

“Is the Woman of Revelation 17 the Same Woman of Revelation 12?”

Recently, Revelation 17:6, “I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement,”¹ has been interpreted to mean that this woman of Revelation 17:6 is the same woman of Revelation 12.² Indeed, woman in the Bible represents church (Isa 54:5; 2 Cor 11:2; Gal 4:26; Eph 5:25-27). It is a “community of faith.”³ “A virtuous woman represents a pure church, a vile woman an apostate church.”⁴ According to OT biblical passages (Ezek 16; Isa 57:8; Jer 31:4-5; Hos 1-3), God’s people, following apostasy, can eventually become an adulteress.⁵ In this line of thought, “Revelation 17 indicates that this woman who was once the true church of God [Rev 12] will, during end-time events, have a very negative role. She will eventually turn from her faithfulness to oppose God and his true people.”⁶ Fred A. Wilson provides the reason for that turning, alleging that the woman failed her test and temptations in the wilderness, and became the woman of Revelation 17.⁷

The view that the two women are the same is based on various grounds. First, John was amazed with a great amazement upon seeing the woman in Revelation 17:6 because she was familiar to him, that is, the woman he saw previously in Revelation 12. The use of the terms *gunē* (woman, Rev 12:1, 4, 6, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17) and *eremos* (wilderness, Rev 12:14 and 17:3) in both chapter is advanced to further support that point. Second, the two glimpses (i.e. of the woman Revelation 12 and Revelation 17) are not the same period of time. They represent two periods of the church: one at the beginning and one at the end. As Hardy states, “the two glimpses that we see of her cannot represent the same period of time. A change has occurred. If Rev 12 shows us how the church began, Rev 17 shows us the unfortunate condition that much of it will be in when

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all scripture references are from the New King James Version.

² So Frank Hardy, “A Brief Note on Revelation 12 and Revelation 17:3-6,” 2, available at www.historicism.org/Documents/Jrnl/Rev12Rev17.pdf (accessed 10 May, 2016).

³ Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, New International Greek Text Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 628.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4 (1884), 233.

⁵ *Seventh-day Adventists Believe. . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1988), 153.

⁶ Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 2nd ed (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2009),

⁷ Fred A. Wilson, *The Woman and the Beast* (Xlibris Corporation, 2013), p. 332.

Christ comes.” In addition, and by extension, the meaning of “remnant of her [woman’s] offspring” is also brought into attention to substantiate the view.⁸

This article intends to reevaluate the claim that these two women are the same by examining the above mentioned points in the immediate and broader contexts. It posits at the outset the use of historicist interpretation of the prophecies in the book of Revelation.⁹

Description of the Two Women

Revelation 12 and 17 give an overall picture of each of the two women:

The Woman of Revelation 12

The description of the woman in Revelation 12 is found in the historical half of the book of Revelation.¹⁰ It is clear from the reading of Revelation 12 that the woman is closely followed by the dragon.

Description of the dragon:

- (1) The dragon has seven heads and ten horns (12:3). John further saw seven diadems on his heads.
- (2) The dragon is also identified as the “serpent of old,” clearly reminiscent of Genesis 3. And he is the “Devil and Satan.” (12:9).
- (3) The dragon/serpent/Devil/Satan, after losing the war in heaven was cast to the earth and came there with great wrath (12:12).

Description of the woman:

- (1) The woman is clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland (i.e. crown, *stephanos*) of twelve stars (12:1)
- (2) The woman is in labor pain (12:2).

⁸ All these grounds are advocated in Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 403-404, 522. Noteworthy is Stefanovic’s statement, “this is why God’s end-time people in Revelation are referred to not as the woman but rather as ‘the remaining ones of the woman’s offspring.’” (ibid., 403-404).

⁹ Though, as in the words of Leon Morris, “there are many historicist views and no real agreement,” (*Revelation*, rev. ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries [Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1987], 19), the book of Revelation, nonetheless, “supplies a prophetic overview of the church history from the first century until the return of Christ.” (C. Marvin Pate, *Reading Revelation: A Comparison of Four Interpretive Translations of the Apocalypse* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009], 9).

¹⁰ See C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares: The Message of Revelation* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1985), 60-61.

- (3) The woman bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron (12:5).
- (4) Being persecuted by the dragon, the woman fled to the wilderness for shelter, protection, and feeding for one thousand two hundred and sixty days or a time and times and half a time (12:6; 12:14).
- (5) The woman has “other children [i.e. the rest of her offspring], who are described as faithful Christians.”¹¹ Further definition is given for the rest of her offspring: they keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (12:17).

Specific acts of the dragon against the woman (church):

- (1) To devour her male-child at his birth (12:2, 4-5).
- (2) To persecute the woman after his definite casting out from heaven (12:13).¹² Persecution would last “one thousand two hundred and sixty days” (12:6), or “a time and times and half a time” (12:14).
- (3) Being enraged with the woman, to make war with the “rest of her offspring” (12:17).

The Woman of Revelation 17

Based on the structure of the Revelation, the woman of Revelation 17 is described in the eschatological half of the book.¹³ The final judgment of the woman, as it would be shown by one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls for the seven last plagues (Rev 16), is summarily introduced in Revelation 17:1 and wrapped up in Revelation 17:16. It is in Revelation 18:1-24 that we find the detailed description of her judgment and fall. What we see clearly in Revelation 17 is the *modus operandi* throughout history, the appearances and the activities of the woman, leading up to her condemnation and fall, as shown in Table 1.:

¹¹ Beale, 629.

¹² Biblical references show that there was a period of time when Satan had access to the heavenly court (Job 1:6; 2:2; Luke 10:18). From the cursory reading of Revelation 12, the definite casting out of Satan took place at the crucifixion of Jesus. The “blood of the Lamb” sealed his defeat (12:11-12).

¹³ Maxwell, 60-61.

<i>Modus Operandi</i>	Sitting on many waters (17:1). Waters are further interpreted as peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues (17:15)
	Sitting on the blasphemous scarlet beast which has seven heads and ten horns (17:3)
	Identified as the great city, reigning over the kings of the earth (17:18)
<i>Appearances/Attire</i>	Arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls (17:4)
	Has a golden cup full of abomination and filthiness in her hands (17:4)
	Has a name on her forehead: "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the Earth" (17:5)
	Drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs (17:6)
<i>Activities</i>	Committing fornication with kings of the earth (17:2)
	Persecuting and shedding the blood of saints and martyrs (17:6)
	Reigning over kings of the earth (17:18)

Table 1. Identification of the Woman in Revelation 17

It clear from John's account that, upon seeing the woman, he "marveled with great amazement." (17:6). While some acknowledge that John "does not state the reason for his astonishment,"¹⁴ it may equally be said that from the cursory reading, his great amazement stems from the view of the woman itself: her luxurious appearances/attire (17:4) and her drunkenness with the blood of the saints and martyrs (17:6). At this juncture, one has to deal with his use of the words *gunē* (woman) and *erēmos* (wilderness) in both chapters. That linguistic analysis, coupled with meaning of *thaumazō* (and *thauma*) as its nature and reason, likely provides the first element towards the identification of the woman in Revelation 17.

¹⁴ Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 522.

The Great Amazement

Gunē (woman) and ***erēmos*** (wilderness). To know the nature or the reason for John's amazement upon seeing the woman in Revelation 17, one should look into John's writings in his reporting of a people or a thing which he had previously seen. The construction is: people/thing + relative pronoun + *eidon* ("I saw") or *eides* ("You saw"):

Seven stars:	1:20, "the seven stars which you saw"	Referring to "seven stars" in 1:16
Beast:	13:2, "the beast which I saw"	Referring to "beast" in 13:1
	17:8; 17:18, "the beast which you saw"	Referring to "beast" in chap. 13
Ten horns	17:8; 17:18, "the ten horns which you saw"	Referring to "ten horns" in 13:1; 17:3
Waters	17:15, "the waters which you saw"	Referring to "waters" in 17:1
Woman	17:18, "the woman whom you saw"	Referring to "woman" in 17:3 (sitting on a scarlet beast)
and		17:1 (the harlot sitting on many waters)

This Johannine construction is conspicuously lacking in Revelation 17 if John were referring to the same *gunē* (woman) in Revelation 12. The same applies to *erēmos* (wilderness). In other words, John would have said/written, "the woman (or the wilderness) which I saw/you saw." Instead, John simply and clearly states, "he [angel] carried me away in spirit into a wilderness (*apēnegken me eis erēmon*). . . And I saw a woman" (*eidon gunaika*)."¹⁵ The absence of an article before the two nouns is readily noticeable. Dana and Mantey remark that "sometimes with a noun which the context proves to be definite the article is not used. This places stress upon the qualitative aspect of the noun rather than its mere identity."¹⁶ But that may not be the case here. John seems to deliberately choose to omit the article for him to be able to differentiate the two wilderness

¹⁵ All modern English versions I have surveyed translate read "And I saw a woman." As for the translation of *eis erēmon*, most versions have "into a wilderness" (ASV, BBE, CSB, DBY, ERV, LSG, MIT, NAB, NAS, NET, NIV, NJB, NRS, RSV, YLT). DRA, GNV, KJV, NKJV, NLT, TNT, WEB reads, "into the wilderness."

¹⁶ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 149.

and two women. A clear example for further support of this is his description of the second beast in Revelation 13:11, which he hears as speaking like “a dragon,” to differentiate that dragon from the previous dragon in Revelation 12 which gave authority to the beast (Rev 13:2) of Revelation 13:1-9.

When John speaks of the woman in Revelation 17 as he saw her in a wilderness, we must understand that that wilderness is not necessarily the same wilderness of Revelation 12:6. As a matter of fact, “it is unclear whether the wilderness is the location of the prostitute, or simply the vantage point from which John views her.”¹⁷ While the desert is positive in 12:6 and 14 (that was where the woman found refuge),¹⁸ the desert in 17:3 can be seen as positive, negative, or neutral. Positive if it was where John “lives in solidarity with the messianic community [cf. 12:6,14].”¹⁹ If the wilderness of the messianic community in refuge is not meant, then it must be a neutral wilderness from which John received the vision on the judgment of the harlot.²⁰ Obviously, the desert is negative if it was the location of the harlot/woman/Babylon the great, as Osborne believes.²¹

Therefore, it is unwarranted to assert that John “recognizes in her the woman that had fled into the wilderness in order to escape the persecution of the dragon during the prophetic 1,260-day period of the Middle Ages (Rev. 12:13, 14).”²² The woman in Revelation 17 is completely another woman. The desert may be where John was when he received the vision of the woman, or the location where John saw her. But it cannot be the same wilderness where the woman of Revelation 12 was sheltered and nourished during the period of persecution.

The term *thaumazō* (to marvel), and ***thauma*** (amazement). The verb *thaumazō* is used four times in the book of Revelation (13:3; 17:6; 17:7; 17:8). It may mean (1) to be astonished, disturbed, surprised, as an intransitive verb (“when I saw her [woman], I was astonished with great astonishment,” [17:6], “the

¹⁷ Ian Boxall, *The Revelation of St John*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 241. Nevertheless, Boxall points out similar experience of John, in which had the vision on the new Jerusalem from a high mountain (Rev. 21:10).

¹⁸ G. Osborne, *Revelation*, Baker Exegetical Commentary of the NT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 610. The positive use of wilderness can be found in several biblical references (Ex 19; 1 Kgs 19:4-6; Isa 40:3; Ez 34:25; Mark 1:35,45; 6:31-35)

¹⁹ W. Robert Wall, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 206.

²⁰ Eldon Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation of John*, 223; also G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St John the Divine* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966), 213. In this view, the wilderness represents a place of security and safety for John “from the lies of the dragon, the threat of the monster, and the seductions of the whore.” (Ibid.). See also Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, New London Commentary (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1977), 311.

²¹ Osborne, 610

²² Stefanovic, “*The Seven Heads of the Beast in Revelation 17*,” *Ministry* (December 2013), p. 17.

angel said to me, ‘why were you astonished?’” (17:7]), or to admire, wonder at as a transitive verb, or (2) to wonder, marvel, be amazed, as a deponent verb (“all the earth was amazed after the beast,” [13:3], “those who dwell on earth will marvel,” [17:8]).²³ In Revelation 17:6, *thaumazō* denotes confusion and perplexity. It was upon seeing the woman that John “was greatly astonished” (*ethaumasa idōn autēn thauma mega*).²⁴ G. R. Beasley-Murray has pointed out that John’s experience is “consonant with the experiences of apocalyptists.”²⁵ Daniel was greatly astonished (*megalōs de ethaumasen ho Daniēl*, Dan 4:19, LXX) upon learning the dream of Nebucadnezzar. In Daniel 7:15, he writes, “I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me.” (Dan 7:15). Such experience of confusion and perplexity was felt even common among the Greeks.²⁶ Therefore, there is no need to understand *thaumazō* to mean that John admired the woman.²⁷ Furthermore, the idea that John was about to be lured by and to succumb to the charms of the prostitute as advocated by Boxall is untenable.²⁸

Even if John does not say it explicitly, the nature and cause for John’s astonishment mixed with confusion and perplexity can be derived from the context. It stems from what John expected to see as the angel told him he would show and what he actually saw. As Osborne points out: “Here is both wonder at the incredible vision and at the same time confusion at the imagery. He had been told by the angels (17:1) that he would see Babylon’s judgment, but instead he saw her luxury, glory, and seeming triumph.”²⁹ If this is the case, then John was not astonished because this woman of Revelation 17 as familiar to him, i.e. the woman of Revelation 12 who turned into prostitute, as some argue.³⁰ John was perplexed and confused. Now, we can turn our attention to the time frame relating to the women in Revelation 12 and 17, particularly on the aspect of persecution, to see if it can provide further clue to solve the issue.

²³ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd rev. ed. (1979), s.v. “*thaumazō*”.

²⁴ The English translation is from NIV. LSG reads, “Et, en la voyant, je fus saisi d’un grand étonnement.”

²⁵ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 253.

²⁶ David E. Aune, *Revelation 17-22*, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 927, cites Lucian *Hercules* 4; Cebes *Tabula* 2.1; Callistratus *Imagines* 6.

²⁷ Beale, 862.

²⁸ Boxall, 241-244.

²⁹ Osborne, 614; also Ladd, 226-27; Mounce, 311.

³⁰ Stevanovic, *Revelation*, 403, 522; *ibid.*, “*The Seven Heads of the Beast in Revelation 17*,” 17; “*Seven Heads of Revelation 17*,” available at <http://www.thebattleofarmageddon.com/Seven%20Heads%20of%20Revelation%2017.pdf>, accessed 19 May 2016; Hardy, 2.

Time Frames of Persecution

We have pointed out that Revelation 12 is found in the historical half, and Revelation 17 in the eschatological half of the book of Revelation. However, this does not mean that there is nothing historical in Revelation 17. On the contrary, Revelation 17 introduces the judgment of the great harlot/woman whose detailed judgment is further fully described in Revelation 18.

It is undeniable that we see in Revelation 17 and 18 the end time pronouncement of the judgment (*krima*, decision, sentence, verdict), usually unfavorable, i.e. condemnation,³¹ against the woman, as part of end time event. However, the use of the present tense throughout to describe her *modus operandi* clearly indicates that she has been operating long time before her judgment. In 17:1, “[she] is sitting on many water;” in 17:3, “a woman sitting on a scarlet beast;” and in 17:18, [the woman] is reigning over the kings of the earth.” It is therefore important to see her as the persecuting power against the faithful church of God throughout its history.

Noteworthy is her sitting on a scarlet beast which has seven heads and ten horns (17:3). The identity of these heads as the current debate among historicist scholars demonstrates,³² is immaterial for the purpose of our study. However, the OT time frame as to the beginning of the persecution of God’s church cannot be denied. As Beale rightly points out: “the woman’s birth pangs represent the persecution of the covenant community and the messianic line during the OT times and the intertestamental period leading up to Christ’s birth.”³³ Closely associated with the beast which she is riding, the woman is known for her persecution. “But though the beast and the harlot are shown as separate entities, they are virtually identical in character [i.e. persecuting power].”³⁴ She is drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (17:6).

As a persecuting power, the woman has something to do with the persecution of the church throughout its history, of which the church in Revelation 12 is not spared. The time frame of the woman in Revelation 12 is

³¹ As Friedrich Bushel, “*Krima*,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), 3:942. *Krima* carries this meaning in several NT texts (John 9:39; Acts 24:25; Rom 3:8; 11:3; 2 Pet 2:3).

³² Two interpretations for the 7-8 heads have been advanced: (1) Babylon-Medo/Persia-Greece-Rome-Papal Rome-Wounded Papacy-Revived Papacy-8th Beast which is the entire beast in its self-actualization (Maxwell, 473- 475; Jacques Doukhan, *Secrets of Revelation* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002], 163); (2) Egypt-Assyria-Babylon-Medo/Persia-Greece-Rome-Papal Rome- Revived Papacy (see Stefanovic, *Revelation*, 521-525).

³³ Beale, 629.

³⁴ Maxwell, 477.

pointedly clear with the labor pain and birth of the male child (i.e. Jesus Christ), then markedly followed by the acts of the persecuting woman against her, and finally and particularly against the remnant of her offspring.

Another important element to take into consideration when dealing with the time frame is John's expression "[methuoustan] *ek tou haimatos tōn hagion kai ek tou haimatos tōn martyron Iēsou* ([drunk] with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." (17:6). The expression has to do with the persecution of the woman, particularly the time frame of that persecution. Some have seen in the conjunction *kai* as epexegetical to say that the saints and the martyrs of Jesus are the same (the saints, that is, the martyrs of Jesus.).³⁵ This implies that John has in mind only the persecution from the NT time onward. But this view fails to take into account the repetition *ek tou haimatos* in the second part. John is clearly mentioning two different groups.³⁶ In the words of Beasley-Murray, "the double expression includes the saints of the Old covenant, whose blood was shed in loyalty to the eternal God, and the witnesses to Jesus who died in earlier persecution and in the last great trial."³⁷ *Kai* is not simply connecting two words; it is connecting two expressions: "with the blood of the saints," and "with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." In keeping with this, C. G. Woide's version of *Codex Alexandrinus* of Revelation 17:6 reads, *methuoustan ek tou haimatos tōn hagion, kai ek tou haimatos tōn martyron Iēsou*.³⁸ Were John to refer to the two as the same, he would say it differently.³⁹ From this analysis, God's saints in the OT have been equally persecuted and are in the picture in Revelation 17. That standpoint is corroborated by Jesus's reference in Luke 11:51, "from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple." The shedding of Abel's blood is reported in the first book of the Hebrew Bible (Gen 4:8-10), the shedding of Zechariah's blood in the last book (2 Chron 24:20-22). Thus, Jesus "names Abel and Zechariah because,

³⁵ So Aune, 937; Boxall, 243; Osborne, 613; Mounce, 312.

³⁶ Several and similar OT (LXX) references attest this conclusion that two different groups of people or things are meant when the construction (*ek + Gen + noun + kai + ek + Gen + noun*) is used. For instances, Genesis 47:25, *kai ēξέλιπεν πᾶν τὸ ἀργύριον ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἐκ γῆς Χανααν* ("so the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan"), Egypt being clearly different from Canaan; 1 Samuel 17:37, *κύριος ὃς ἐξέλατό με ἐκ χειρὸς τοῦ λέοντος καὶ ἐκ χειρὸς τῆς ἄρκου* ("The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear"), the lion being clearly different from the bear.

³⁷ Beasley-Murray, 253.

³⁸ C. G. Woide, *Codex Alexandrinus*. London: William & Norgate, 1860. See also the translation of Revelation 17:6 in *Codex Sinaiticus: The New Testament in English Translated from the Sinaitic Manuscript*, ed. Jackson Snyder and Roy Shurtleff Miller (Tallahassee, FL: ATC Web Publishing, 2004).

³⁹ In that case, the reading would be: *[methuoustan] ek tou haimatos tōn hagion kai martyron Iēsou* ("drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus"). Cf. the so-called Granville Sharp rule as mentioned by Daniel B. Wallace, *The Basics of New Testament Syntax: An Intermediate Greek Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 120-121.

according to the order of books in Hebrew Bibles, they represent the first and the last recorded martyrs.”⁴⁰

When the time frames of the two women, particularly on the element that deal with persecution, are taken into consideration, one is led to conclude that the persecuting woman of Revelation 17 and the faithful woman of Revelation 12 exist in parallels. In Revelation 17, the persecution of the saints of the OT and the martyrs of the NT onward is in view. Since Revelation 12 covers the time from Jesus’ first coming onward, the persecution Revelation 12 refers to is the persecution against God’s faithful people in the NT time and beyond.

Remnant of Her [Woman’s] Offspring (Rev 12:17)

Any serious study that deals with the woman in Revelation 17 must bear in mind the whole picture of Revelation 12, 13, and 17, the main figures being the prostitute, the beast, and the dragon. Joseph L. Mangina rightly points it out that the prostitute is the “accomplice” of the dragon and the beast is the “dragon’s offspring.”⁴¹ The correct understanding of the phrase “remnant of her offspring” will provide further evidence for our study.

Revelation 12 makes it clear that there is at least two groups of people as offspring of the woman: the male-child (12:2, 4-5) and the rest of her offspring (12:17). But careful reading shows that three are meant: the male-child, the church, and the remnant. As Mueller has also noted: “since after His ascension the dragon cannot attack Jesus any longer, he turns specifically against God’s church and the remnant of her offspring. Apparently, the dragon carries out this battle against the remnant through the beast out of the sea (13a) and the beast out of the earth (13b).”⁴² Mueller further clarifies:

Rev 12 also contains these three periods of world history. In the first stage, Satan fights God’s church by turning against Jesus (12:1-5). As soon as Jesus is out of his reach, he focuses on the church itself for 1260 days. After that Satan turns his attention to the remnant of her offspring.

The descendant of the women at the beginning of Rev. 12 finds a certain parallel in the descendants of the woman at the end of Rev 12.15 The dragon opposes all of them. The battle against the remnant in 12:17 is

⁴⁰ “Zacharias,” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980), 5:492.

⁴¹ Joseph L. Mangina, *Revelation*, Brazos Theological Commentary (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010), 195.

⁴² Ekkehardt Mueller, “The End Time Remnant in Revelation,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 11/1-2 (2000), 191.

elaborated on in Rev 13, where the dragon uses his agents to fight the faithful remnant.⁴³

We should also take into consideration the fact that the woman in Revelation 17 is interchangeable with, and is explicitly called Babylon (17:4; 17:5; cf. 18:2). Being called “mother of harlots,” (Rev 17:5), her offspring⁴⁴ is in contrast with the offspring of the woman in Revelation 12:17.

From the foregoing analysis, we may safely say that the woman of Revelation 12 is not the same as that of Revelation 17. They exist in parallel. They both have their respective offspring. They are to be understood in contrast.⁴⁵ Doukhan states, “clearly the woman of chapter 17 is the antithesis of the woman of chapter 12.”⁴⁶ More precisely, the pure woman of Revelation 12 is being persecuted, for a 1260 year period of time, sheltered, protected and nourished in the wilderness that was prepared for her. Later on, the faithful remnant of her offspring “who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ,” becomes a particular target of persecution. The woman of Revelation is the persecuting power, using as her instruments of persecution the heads of the beast, on which she has been riding. She is brought to view and finally exposed as being drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, at the moment when the verdict of her judgment was pronounced.

Conclusion

R. C. H. Lenski’s had asked “why confuse this woman [of Revelation 17] with the one mentioned in 12:1?”⁴⁷ This study has found these two women are not the same.⁴⁸

⁴³ Ibid. 196.

⁴⁴ White, *Spirit of Prophecy* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1884), 4:233, states, “Babylon the harlot is the mother of daughters who follow her example of corruption.”

⁴⁵ Leon Morris, *Revelation*, 2nd ed, Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 195.

⁴⁶ Doukhan, 161.

⁴⁷ R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St John’s Revelation* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), 497.

⁴⁸ Mangina, 195

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The working of Satan started from heaven in the beginning and he will continue through his instrument, the great harlot or the unfaithful woman until the end of the ages. Knowing that Lucifer himself was part of God's community in heaven before his rebellion, it can be said that, in the same manner, one that was part of God's people may move away from his/her own people and join those who are unfaithful to finally end up to join those who are persecuting God's faithful people. But in spite of the apostasy of some of its members, the woman of Revelation 12 remains the true and pure church of God. In the time of the end, those who are still in Babylon are called to come out from Babylon and join God's people (Rev 14:8-11; 18:4).