

# A War in a Manger

## The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-14

- Bethlehem was the traditional ancestral home for Joseph who was a descendant of David. *Jn 7:42, Mic 5:2*
- The Birth of Jesus took place in a stable and Mary herself wrapped Him indicating she was probably not attended by a midwife.
- Shepherds were a despised class because their work prevented them from keeping the ceremonial law.
- The angel began by reassuring the frightened men and went on to use strong terms for the great joy and the Good News he was heralding. *Lk 1:13, 30*
- The peace of the Messiah is not for everyone, but only for those whom God has chosen, his people. *Rom 5:1, Eph 2:14, 17*

## The Woman, Dragon and Male Child

Revelation 12:1-6

- The imagery of the woman calls to mind Joseph's dream, (*Gen 37:9-10*), and the picture of Jerusalem bringing forth the Messiah and his remnant. *Isa 54:1-4, 66:7-13, Mic 5:3*
- The red dragon is identified as Satan, the devil in verse 9. Satan has constantly opposed the plans of God and has been repeatedly defeated by the great acts of God's saving power. *Gen 3:1,15, Ps 74:13-14, Isa 27:1, Lk 11:14-23, Jn 12:31, Col 2:15*
- A son, in fulfillment of *Mtchah 5:3-5*, Christ is born, and his triumphant rule of the nations is certain to be established. *Ps 2:9*
- The child's mother fled into the wilderness, a setting in which God's people are utterly dependent on him but are protected from the dragon's rage. There, she was nourished by God's provision, as were Israel (*Ex. 16:13-18*) and Elijah (*1 Ki 17:6, 19:5-8*)
- 1,260 days (or "a time, and times, and half a time," *Rev. 12:14; cf. 11:2-3*) began with Christ's ascension and will end when God withdraws his restraint on the dragon's power to deceive the nations and gather them against the church (*20:7-10*).

## War in Heaven

Revelation 12:7-17

- The victory of Michael and the holy angels over the dragon and its coconspirators symbolize the triumphant power of Jesus' cross. *Col 2:15*
- Two wings of the great eagle. A metaphor of the exodus (see *Ex. 19:4*) becomes an image of God's care for his church, exposed in the wilderness yet guarded and nourished in its pilgrimage.
- A time, and times, and half a time. This half-sabbatical period, derived from *Daniel 7:25*, signifies the brevity of the saints' suffering and of their persecutors' power.
- Water like a river. The serpent tries to destroy the people of God by lies and false teaching from its mouth, as it had deceived Eve (*Gen. 3:13*).
- Having failed to destroy the Messiah (*cf. 12:4-5*) and his mother the frustrated dragon makes war on the rest of her offspring.