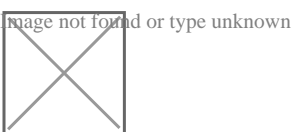


# Introduction to Chapter 12

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### A Division of Thought

Chapter 12 is a dividing point in the book of Revelation. Chapters 1-3 prophetically describe the entire church age. Chapters 4-11 start and continue from the Rapture in the middle of the 7 years of tribulation. Chapter 11 concludes with the Seventh Trumpet and the climax of Christ's return to the earth at the end of the 7 years of tribulation. Chapter 12 resets back to the church age (the time before both the Rapture and the Translation) for further detail and prophetic truth.



Though Chapters 1-11 have progressed linearly, to this point, there are gaps in 'explanation'. For example, Chapter 3 ended with Christ's appraisal of the Church being anything but complementary. Yet, chapter 4 graciously places the Church in the presence of God enjoying a great honor. Something has happened between the end of chapter 3 and the beginning of chapter 4 where the church is Raptured. Further explanation of this is given in the proceeding chapters of our study beginning with Chapter 12. Further details are given in Chapters 12-22 regarding the First 3-1/2 Years of Tribulation, concerning the wrath of God during the Second 3-1/2 Years of Tribulation and the Divine plan following that season of judgment.

### A Continuation of Prophecy

It is important to remember that this is a book of prophecy and not history. Seven times Revelation refers to itself as words of prophecy.(Revelation 1:3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7; 22:10; 22:18; 22:19)

A prophetic warning before judgment is an absolutely necessary part of how God does business. As a matter of Divine policy, before God would send judgment as contained in the book of Revelation, God would first give warning through His prophets. (Compare Daniel 12:4 with Revelation 22:10, I Corinthians 2:10, and Revelation 2:17.)

Amos 3:7 — Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

## The Importance of This Revelation

### It was a sign.

“appeared a great wonder” “Semeion” Miracle -Sign -Token -Wonder John 2:11; 4:45; 20:30; I Cor. 12:12; Matt.26:48; Luke 2:12; Rom.4:11; II Cor. 12:12; (II Thess.3:17 Token or Sign).

John uses the word 'semeion' (a sign) here for the first time in the Revelation. The intention of a symbol is to communicate meaning beyond the symbol itself. A sign is a picture or symbol of something else. It is that 'something else' which is the true subject of contemplation.

When interpreting Revelation it is necessary to understand that there is both literal and figurative language. Knowing when the writer uses which is key to understanding this book. When the Scripture is absent from a figurative expression or a figurative setting we should not try to make it figurative, but we should take it literal. Here John says,” And there appeared a great wonder in Heaven.” Something very mysterious is happening in the heavens. By John’s statement we know the scenes in Revelation 12 must be taken symbolically or figuratively and not literally.

## It was an important sign.

‘Megas’ (great) means extraordinary and important. Not only is this a sign, but this is “A great sign”. This is a great, important, extraordinary, and remarkable event that needs to be studiously considered.

How and where this sign appears should alone tell us that it is very important and should therefore arrest our attention:

## It was Seen in the Spirit.

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day.” John was transported through time and space.

## It was Seen in Heaven.

“A great wonder in heaven.” That is, it was revealed to him in the heavenly realm.

The meaning of this wonder is apart from the natural world. It is something of a heavenly order. It’s not a natural thing; it’s not in the natural order. It’s not of the earthly, but of the heavenly.

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