

The Book Of Revelation Study 62

Revelation 12:13-17 (NKJV)

¹³ Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.

¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

¹⁵ So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

WAR ON EARTH

One of the darkest stains on the history of mankind has been the persistent specter of anti-Semitism.

Over the centuries the Jews have faced more hatred and persecution than any other people.

Much of that suffering was chastisement from God to turn the nation away from their sin and unbelief and back to Him.

God repeatedly warned Israel of the consequences of disobedience; *Deuteronomy 28:14-68 (NKJV)* and He punished them when they failed to obey

2 Kings 17:7-23 (NKJV)

⁷ For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods,
⁸ and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the Lord had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

⁹ Also the children of Israel secretly did against the Lord their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city.

¹⁰ They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree.

¹¹ There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the Lord had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger,

¹² for they served idols, of which the Lord had said to them, "You shall not do this thing."

¹³ Yet the Lord testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets."

¹⁴ Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the Lord their God.

¹⁵ And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the Lord had charged them that they should not do like them.

¹⁶ So they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

¹⁷ And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.

¹⁸ Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but

the tribe of Judah alone.

¹⁹ *Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.*

²⁰ *And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight.*

²¹ *For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the Lord, and made them commit a great sin.*

²² *For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them,*

²³ *until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.*

Within the paradigm of God's sovereign purpose for His people, Israel also has suffered constantly and severely at the hands of Satan, acting as God's instrument.

Unlike God, however, Satan's purpose in causing the Jewish people to suffer is not remedial, but destructive, He seeks to bring them not to repentance and salvation, but to death and destruction.

Israel faced constant threats from her neighbors during the period of the judges and of the kings.

Later, first the northern kingdom of Israel (722B.C.) and then the southern kingdom of Judah (586 B.C.) were conquered by their enemies.

As a result, the Jewish people lost their independence and became subject to foreign powers, including Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.

In post biblical times the story has, tragically, been much the same.

The history of the Jewish people for the last two thousand years is a sad litany of prejudice, persecution, and pogroms.

The first wide spread persecution of the Jewish people in Europe took place during the First Crusade (1095-99). As they made their way across Europe toward Palestine, mobs of unruly crusaders destroyed Jewish homes and villages and massacred their inhabitants.

In 1099, when they captured Jerusalem, the crusaders herded Jerusalem's Jewish population into a synagogue and set it on fire.

Most of the Jews perished, and the survivors were sold into slavery.

King Edward 1, banished all Jews from England in 1290, thus giving England the dubious honor of being the first country to expel its Jewish population.

They would not be permitted to return until the time of Oliver Cromwell, nearly three and a half centuries later.

France followed suit in 1306, Spain in 1492, ironically, the year of Columbus's voyage of discovery to the New World.

Throughout the middle ages, the Jews were blamed for various natural disasters, most notably the Black Death (1348-50) and so they were savagely persecuted.

The nineteenth century saw an outbreak of anti-Semitism in Russia, where Jews were blamed for the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881.

In the ensuing pogroms of the next four decades, tens of thousands of Jews were killed and hundreds of thousands of others driven from their home.

Nearly 3 million more were killed during Stalin's reign, part of the tens of millions of people massacred by that notorious dictator.

1894 saw the scandalous Dreyfus affair in France. In which a Jewish army official, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, was falsely convicted of treason. Only after twelve years of public turmoil over the case was Dreyfus exonerated.

But the darkest hour in the long history of anti-Semitism was yet to come.

In the early 1930s the Nazi party came to power in Germany and their insane racial theories became public policy.

Unlike others who had persecuted the Jewish people, the Nazis and their maniacal leader, Adolf Hitler, did not merely seek to persecute the Jews, but to eliminate them.

In the Holocaust that ensued when the Nazis sought to implement their "final solution" to the Jewish problem," 6 million Jews, more than half the Jewish population of Europe were slaughtered.

But despite millennia of savage persecution, the Jewish people still survive.

John Phillips wrote:

Significantly, the turning point came in Moses' life when he saw, in the desert, that mysterious burning bush, which flamed and blazed away but, for all the crackling of the fire, was not consumed. That bush clearly symbolized Israel, which cannot be consumed despite the ceaseless hatred of her foes, because God is in her midst. Israel cannot be assimilated into the nations, nor can she be exterminated by the nations. She is a burning bush in the wilderness. (Exploring Revelation, rev. ed. [Chicago: Moody, 1987; reprint Neptune, J.J.: Loizeaux, 1991], 156)

It is the fervent hope of the Jewish people that the horrors of the Holocaust will never again be repeated. Tragically, however, they will.

The Bible warns that a time of suffering lies ahead for Israel that will be worse than anything the nation has endured in the past.

Jeremiah called that time, "*the time of Jacob's distress*" *Jer 30:7*.

Jesus described it:

Matthew 24:21 (NKJV)

²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The Tribulation will be worst of times for Israel for two reasons.

During that seven-year period God will pour out His final fury on the unrepentant and unbelieving world (including the unrepentant rebels of Israel).

At the same time, Satan will make his last, desperate attempt to prevent the promised reign of the Lord Jesus Christ on Israel's throne and thus negate the salvation and kingdom promised to Israel. He will savagely assault the Jewish people, seeking to destroy both those Jews who have already come to faith in Christ, and those who still might.

The devil will also do everything in his power to hinder the ministries of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists (7:4) and the two witnesses (11:3-14).

But Satan's efforts will not succeed. His worst fears will be realized when the Jews experience the fulfilling of the prophecy in Zech

Zechariah 12:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ *"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

The believing remnant of Israel will be saved;

Romans 11:25-29 (NKJV)

²⁵ *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

²⁶ *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

²⁷ *For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."*

²⁸ *Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.*

²⁹ *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.*

And their promised kingdom will be established;

Hosea 2:14-23 (NKJV)

¹⁴ *"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, Will bring her into the wilderness, And speak comfort to her.*

¹⁵ *I will give her her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.*

¹⁶ *"And it shall be, in that day," Says the Lord, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' And no longer call Me 'My Master,'*

¹⁷ *For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, And they shall be remembered by their name no more.*

¹⁸ *In that day I will make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, With the birds of the air, And with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, To make them lie down safely.*

¹⁹ *"I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me In righteousness and justice, In lovingkindness and mercy;*

²⁰ *I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, And you shall know the Lord.*

²¹ *"It shall come to pass in that day That I will answer," says the Lord; "I will answer the heavens, And they shall answer the earth.*

²² *The earth shall answer With grain, With new wine, And with oil; They shall answer Jezreel.*

²³ *Then I will sow her for Myself in the earth, And I will have mercy on her who had not obtained mercy; Then I will say to those who were not My people, 'You are My people!' And they shall say, 'You are my God!'*

The Prophet Daniel foresaw this tragic and triumphant time for Israel:

Daniel 12:1-11 (NKJV)

¹ *"At that time Michael shall stand up, The great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; And there shall be a time of trouble, Such as never was since there was a nation, Even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, Every one who is found written in the book.*

² *And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame and everlasting contempt.*

³ *Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever.*

⁴ *"But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."*

⁵ *Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank.*

⁶ *And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?"*

⁷ *Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.*

⁸ *Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?"*

⁹ *And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.*

¹⁰ *Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.*

¹¹ *And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.*

Daniel, like Jeremiah and Jesus, saw essentially the same scenario that John reveals in Revelation 12:

A future time of unparalleled distress, persecution, and slaughter for Israel.

Two thirds of the Jews alive at that time will be killed as God uses Satan to purge the rebels from the nation.

Zechariah 13:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ *And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the Lord, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it:*

⁹ *I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The Lord is my God.' "*

Ezekiel 20:38 (NKJV)

³⁸ *I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.*

But the elect, believing remnant will enter the Messiah's kingdom along with those resurrected Old Testament saints who at the time will "*awake to everlasting life*" (*Dan 12:2*)

Satan's onslaught against the Jews during the Tribulation will begin with the rise to power of Antichrist.

During the first three and one half years of the tribulation, Satan will work to extend Antichrist's power.

Once he becomes the ruler of the world, Satan will make use of him for his evil purposes. Thus, Antichrist will pose as the protector of the Jews during the first half of the Tribulation.

Note the covenant of *Dan 9:27*

Daniel 9:27 (NKJV)

²⁷ *Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."*

This covenant is a protection covenant or protection pact, but Antichrist will break the pact mid way through the Tribulation period

Then Antichrist becomes Israel's persecutor for the last half of the Tribulation.

He will reveal his true nature when he breaks the covenant and sets up the abomination of desolation spoken of in Daniel.

Daniel 11:31 (NKJV)

³¹ And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.

Daniel 12:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Matthew 24:15-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 (NKJV)

³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

At that time, Antichrist's persecution of God's people which has been going on throughout the first half of the Tribulation will focus on Israel and intensify

We will now look at the passage more closely and take a look at the three attacks that Satan's forces will mount against Israel during the Tribulation.

We will talk about attack number one in our next study