

Dr. Martin's Unsolved Wonder

Commentary for April 1 — Revelation 12:3, "Another Wonder" in the Heavens

A key passage to the time of Christ's birth is Revelation 12:1–2. As discussed in Dr. Martin's book [*The Star that Astonished the World*](#) (Portland: ASK Publications, 1996).

"And there appeared a great wonder [sign, Greek: *semeion*] in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

Combined with other biblical and historical evidence, Dr. Martin identified this verse as an astronomical indicator pinpointing a short period of time on September 11, 3 BC. during which all conditions of the birth of Jesus took place. The word "wonder" in the King James Version is translated "**sign**" 50 times, "**miracle**" 23 times, "**wonder**" 3 times and "**token**" 1 time.

The first occurrence of the Greek word, translated "sign" in the KJV is as follows,

"Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, 'Master, we would see a sign [*semeion*] from thee.' But he answered and said unto them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seek after a sign [*semeion*]; and there shall no sign [*semeion*] be given to it, but the sign [*semeion*] of the prophet Jonas.'"

• **Matthew 12:38–39**

This repetition is interesting. Jesus' reply uses the word 3 times within 11 Greek words. This is done for emphasis, meaning *"pay close attention, I'm repeating for a reason."*

Likewise, Revelation chapter 12 repeats the word "**sign**" in the verse 3,

"And there appeared another [*allo*] wonder [sign, Greek, *semeion*] in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

• **Revelation 12:3–4**

Both occurrences of the same word [*semeion*] in Revelation 12:1 and 12:3 are nouns, with exactly the same form (nominative neuter singular).

Note the interesting word "another" [*allo* in Greek] in Revelation 12:3 which is commonly used and known as meaning "another of the same kind." (There are other Greek words that denote "**another,**" but another of a different kind.) The "**wonder**" in Revelation 12:3 is the same kind as the "**wonder**" in Revelation 12:1. That means that the wonder in verse 3 is ALSO a visible astronomical occurrence. However, Dr. Martin never identified that celestial formation that indicated when, where (or the pattern in the heavens, of the second sign) in

verse 3, other than the information in the text. I asked Dr. Martin (bugged him about it actually) at least 4 times over a ten-year period. He said he had not yet developed more information about that **"wonder"** in Revelation 12:3.

Nothing in the **"wonder"** of verse 3 changes the meaning of the **"wonder"** in verse 1, but the meaning of the second **"wonder"** remains a mystery to this day. The views of other commentators are not useful because almost all refuse to acknowledge that Revelation 12:1 is an astronomical indicator. Therefore, their understanding of Revelation 12:3 would be faulty. They all say it is a metaphor, without explaining the imagery.

There is another interesting problem with Revelation 12:3–4. It has to do with time. It seems apparent that the time would be close to the birth of Jesus, perhaps following Revelation 12:1–2 or soon after. Another way of looking at this is that verses 3–4 seem to be "inserted" within a continuous narrative of verses 1–2 and 5–6.

Also note in verse 4 it is the dragon who casts the stars to earth, not God. That is interesting. This is because occasionally "messengers" (angels) are identified with "stars." Whether that is the case here is not known, but it is likely.

Further in Revelation chapter 12 to verse 7, the scene shifts to a war in heaven. The war is fought **[1]** after the stars of heaven are cast down to the earth (verse 4), and **[2]** after the birth of the child and **[3]** after the escape from the Dragon. How long after, we do not know, but Dr. Martin believed the fulfillment of this war in heaven is yet future to us.

Over the years Dr. Martin continued to seek a solution to the "other sign" of Revelation 12:3. I am still seeking a solution. This no way diminishes his unique discovery and understanding of the birth of Jesus. The word "another" occurs again in Revelation 15:1:

"And I saw another [allo] sign [semeion] in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God."

Once again, this is "another sign" of the same kind. Does it refer back to Revelation 12:1, 3, or to the last occurrence of ["miracles", *semeion*] in Revelation 13:14? It seems that the last plagues of the wrath God are all one sign that will be visible in the heavens for all to see.

There is still more study to be done and more discoveries to be made. Perhaps someone soon will solve these biblical and historical problems of the "other sign" in Revelation 12:3.

Note the usages of the same Greek word elsewhere in Revelation: Revelation 13:13 (translated **"wonder"**), 13:14 (**"miracles"**), 15:1 (**"sign"**), 16:14 (**"miracles"**), 19:20 (**"miracles"**). For more background, see these other articles on the ASK website,

["Signs of the Times in the First Century"](#)

["How to Interpret Biblical Signs"](#)

["Signs and Wonders"](#)

["How to Fully Escape the Great Tribulation"](#)

["How to Identify False Prophets"](#)

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