

People: **And being made in the likeness of men.**

Leader: *Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death,*

People: **Even death on a cross.**

Leader: *For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name*

People: **Which is above every name,**

Leader: *So that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven*

People: **And on earth and under the earth,**

Leader: *And that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,*

People: **To the glory of God the Father.**

Leader: *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,*

People: **Work out your salvation with fear and trembling;**

Leader: *For it is God who is at work in you,*

People: **Both to will and to work for His good pleasure.**

Prayer of Invocation and Confession

Gospel Absolution Texts

Genesis 3:15 – the *Protoevangelium*, the first proclamation of the Gospel in the Bible

“And I (God the Father) will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman (Eve), and between your seed (demons) and her seed (mankind but especially Christ – note that “seed” is in the similar); He (Christ) shall bruise you (Satan) on the head, and you (Satan) shall bruise him on the heel.”

Romans 16:20 - *“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your (the church’s) feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”*

***Hymn #194** (red hymnal) – “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

Scripture Readings – Matthew 1:18-2:15

(For a harmony of the Christmas texts see the end of the bulletin.)

Ancient Creedal Reading – Apostles Creed (pg#845 in the red hymnal)

Offerings Presented

[Please put your tithe/offering in the plates before or after the service – Thank you!]

[Gifts labeled “Deacon’s Fund go to aid those in need in the congregation.]

***Doxology #731** (red hymnal)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host: Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.*

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Hymn #213** (red hymnal) – “What Child Is This”

Prayers of the Church & Lord’s Prayer (sins)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Reformation Creedal Reading – Westminster Larger Catechism, 37,47

Leader: Question: *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?* John 1:14

People: **By taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul,** Matt 26:38

Leader: *Being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost*

People: **In the womb of the Virgin Mary,** Luke 1:27,31,35,42;

Leader: *Of her substance, and born of her,* Gal 4:4

People: **Yet without sin.** Heb 4:15; 7:26

Leader: Question: *How did Christ humble Himself in his conception and birth?* John 1:14,18

People: **In that, being from all eternity the Son of God,** Gal 4:4

Leader: *In the bosom of the Father, He was pleased in the fullness of time* Luke 2:7

People: **To become the son of man,**

Leader: *Made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her;
with divers circumstances*

People: **Of more than ordinary abasement.**

Ministry of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

***Sermon Text** – Revelation 12:1-6

***Gloria Patri #735** (red hymnal)

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.*

Sermon – “The Christmas Story From the View of Heaven”

(A Christmas Sermon)

***Hymn #203** (red hymnal) – “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

***Benediction** – Numbers 6:24-26

All are welcome for Fellowship & Food downstairs after Worship

Announcements

- There will be **no Sunday School** on **December 29th** and **January 5th**.
Church will start at the usual 10:30 AM and there will be Coffee Hour.
- **Tuesday Morning Study** is done for the year – It will return on **January 14th**.
- **Wednesday Evening Study** is done for the year – It will return on **January 15th**.
- Pastor Doug will be on vacation from December 23rd through January 6th.

Upcoming Events

- There will be a **TRC Game Night** on January 24th at 6:30 PM at Tanja’s parents house at 409 Oak Avenue, Torrington (with a snow date at Jan 31st).
- Sledding in February?
- There will be a **Ladies Bingo & Pot-Luck Supper Night** on Friday, March 28th at 6:00 PM (with a snow date of Friday, April 4th) at the Gabelmanns’ pool-house. All adult ladies are welcome!
- Easter is on April 20th.

Regular Weekly Events

<i>Sunday</i>	9:00 – c.10:00 AM	Sunday School (Returns on January 12 th) Children’s curriculum: KVB Publications Women’s Study: Baucham’s <u>Expository Apologetics</u> Adult Study: Westminster Larger Catechism
	10:30 – c.11:40 AM c.11:40 AM	Worship (Lord’s Supper on the 1 st Sunday of the month) Coffee Hour Fellowship
<i>Tuesday</i>	10:30 AM – Noon	Tuesday Study (Evangelism in Acts) at Pastor Doug’s house (Returns on January 14 th)
<i>Wednesday</i>	6:30 – 8:00 PM	Wednesday Study (on Exodus) at Pastor Doug’s house (Returns on January 15 th)
<i>Friday</i>	6:30 - ??? PM	Young Adult Discussion Group at Pastor Doug’s house (1 st & 3 rd Fridays) (Returns on January 17 th)
<i>Saturday</i>	morning	Prayer Group at the Gabelmann’s. (Please call Sheryl to confirm if the group is meeting that day, 860-309-7250.)

Trinity Reformed Church of Northwest Connecticut

Worship Starts At: 10:30 AM (9:30 AM in the summer)

Sunday Worship At: Winchester Grange (100 Newfield Rd; Winchester Center, CT 06098)

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 343; Riverton, CT 06065 – Phone: (860) 238-7399

Webpage: trinityreformedct.org – Email: trinityreformedct@gmail.com

ONLINE RESOURCES

TRC's Webpage:	TrinityReformedCT.org
TRC's Facebook Page:	facebook.com/people/Trinity-Reformed-Church/61554974150922/
TRC's Youtube Channel:	youtube.com/@TrinityReformedCT
Pastor Doug's	youtube.com/simplyreformed
Youtube Channels:	youtube.com/@PilgrimsOfPlunder

INTERNET PRAYER CHAIN

If you have any prayer requests for our prayer chain, please email them to Donna Ensminger at: trcnwprayer@gmail.com. (If you would like to join the Prayer Chain, also see Donna.)

LEADERSHIP

Elders:	Rev. Douglas Aldrich, pastor	860-379-1147	douglas_aldrich@sbcglobal.net
	Bob Ensminger	860-485-8738	robert.ensminger@arthurgrossell.com
	Rich Gabelmann	860-605-7852	rgabelmann0415@gmail.com
	Rev. Jonathan Haulenbeek	203-709-0784	jhaulenbeek@icloud.com
Deacons:	David Mattson (chair), Carl Bierce, Caleb Goodell, Mason Goodell, Dean Winters		
Sunday School:	Verna Aldrich, Mason Goodell	Music Coordinator:	Cindy Rines
Clerk:	Sheryl Gabelmann	Treasurer:	Cindy Rines

Sermon Notes

Revelation 12:1-6
"The Heavenly Christmas"
A Christmas Sermon
December 22, 2024

Introduction

- 1) It seems like the famous parts of the birth story of Christ (e.g. manger, shepherds, wisemen, etc.) are not a major focus in the Bible.
 - a) It is only in two Gospels, and only for a total of three chapters. Matt 1:18-2:23;
is the story told (e.g. manger, shepherds, wisemen, etc.). Luke 1:26-2:40
(See the appendix below for a harmonized outline of the birth texts.)
 - b) Yes, the doctrine of the incarnation* is critical and found throughout Scripture.¹
*** Incarnation:** That the Second Person of the Trinity, the eternal Word of God, who is fully God, took on human flesh and was born 2,000+ years ago.
 - c) The rest of the Bible (the history Book of Acts and all the Epistles/Letters), however, does not directly mention the birth stories, because the incarnation is the critical part.
- 2) From a worldly perspective (i.e. the power politics of the Roman Empire in the 1st century AD), the birth stories are not that grand.
 - a) The birth of a son to a middle-class Jewish carpenter in Bethlehem wouldn't even be worth considering. (Even the OT calls Bethlehem "*too little*" – Mic 5:2.)
 - b) The heavenly host only appears to a few shepherds. Luke 2:8ff
 - c) Even the Star of Bethlehem, if you read the biblical texts, Matt 2:2,7,9-10
isn't described as a super nova.

¹ Gen 3:15; Is 7:14; 9:6; 53:2; Mic 5:2; Zech 9:9; John 1-5,14,18; Rom 1:2-3; 8:3; 2Cor 8:9; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:6-8; Col 2:9; 1Tim 1:15; 3:16; Heb 1:1-2; 2:14; 1John 1:1-3; 4:2; 2John 7

- d) The most dramatic part of the birth story, that those in the area would notice, is the one part that we moderns never like talking about: the Slaughter of the Innocents – where the insane and wicked King Herod orders the execution of the infants in the Bethlehem area.
- 3) Though the incarnation is a critical part of the birth stories, it is not true there are only two books in the Bible that describe Christ’s birth, or that it is a minor event.
 - a) There is one description of the birth of Christ from the heavenly, cosmic, big picture perspective that shows how astounding and epic the first Christmas is.
 - b) Not surprising, it is in the Book of Revelation.
- 4) We have been going through the Book Revelation from an Idealist Amillennialist² perspective which views Revelation as a series of visions that retells the story of this age, into the next age, seven times.³
 - a) Christ’s 1st Advent is that time 2,000+ years ago when the Second Person of the Trinity took on human flesh (Christmas), died for the sins of the world (Good Friday), rose from the dead (Easter) and ascended into heaven to reign in glory.
 - b) Christ’s 2nd Advent is at the end of this age when He returns in power and glory to bring judgment and the eternal new heavens and new earth.
 - c) These critical events, the purpose of history and creation, and what it is like to live in-between them, is told seven times in the Book of Revelation.
 - i) For example, clearly the end of Revelation chapter 11 (verses 15-19) is about the very end of the age – the resurrection of the dead, the eternal destruction of the wicked and the heavenly conquering Christ ruling over all of Creation.
 - ii) The story then clearly reboots in Revelation 12 to describe the birth of Christ.
- 5) Because the purpose of history, and all of creation, is Christ. Rev 1:12-20; Gal 4:4-5; Eph 1:9-12
 - a) Galatians 4:4-5 – “*But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*”
 - b) For this Sunday before Christmas let us ponder the birth of Christ from the perspective of heaven.

² **Idealism** is a way of reading Revelation that views that many of the images in Revelation represent not a particular person, thing or event, but representing the “ideal” of the thing. For example, for the Idealist, the Red Horseman of Revelation 6:3-4 represents war and violence that will exist throughout this age, and in particular, against the church. Instead of seeing the Red Horseman representing the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD (a Preterist view), or the period of Roman history from 180 to 284 AD (a Historicist view), or as Russia & Arab nations attacking that nation of Israel in the future (a Futurist view).

Amillennialism is an understanding of the millennium, the thousand year reign of Christ as described in Revelation 20:1ff, that believes it refers to the period that we are in between the 1st and 2nd Advents of Christ (from His birth 2,000 years ago to His return in glory at the end of the age), since we have perfect peace with God through Christ’s cross and the Gospel is going to all the nations.

Steve Gregg’s Revelation: Four Views – A Parallel Commentary (Thomas Nelson, 1997) is a very helpful book that explains the four views and then goes through Revelation, chapter by chapter, in four columns giving each camp’s understanding of the text.

My favorite commentary on Revelation is More Than Conquerors by William Hendriksen from the Idealist Amillennialist view.

³ William Hendriksen argues Revelation is divided into seven visions:

	<u>Vision 1</u>	<u>Vision 2</u>	<u>Vision 3</u>	<u>Vision 4</u>	<u>Vision 5</u>	<u>Vision 6</u>	<u>Vision 7</u>
Present Church Age:	1:1-3:22	4:1-6:11	8:1-12	12:1-13:18	15:1-16:12	17:1-18:24	20:1-6
Tribulation - End of this Age:	---	6:12-7:8	8:13-11:14	14:1-13	16:12-16	---	---
Perfect Final Age to Come:	---	7:9-17	11:15-19	14:14-20	16:17-21	19:1-21	20:7-22:21

The Consolation of Israel – Revelation 12:1-2

Luke 2:25

- 1) John the Apostle sees a “*great sign appeared in heaven*” – Revelation 12:1a
 - a) One might be tempted to think this is the Star of Bethlehem? Matt 2:2,7,9-10
It’s not, it is something much more grand, cosmic and epic.
 - b) It is “*a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;*” - Revelation 12:1b
- 2) *Critical question: Who is the woman?*
 - a) The woman isn’t Mary, but God’s people, the true Gen 3:15 + Rom 16:20;
 (“invisible” – the church God sees) church, who Satan Rom 2:28-29; 9:5-8;
 wars against. Rev 12:15-17
 - b) It is from Israel that the Messiah (i.e. the 2Sam 7:12-16; Ps 2:7-12; 110:1-7;
 “Christ” the anointed one) will come. Matt 1:1; 2:5-6; Acts 13:22-23
 - c) In the OT period it is Israel, in the NT it is the church, which Is 54:1; Hos 2:1ff;
 is described as a woman in this world and in heaven. Gal 4:26; Eph 5:31-32
 - d) Israel & the NT church are frequently SoS; Is 54:1; Jer 3:1ff; Hos 2:1ff; Gal 4:21-31;
 referred to as a “her.” Eph 5:31-32; Rev 19:7-10; 21:2-3
 - i) The woman in Rev 12:1 is the true, faithful, Israel from the Old Testament.
 - ii) As the story continues (12:15-17) the woman is clearly the church.
- 3) She is “*clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars*”
 - a) This is a poetic imagery used for Israel, Gen 37:9; SoS 6:10; Is 61:10
 including the promise of heaven. Is 60:19-20; Rev 21:23
 - b) Though the world, and sometimes Christians, view the church as weak (SoS 1:6),
 from God’s perspective it is great and much loved (SoS 6:4).
 - c) All of creation is for the church. Rom 8:28,32
 - d) The crown is salvation given to God’s people Is 62:3-5; Rev 2:10; 3:11; 4:4,10; 14:14
 - e) The twelve stars represent God’s people.⁴
- 4) The woman is “with Child” because it is from Israel the Christ will come. Mic 5:2; Matt 2:6
- 5) The woman is in “*labor and in pain*” because Ps 6; 69; John 15:18-20; 14:22; 16:33;
 God’s people have, and will, suffer in this Mark 10:30; Acts 9:15-16; Phil 1:29-30;
 age because of Christ. 1Thes 3:3; 2Tim 3:12; 1Pet 2:21-24; Rev 1:9
 - a) OT Israel was frequently defeated and enslaved a few times. Dan 2:31-43
 (e.g. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome, etc.). Dan 7:1-8
 - b) From the birth stories themselves:
 - i) Joseph, Mary and the baby Jesus are forced to flee into Egypt. Matt 2:13-15
 - ii) And Herod slaughters the infants of Bethlehem. Matt 2:16-18
 - c) Revelation was originally written to comfort the tiny persecuted Rev 1:9
 early Christian church.

⁴ 12 Tribes of Israel for the OT. (Gen 49:28; Ex 28:21; 39:14; 1Kgs 18:31; Ezek 47:13)

12 Apostles for the church in the NT. (Matt 10:1-2,5; 11:1; 26:20; Acts 6:2; 1Cor 15:5)

Sometimes the Church is called “tribes.” (James 1:1; Rev 7:5-8)

Sometimes Israel & the Church are combined to the number “24” (Rev 4:4,10; 5:8; 11:16; 19:4)

Twelve is also associated with worship. (Num 7:3,84,86-87; 17:2,6; 29:17; Ezek 43:16; Rev 21:12,14,21; 22:2)

- d) Let alone the persecution the church has, and will, experience throughout this age.⁵
- 6) Because the birth of Christ is so important, *the* cosmic war comes to a head.

The Adversary – Revelation 12:3-4

- 1) John then sees another sign appear in heaven.
 - a) To emphasize how dramatic a change of events this is, John uses the interjection “*behold*”. (It is used only here in Revelation 12.⁶)
 - b) John sees, “*a great red dragon*” who is clearly Satan. Is 27:1;
Rev 12:7,9,13,16; 13:2,4,11; 16:13; 20:2
- 2) The devil is described as having “*seven heads . . . ten horns . . . seven diadems*”. Rev 12:3
 - a) Seven usually represents completeness and is used of God Himself. Gen 2:2;
Rev 1:4,20; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6
 - b) Ten usually represents perfection and order. Ex 9:14ff; Deut 4:13
 - c) Horn is a symbol of authority and power Deut 33:17; Dan 7:8,24-25; Luke 1:69
 - d) So, the dragon appears to have great worldly power but he is a deceiver, he claims to be Christ, and isn’t. John 8:44;
2Cor 11:12-15
- 3) The devil “*swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth*” Rev 12:4
 - a) This might refer to two events: Gen 1:4; Dan 8:10; 12:3; 2Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 1:16,20; 2:1; 3:1
 - i) It might have allusions to the original fall of Satan and the creation of demons back at the beginning of time, thus the “stars” refers to angels.
 - ii) “Stars” can also refer to the saints, so it might also refer to the martyrdom of Christians during times of persecution.
 - b) The bigger picture is clear: In this current spiritual war Satan will do damage.
 - c) Like Death on the ashen horse in Rev 6:7-8 has authority “*over a fourth of the earth*”, this shows evil will do harm, however, it is limited by God’s plan, which encourages us while being a sober hope.
 - d) Like saying, “We are going to win the war against a terrible enemy, however, we are going to take 1/3 casualties.”
- 4) The devil “*stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.*” – Revelation 12:4b
 - a) This birth, of course, refers to the first Christmas, Christ’s 1st Advent, when He took on human flesh, some 2,000 years ago. Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-20
 - b) Satan’s war on Christ, and His followers, was ordained from the beginning. Gen 3:15; Rom 16:20
Rev 20:1-6
 - c) Demonic activity seems to have greatly increased during Christ’s earthly ministry.
 - i) As compared to the Gospels, the Old Testament only mentions demons occasionally. Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17;
Ps 106:37; Is 34:14

⁵ Matt 5:10-12; 10:27-39; 13:5-23; Mark 10:29-31; 13:11-13; John 15:18-27; 16:33; Acts 14:21-22; 2Cor 11:23-27; Phil 1:29; 1Pet 3:14; 2Tim 3:12.

⁶ “*Idou*” (ἰδοὺ), “*behold!*”, is used throughout Revelation to command “*look!*” to call attention to something dramatic that has happened. See: Rev 1:7,18; 2:10,22; 3:8-9,20; 4:1-2; 5:5; 6:2,5,8; 7:9; 9:12; 11:14; 12:3; 14:1,14; 16:15; 19:11; 21:3,5; 22:7,12.

ii) The frequency of demonic activity seems to decrease as the NT moves past the cross.⁷

iii) Though demonic activity doesn't go away.

Eph 6:16; 1Pet 5:8

A King is Born – Revelation 12:5-6

- 1) Satan fails and from Israel, "*a male child*" is born, who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ, the Son of God – Hallelujah! (literally "Praise the Lord")
- Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35;
John 1:34
Rev 19:1,3-4,6
- a) This is very good news, literally "Gospel."
- b) Romans 1:1b-3 – "*the gospel of God, which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,*"
- 2) He "*is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron*" – Rev 12:5b
- Rev 2:27; 19:15
- a) As per OT prophesy.
- Ps 2:7-9; Jer 23:5; 30:9; Zech 9:9; Matt 2:2
- b) That is why Christ is Lord and King.
- John 20:28; 1Cor 1:2-3; Eph 1:3-23
- c) And His Kingdom is not for one nation (OT Israel) but for all the nations.
- Matt 25:32; 28:19
Luke 24:47; Gal 3:8
- 3) Where does this ruling come from? What is this ruling like?
- a) Revelation 12:5b – "*her child was caught up to God and to His throne.*"
- i) With the cross (Good Friday), Christ defeats death.
- Eph 2:16; Gal 3:13;
Col 2:14; 1Pet 2:24
- ii) With His resurrection (Easter), Christ shows His victory over death.
- Acts 2:24; Rom 6:8-9; 8:34-35;
1Cor 15:4ff; 15:55-56;
Eph 1:20-21; 1Pet 1:21
- iii) He then ascends bodily into heaven, "*caught up to God*" as Revelation puts it.
- Luke 24:50-53;
Acts 1:9-11
- iv) There the Son is enthroned at the right hand of the Father reigning in glory.
- Ps 110:1; Luke 22:69; 1Pet 1:21-22;
Rev 5:13; 6:16; 7:9-10,17; 22:1,3
- b) We have been hearing how Christ reigns as we have been going through our sermon series on Revelation 4-7.
- i) The Son is revealing and executing the Father's plan. As seen in the scroll with seven seals.
- Rev 5:1ff
- ii) Christ is going forth conquering and to conquer by having His Gospel go to all nations, gathering His people into His spiritual body on earth – His Church.
- Rev 6:1-2;
Rev 20:1ff;
Eph 1:18-23
- iii) Always remember Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. The church wars not as the world wars (i.e. power, greed, politics, etc.) but in the Spirit – faith, hope and love.
- John 18:36; Rom 8:4;
1Cor 13:11-13;
2Cor 10:3-4; Gal 5:19-25
- c) At the end of the age the Son, along with His church, will rule all of redeemed creation.
- Rev 2:26-29; 19:11-19

⁷ Matt 5:10-12; 10:27-39; 13:5-23; Mark 10:29-31; 13:11-13; John 15:18-27; 16:33; Acts 14:21-22; 2Cor 11:23-27; Phil 1:29; 1Pet 3:14; 2Tim 3:12.

- d) Though Rev 12:5 is finally complete at Christ's 2nd Advent, it is also fulfilled with Christ's 1st Advent.
- i) Satan is defeated by the cross. John 16:7-15; Heb 1:1ff; 2:14-15; Rev 20:1-6
 - ii) Christians have been sealed by the Holy Spirit. Eph 1:3; 4:30
- 5) With the Son enthroned in heaven, what happens to the woman?
- a) Revelation 12:6 – *"Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days."*
 - b) Fleeing into the wilderness shows that the church will be persecuted throughout this age. John 15:18-27; Phil 1:29-30
 - i) God is getting all His saints, making them strong through weakness. 1Cor 1:18-31; 2Pet 3:8-9; Rev 6:10-11
 - ii) This is all by God's plan.
 - Remember that seals 2-4, and the last three horsemen that deal with suffering are still of God's plan. Rev 6:3ff
 - We are in *"a place prepared by God"* – Revelation 12:6 Rom 8:1-39
 - c) Even in the wilderness we will *"be nourished"* – Revelation 12:6
 - i) Though we are pilgrims in this world God does not abandon us. Deut 31:8; Matt 28:20; Acts 2:27; 2Cor 4:9; Heb 11:13; 1Pet 2:11
 - ii) God doesn't abandon His people in this world. John 14:16-31; 16:5-15
 - iii) We have the Holy Spirit. We are fed on the Gospel in the ministry of the Word, and we have the fellowship of the saints in the church. John 16:7ff; Rom 1:15-17; 8:1ff; Eph 5:23-33
- 6) We are in the wilderness *"for one thousand two hundred and sixty days."* – Rev 12:6
- a) 1,260 days is a symbol number that represents the time from Christ's 1st Advent (Christmas) to His 2nd Advent (His return at the end of the age).
 - b) It is a symbolic number of refuge, protection while in the wilderness and completeness.⁸

Conclusion

- 1) If you keep on reading through chapter 12 the story recaps, going into more detail about the implications of Christmas in the heavenly realms
- a) The dragon (the devil), who appears to have great worldly power, increases his attacks during Jesus' 1st Advent. Rev 12:3-4
 - b) While this is happening, a war in the heavenly/spiritual realm breaks out. Rev 12:4,7
 - c) The Child (Jesus) is born (Christmas) and then taken up into heaven, at the end of Christ's 1st Advent, two thousand years ago. Rev 12:2,5

⁸ "1,260 days", "42 months" and "3.5 years", which are the same thing, are us throughout Revelation (11:2-3; 12:6,14; 13:5) "42" is symbolic of a place of refuge. (Num 35:6-7)

It is an allusion to Israel's time in the wilderness where she was protected and fed by God.

(Deut 2:7; 8:3,15-16; 29:5; 32:10; Is 40:3; 51:3; Hos 2:14-17; 13:5)

The Exodus took about 42 years and in 42 stages. (Num 33:5-49)

Daniel prophesies about a time of trouble for 3.5 years. (Dan 7:25; 12:7)

- d) Satan is thrown down to earth because of Christ's 1st Advent when Jesus secured His victory over evil. Rev 12:5,8-17
- e) The woman (God's people, here this is the true church), flees into the wilderness (this present world). Rev 12:6
- i) This is part of God's plan. Rev 12:6
- ii) Satan wars against the woman & her children (i.e. the church). Rev 12:6,12-13,15,17
- iii) All of creation, the physical and spiritual realm, are part of this great war. Rev 12:16-17
- iv) However, Satan's days are numbered. Rev 12:6,12,14
- "3.5 years" and "1,260 are the days in between Christ's 1st Advent and His 2nd Advent.
- v) The church is protected and nourished by God. Rev 12:6,14,16
- vi) The church has power, even in the wilderness. Rev 12:1,10-11
- She is given salvation, power, the Kingdom and authority because "of the blood of the Lamb." Rev 12:10
- 2) This grand struggle of knowing victory yet still as pilgrims is beautifully described in Revelation.
- a) Revelation 12:10-12 – *"Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come (because of Christ's 1st Advent, starting with Christmas), for the accuser of our brethren (Satan) has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb (which is only possible because of the 1st Advent) and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. (Starting with Christmas there is special rejoicing in heaven, because the final victory has begun, yet there is a warning . . .) Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, (however there is a promise . . .) knowing that he has only a short time."*
- b) All this happens because of the 1st Christmas.

Appendix – A Christmas Harmony

John 1:1-5,14-18; Col 1:15-20; Phil2:5-11

The birth of Christ as seen from heaven	Revelations 12:1-17
Zacharias & Elizabeth; the birth of John the Baptist foretold	Luke 1:5-25
Gabriel announces the birth of Jesus to Mary (the Annunciation)	Luke 1:26-38
Mary visits Elizabeth	Luke 1:39-45
Mary's prayer (the Magnificat)	Luke 1:46-56
John the Baptist is born	Luke 1:57-66
Zacharias' prophecy	Luke 1:67-80
Angel appears to Joseph in a dream	Matthew 1:18-25
Census, travel to Bethlehem & the birth of Jesus	Luke 2:1-7
The shepherds	Luke 2:8-20
Jesus' circumcision at the Temple	Luke 2:21-35
The prophetess Anna's witness	Luke 2:36-38
The Magi	Matthew 2:1-12
Return to Nazareth	Luke 2:39
Joseph, Mary & baby Jesus flee to Egypt	Matthew 2:13-15
Herod slaughters the babies in Bethlehem	Matthew 2:16-18
An angel tells Joseph to leave Egypt and return	Matthew 2:19-23
Return to Nazareth	Luke 2:40