

Second Sign: The Dragon (v.3)

VERSE 3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold (καὶ ὤφθη ἄλλο σημεῖον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἰδοὺ [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. horao see; appear (pass) + adj.nom.nt.s. allos another (same kind) + noun nom.nt.s. semeion sign + prep en + art.w/noun loc.m.s. ouranos heaven (2nd), a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems (καὶ ἰδοὺ δράκων μέγας πυρρός ἔχων κεφαλὰς ἑπτὰ καὶ κέρατα δέκα καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτοῦ ἑπτὰ διαδήματα [*conj kai + part idou behold + noun nom.m.s. drakon monster serpent or dragon; metaphor for the devil + adj.nom.m.s. megas great + adj.nom.m.s. purros red (fiery) + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.f.p. kephale head + adj.acc.f.p. hepta seven + conj kai + noun acc.nt.p. kepas horn + adj.acc.nt.p. deka ten + conj kai + prep epi + art.w/noun kephale head + pro.gen.s. autos "his" + adj.acc.nt.p. hepta seven + noun acc.nt.p. diadema diadem, crown, tiara; worn as a sign of royalty*]).*

ANALYSIS: VERSE 3

1. The appearance of a second sign or “another sign” (i.e. another of a same kind as) signifies yet another astronomical phenomenon.
2. The astronomical sign of “a great red dragon” is Draco.
3. Draco is a sea monster and not to be confused with Hydra “the fleeing serpent” (1st Decan of Scorpio the 3rd constellation) both representative of Satan in the divine zodiac.
4. The dragon is one of the most famous creatures in the history of human imagination.
5. He is a universals symbol of evil.
6. Whenever Satan is referred to under the figure of a serpent the emphasis stands for cunning and malignant subtlety.
7. The Dragon on the other hand represents the same power armed with armed might and projecting imperial forms (cf. 11:3; 12:17; 13:1,2,4)
8. The Dragon is the menacing oppressor, assailing with tooth and claw, protected by scaly armor.
9. Parallel to this image of a dragon is that of the devil as a roaring lion (cf. 1Pet. 5:8).
10. The Serpent and the Dragon are one and the same, only differing in manifestation (cf. 20:2 “He laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan...”).
11. Among all nations we find this terrible entity.
12. The ancient poets of Greece and Rome abound with it.
13. Chinese and Japanese legend superabounds with it.
14. It is in the OT, the Apocrypha, and in the NT.
15. Jews and Gentiles, Christians and heathen, civilized and savage, the Teutons, Scandinavians and Celts of Europe as well as the peoples of Asia and the remote isles of the sea, alike have it, and all connect it with the same family of ideas.
16. And everywhere the vanquishing of this monster is the work of gods, heroes, and saints.
17. Some hold that there is nothing in earthly zoology that corresponds to this creature putting him in the category of mythological.

18. But perhaps he is represented in the lower creation by the largest and most fearsome of the dinosaurs.
19. Is this what God describes to Job in chapter 41?
20. Whatever it is, it is a real creature, and is not what commentators say is a crocodile!
21. The creature in chapter 40 (Job) fits the description of the largest of the dinosaurs, portrayed to children as the lovable Barney.
22. Commentators vainly seek to identify this creature as the hippo.
23. The Dragon motif may combine features of any rare but legendary sea monster with that of a land monster.
24. Both are rarely seen suggesting Satan's invisible but malevolent presence.
25. Such sea monsters are real according to Ps. 74:13 (translated "dragons" in KJV; cp. Ps. 104:26).
26. Ps. 74:14 goes on to say "You crushed the heads of Leviathan; You gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness."
27. Isaiah refers to a time when the Lord will come out of His place and "punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, with His fierce and mighty sword; and He will kill the dragon who lives in the sea" (Isa. 27:1).
28. Another biblical title for Satan is Rahab (cf. Job 26:12; 89:10; Isa. 51:9) which, like Leviathan points to the dragon motif.
29. The dragon's fiery red color points to Satan's murderous ways (Jn. 8:44; cp. 1Jn. 3:12) as red is the color of blood.
30. Red as a symbol for blood-shed harmonizes with Satan's murderous intentions with respect to the offspring of the woman in verse 17.
31. John sees a dragon with seven heads.
32. The Babylonians feared the seven-headed hydra.
33. Typhon was the Egyptian dragon which persecuted Osiris.
34. In Canaanite tradition, it was Leviathan which was closely associated with Rahab, the female monster of chaos.
35. These creatures are pictured in the sea of chaos as Israel's enemies.
36. Pharaoh is the great monster in the rivers (Ezek. 29:3).
37. Again, establishing the identity of the dragon is not difficult as we have explicit statements as to who he is in 12:9 and 20:2.
38. This dragon this presentation is mythological as it has seven heads (like the Babylonian hydra).
39. The seven heads and ten horns motif also occurs in Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 7 and 9.
40. In Rev. 17:8 the seven heads are interpreted as being "seven mountains."
41. A mountain is used as a biblical symbol for a major world power (cf. Jer 50:6; 51:25 of USA; or Isa. 2:2-3).
42. The seven diadems on the seven heads further establishes the notion that the seven heads represent seven kingdoms.
43. These seven kingdoms can also be seven kings according to Rev. 17:10.
44. The symbolism here and in 13:1 and 17:3, 7, and 9 must be one and the same.
45. From Rev. 17:10 we learn that these heads are past, present, and future entities from John's perspective at the end of the 1st century AD.
46. Is it safe to assume that these are kingdoms (empires) intimately associated with the Woman or Israel.

47. Seven noteworthy empires stand out: Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.
48. But that only gives us six world powers and not seven.
49. The 7th is yet to come says Rev. 17:10.
50. That kingdom is the kingdom of the Beast or Antichrist.
51. It not only has a royal diadem but sports ten horns.
52. So the ten horns of the seventh head are ten nations that will form the Antichrist's power base.
53. This is first seen in Dan. 7:7 (cf. vv. 20, 24).
54. Rev. 17:7 makes it clear that from John's perspective these ten horns or ten kings were for a future time.
55. It is also clear from Revelation 17 (9ff.) that there is as woman who has sat atop a red colored beast during the tenure of the seven heads or kingdoms.

Angelic Revolt and Incarnation (v.4)

VERSE 4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth (καὶ ἡ οὐρὰ αὐτοῦ σύρει τὸ τρίτον τῶν ἀστέρων τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἔβαλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν γῆν [*conj kai + art.w/noun nom.f.s. oura tail + pro.gen.m.s. autos "his" + pres.act.ind.3s. suro drag, draw + art.w/adj.acc.nt.s. tritos third + art.w/noun gen.m.p. aster star + art.w/gen.m.s. ouranos heaven + conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. ballo throw + pro.acc.m.p. autos + prep eis + aart.w/noun acc.f.s. ge earth*]).

And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth (καὶ ὁ δράκων ἔστηκεν ἐνώπιον τῆς γυναικὸς τῆς μελλούσης τεκεῖν [*conj kai + art.w/noun nom.m.s. drakon dragon + perf.act.ind.3s. histemi stand + prep enopion before + art.w/noun gen.f.s. gune woman + art.w/pres.act.part.gen.f.s. mello be about to + aor.act.infin. tikto give birth*]), **so that when she gave birth he might devour her child** [ἵνα ὅταν τέκη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς καταφάγη [*conj hina so that + conj hotan when + aor.act.subj.3s. tikto give birth + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. teknon child + pro.gen.f.s autos her + aor.act.subj.3s. katesthio eat, devour*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 4

1. The interpretation of this part of the vision begins with the identity of "the stars of heaven."
2. Stars in Scripture can refer to heavenly bodies, angels, and saints.
3. In Dan. 8:10 "stars" refer to Jewish saints who were killed as a result of the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes.
4. Here the fraction one-third leaves the interpreter wondering who, what, and when.
5. If taken as a future action, then one must conclude that one third of tribulational saints are martyred.
6. If taken as a past action, which is clearly the thrust of the grammar, then we are at a loss to identify which saints this might apply to.
7. Certainly one third of all believers of all time falling prey to satanic murder is farfetched.

8. In the present verse the activity portrayed in line one is followed by the activity of line 2.
9. Stars can refer to angels and that is the least problematic interpretation (cf. 9:1).
10. These “stars” are angels who in the distant past fell with Satan.
11. Satan, after his fall, managed to persuade one third of all angels to buy into his propaganda.
12. The tail of the dragon suggests this persuasive propaganda that fed the ego and planted the seeds of discontent.
13. Satan’s original sin was pride (Ezek. 28:17; cp. v.12).
14. Following his fall from moral perfection, he proceeded to recruit allies from the angelic host.
15. According to Isaiah 14 under the figure of the king of prophetic Babylon Satan formulated his revolutionary credo.
16. This is seen in the five “I wills” of that chapter (Isa. 14:13-14).
17. Lucifer’s pride constituted his first fall, which was immediately followed by his second fall, namely his demotion from the honored position of being “the anointed cherub who covers” (cf. Ezek. 28:14,16).
18. It was after his second fall that Satan began to solicit the angels to revolt and join him in the long war against God.
19. Satan, based on this verse, managed to persuade one third of all the angels to join him in his quest to overthrow God.
20. At some point the sides were clearly drawn and the angelic conflict was operational.
21. Within this context God sentenced Satan and his angels to eternal fire (cf. Matt. 25:41 “Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’”).
22. That fact that that sentence was not immediately forthcoming suggests the very real possibility of an appeal.
23. This explains the subsequent creation of man and the redemptive history that followed.
24. Clearly no salvation package was provided for the fallen angels (cf. Heb. 2:16 “For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the seed of Abraham.”).
25. The pictorial present of “swept away” (*sero*) suggests an on-going process and is here interpreted as the propaganda campaign waged by Lucifer against the angelic host.
26. This verb occurs 5x in the NT with four of the five referencing physical dragging (Jn. 21:8; Acts 8:3; 14:19; 17:6) of an item or person.
27. Only here is the reference metaphorical for volitional persuasion.
28. Of course, the choice of verb suggests aggressive propaganda and not physical coercion.
29. Satan and his agents can be very persuasive, even to seducing the elect of God.
30. This is the serpent aspect as seen in the Garden of Eden.
31. Once this percentage of angels sinned and committed them to Lucifer’s destiny the scene shifts from the heavens to the earth.
32. The change of tense from the present to the aorist of “threw” looks ahead to the time when the dragon and his stars focused their energies on this earth and its newest occupant man.
33. Once the process suggested by the first verb “swept away” was realized, the second verb comes into play with the creation of Adam.
34. The aorist is cumulative, where the action is focused on the end result.
35. Once Satan got the angels to buy into his lies, they were under his power.
36. Satan generated an attack on the human race and the angels under his charge were “thrown to the earth.

37. The entire history of man is a record of demon activity to supplant truth with error and repeated attempts to negate God's purposes.
38. Sentence two of this verse provides an example of the dragon's malice in keeping with the principal character in this chapter — the Woman.
39. The OT contains a record of Satan's attempts to thwart the promise of Gen. 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He (Messiah) shall bruise you on the head (fatal), and you shall bruise Him on the heel" (crucifixion).
40. Having failed to overthrow the line of Christ, Satan was the instigator of the foiled attempt to murder the infant Jesus.
41. This is the clear meaning of the 2nd line.
42. This attempt came about when King Herod ordered the genocide of the infants in the tiny village of Bethlehem (Matt. 2).
43. Herod a ruthless, cunning, and deeply paranoid individual became the tool and occasion for the dragon to move against the infant Jesus.
44. "The Woman" refers to corporate Israel and not the Virgin Mary.
45. The words "the dragon stood before the woman" refers to Satan's continual surveillance of the holy family looking for an opportunity to bring the incarnation to a premature end.
46. He hoped to kill the infant at the earliest opportunity.
47. The visit of the Magi and their audience with Herod in Jerusalem provided the occasion to move against the infant.
48. Herod pretended to be favorable to the Magi's quest unbeknownst to them.
49. Herod requested that after they located the infant in Bethlehem that they report back to him so he could pay the family a visit and worship the king of the Jews.
50. But the ploy was foiled when they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod but to take a different route to their homeland.
51. When Herod realized he had been tricked he order the killing of all male infants in the village two years old and under in the hopes of eliminating Jesus.
52. But God foiled this by warning the holy family to take exile in Egypt until further notice.
53. Upon the family's return they were told not to take up residency in Bethlehem but to return to Galilees which was not under the jurisdiction of Herod's successor Archelaus.
54. Once again, Satan was foiled as he is no match for his creator.

Child of Destiny (v.5)

VERSE 5 And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations

with a rod of iron (καὶ ἔτεκεν υἱόν ἄρσεν, ὃς μέλλει ποιμαίνειν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐν ῥάβδῳ σιδηρᾷ [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. tikto give birth + noun acc.m.s. huios son + adj.acc.nt.p. arsen male + rel.pro.nom.m.s. hos who + pres.act.ind.3s. mello be about (to do something) + pres.act.infin. poimaino tend (a flock); shepherd; rule + adj.acc.nt.p pas all + art.w/noun acc.nt.p. ethnos nation + prep en + instr.f.s. hrabdos rod, staff + adj.instr.f.s. siderous iron*];

and her child was caught up to God and to His throne [καὶ ἠρπάσθη τὸ τέκνον αὐτῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ πρὸς τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ [*conj kai + aor.pass.ind.3s. harpazo seize, snatch; "caught up" + art.w/noun nom.nt.s. teknon child + ro.gen.f.s. autos her + prep pros to +*

art.w/noun acc.m.s. theos God + conj kai + prep pros to + art.w/noun acc.m.s. thronos throne + pro.gen.m.s. autos his]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 5

1. The snatching away of the child into heaven after His birth officially ended the dragon's attempt to destroy Him.
2. The narration continues with "And she gave birth to a son..."
3. "She" strictly refers to corporate Israel and not Jesus' mother Mary.
4. Mary was the means to the end.
5. It was the work of a entire race, not Mary alone.
6. Her child was of the male gender.
7. Her child's destiny is one "who is about to shepherd the nations with a rod of iron."
8. The words of this clause are taken from Psalm 2 verse 9.
9. God the Father directed the words of Ps. 2:7b-9 to Jesus Christ upon His first ascension into heaven immediately after "HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES" (cf. Eph. 4:8-10).
10. This took place on the very day of Jesus' resurrection (cf. Ps. 2:7; "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You (e.g. from the dead).
11. Psalm 110:1 is what God the Father said to His Son upon His final ascension into heaven forty days later: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."
12. After Jesus' ascension into the 3rd heaven late on resurrection Sunday, He immediately returned to the earth and appeared to His disciples over a forty day period (cf. Acts 1:3).
13. Upon His first appearance in heaven after His resurrection God the Father asserted the destiny of His Son with respect to the nations of the earth (Ps. 2:8-9).
14. This is a part of the divine decrees (cf. Ps. 2:7a "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD."
15. The word that "He is about to shepherd/rule" indicates true immanency.
16. Which requires that all things be prophetically ready before Christ can officially take up His inheritance or reward for His perfect obedience during the days of His flesh.
17. Overcomers (believers) who fulfill their Ph 2 will likewise participate in the administration of corporate punishment upon evildoers during the millennial phase of the kingdom (cf. Rev. 2:26-27).
18. Those who suffer the rigors of Ph2 will enjoy maximum glory under Ph3 sanctification (Rom. 8:17).
19. At His second coming Christ will "shepherd all the nations with a rod of iron."
20. An iron scepter is one that cannot be resisted when wielded by the One who is eternal God.
21. The rule of the rod of iron is seen in the perfect and just administration of civil rule over the millennial nations.
22. This is because mortal humanity will continue to possess the ISTA and will commit crimes worthy of corporal punishment.
23. Crime won't take a holiday during the millennium but assuredly criminal activity will be universally and consistently dealt with as there will be in place a fool proof system of apprehension and conviction.
24. This picture is drawn from Ps. 2 and requires the birth presented here.
25. The male child is inaccessible to the dragon because of His glorification the final stage of which is ascension to the right hand of the majesty on high.

26. This visionary view passes over the events of Jesus' life, His crucifixion, and His resurrection to focus on the final event, namely His resurrection and session.
27. The theme of verse 5 is consistent with the prophecy of Isa. 9:6-7 (cf. 7:14) and Micah 5:2-4.
28. The verb *harpazo* translated "caught up" is used of a beast catching its prey (Jn. 10:12).
29. It is also used in connection with the snatching away of Philip after ministering to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:39).
30. It is the same verb used in connection with the Rapture of the Church in 1Thess. 4:17 and of Paul when he was taken to Paradise (2Cor. 12:2,4).
31. Finally, it is used of ministering to a believer in reversionism who is in danger of loss at the Bema (Jude 23).
32. The verb carries the connotation of escape from immediate danger in certain contexts.
33. It denotes a forceful or decisive action.
34. In Jesus' case His being taken up was not to escape Satan's grasp but was a by-product of it.
35. Once the Messiah was permanently in heaven, Satan had no further occasion to destroy by either temptation or otherwise.
36. Satan is left with redirecting his animosity.