

The Book Of Revelation

Study 63

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.*

This passage describes three attacks that Satan's forces will mount against Israel during the Tribulation.

Last study we looked into the Old Testament and saw that 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 this time will be killed as God uses Satan to purge the rebels from the nation.

In our last study we looked at the response from Heaven concerning the activities that are going on, on the earth, and we see singing and great joy because the Lord is beginning His process of taking over the earth and reigning on the throne of David.

Here we will begin with the first attack

ATTACK ONE

Revelation 12:13-14 (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.*

Here the reason is given for Israel's flight, which was first mentioned in *12:6* Following his defeat by Michael and the holy angels, **the dragon (Satan) was thrown down to the earth.**

Frustrated and enraged by his ejection from heaven and desperate, "**knowing that he has only a short time**" (*12:12*) left to oppose God's plans before he is incarcerated in the abyss (*20:1-3*), the devil furiously **persecuted the woman** (Israel) (*12:1*) **who gave birth** (*12:2*) **to the male child** (Christ, *12:5*).

The Greek word translated **persecuted**, (dioko) means "to pursue," "to chase," or "to hunt."

It is used in the New Testament of pursuit with hostile intents,

Matthew 23:34 (NKJV)

³⁴ *Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,*

Acts 26:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ *And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.*

And thus, by implication, can mean “to persecute.”

Here it describes Satan’s hostile pursuit and persecution of the Jews as they flee into the wilderness

Now the flight of the Jews from Satan’s forces should come as no surprise to anyone familiar with our Lord’s Olivet discourse.

In that sermon on the end times, Jesus warned the Jewish people of the desperate danger they will face:

Matthew 24:15-22 (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.*

¹⁷ *Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.*

¹⁸ *And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.*

¹⁹ *But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!*

²⁰ *And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.*

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.*

²² *And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.*

The only appropriate response to the imminent danger will be immediate flight; There will be no time even to return home to gather belongings, Pregnant women and those nursing infants will be especially vulnerable, since it will be difficult for them to flee quickly.

So severe will the peril be that God will intervene and *“for the sake of the elect [both Jews and Gentiles] those days will be cut short” (Matt 24:22)*

Were it not for that intervention, even the elect would perish.

Israel’s situation when the storm of Antichrist’s persecution breaks upon them during the Tribulation will be terrifying and tragic.

The Jews will be in desperate need of any assistance they can get and, in God’s providence, there will be some people who will help them:

Matthew 25:31-40 (NKJV)

³¹ *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.*

³² *All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.*

³³ *And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*

³⁴ *Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

³⁵ *for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;*

³⁶ *I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'*

³⁷ *Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?*

³⁸ *When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?*

³⁹ *Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'*

⁴⁰ *And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

In the Jews' time of peril and flight they will receive help from individual Gentiles. Those Gentiles will demonstrate the genuineness of their faith in Christ by their willingness to help the persecuted Jews even at the risk of their own lives.

Not only will God providentially use believing Gentiles to aid the Jewish people, but He will also intervene directly on their behalf. John saw in his vision that:

Revelation 12:14 (NKJV)

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.*

This is figurative language that symbolically depicts Israel's escape from Satan's assault.

The interesting and striking imagery of **the two wings of the great eagle** is taken from Exodus;

Exodus 19:4 (NKJV)

⁴ *'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.*

God will bring Israel to safety, just as He delivered the nation from bondage in Egypt.

Wings in Scripture symbolize strength;

Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

³¹ *But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

Also it symbolizes speed;

2 Samuel 22:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ *He rode upon a cherub, and flew; And He was seen upon the wings of the wind.*

Psalms 18:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ *And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind.*

Psalms 104:3 (NKJV)

³ *He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, Who makes the clouds His chariot, Who walks on the wings of the wind,*

Most commonly however, **wings** speak of protection.

Deuteronomy 32:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ *For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance.*

¹⁰ *"He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.*

¹¹ *As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings,*

The Psalms repeatedly use the imagery of wings to describe God's protection of His people;

Psalms 17:8 (NKJV)

⁸ *Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,*

Psalms 36:7 (NKJV)

⁷ *How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.*

Psalms 57:1 (NKJV)

¹ *To the Chief Musician. Set to 'Do Not Destroy.' A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into the cave. Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by.*

Etc.

Eagle translates *aetos*, which can also refer to the griffon, or vulture (*Matt 24:28; Luke 17:37*)

These large birds with enormous wing spans serve as a fitting symbol for God's protection and sheltering of Israel.

This is not of course, a reference to an actual **eagle** with literal **wings**; rather, it is picturesque language depicting God's miraculous assistance of **the woman, so that she could fly swiftly into the wilderness to her place** of shelter and safety.

The naming of the place that the Jews will go is not found in scripture, the description is somewhat vague, many believe it will be city of Petra, a place which we have had a chance to look at with the study we viewed.

Jesus said they would flee to the mountains, or a mountainous region east of Jerusalem.

Daniel 11:41 (NKJV)

⁴¹ *He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.*

Now note that these are not Jewish people or area's that have escaped the wrath of Anti-Christ. They are predominantly Arab.

Petra was built by Esau's family or tribe which was a dwelling place that God used him to build for his lifestyle and for future use as prophecy reveals. Many see this then become a refuge for Israel.

Now while they re in their hiding place, Israel will be given provision, safety and refuge supernaturally.

Led by God, cut off from the world system, and unable to in any case buy and sell;

Revelation 13:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ *no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.*

The Jews will need outside help to survive.

God will supernaturally supply them with food, just as He did by providing their ancestors with manna and quail in the wilderness

Exodus 16:12 (NKJV)

¹² *"I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God.' "*

Also when he supplied food for Elijah at the brook Cherith;

1 Kings 17:1-6 (NKJV)

¹ *And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word."*

² *Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying,*

³ *"Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.*

⁴ *And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."*

⁵ *So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.*

⁶ *The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.*

Certainly it is not incredible that in a time of devastating miraculous judgments, God will miraculously provide provisions for His people.

The duration of Israel's hiding and God's provision is defined as a **time and times and half a time**.

That phrase, drawn from *Daniel 7:25* and *12:7*, refers to the second half of the tribulation (the three and a half year period Jesus called the Great Tribulation in (*Matt 24:21*))

It is the same period defined in *12:6* as *"one thousand two hundred and sixty days"*

Revelation 12:6 (NKJV)

⁶ *Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*

Also in;

Revelation 11:3 (NKJV)

³ *And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."*

Also as the forty two months;

Revelation 11:2 (NKJV)

² *But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months.*

This period of time being initiated by the setting up of the abomination of desolation, will mark the visibly, overtly, evil career of Anti-Christ.

During that time God will protect Israel **from the presence of the serpent**.

Although Satan may know where the Jews are hiding, he will be unable to get at them because of divine protection.

Frustrated by this defeat of his first assault on the Jewish people, the devil will launch a second attack.

ATTACK TWO

Revelation 12:15-16 (NKJV)

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.*

Thwarted in his initial attempt to massacre the Jewish people, and unable to directly assault them in their hiding place, Satan will resort to long range tactics. Since the **serpent** is not an actual snake but a symbolic representation of Satan, the **water** he spews **like a river out of his mouth** is likely symbolic as well.

The imagery once again derives from the Old Testament, where floods symbolize trouble in general and an invading and a destroying army;

Jeremiah 46:8 (NKJV)

⁸ *Egypt rises up like a flood, And its waters move like the rivers; And he says, 'I will go up and cover the earth, I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.'*

Jeremiah 47:2 (NKJV)

² *Thus says the Lord: "Behold, waters rise out of the north, And shall be an overflowing flood; They shall overflow the land and all that is in it, The city and those who dwell within; Then the men shall cry, And all the inhabitants of the land shall wail.*

Satan's attacking force will sweep toward the Jews' hiding place like a great flood.

The devil will seek to **cause Israel to be swept away with the flood**; to be drowned by it, to be consumed and destroyed.

But just as He sheltered Israel from Satan's initial onslaught, so also will God defeat this second assault. In dramatic fashion, **the earth helped the woman**; it **opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth..**

The imagery is reminiscent of Moses' description of God's destruction of Pharaoh's army in *Exodus 15:12*

Exodus 15:12 (NKJV)

¹² *You stretched out Your right hand; The earth swallowed them.*

Another Old Testament parallel is the dramatic story of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, whose rebellion against Moses was crushed by God in a shocking, dramatic fashion;

Numbers 16:28-33 (NKJV)

²⁸ *And Moses said: "By this you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will.*

²⁹ *If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the Lord has not sent me.*

³⁰ *But if the Lord creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the Lord."*

³¹ *Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them,*
³² *and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods.*

³³ *So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly.*

It may be one of the frequent earthquakes during the Tribulation that will cause the ground to split open and swallow Satan's forces.

Whatever this symbolic language pictures, it marks the destruction of the attacking army and the end of Satan's second assault.

ATTACK THREE

Revelation 12:17 (NKJV)

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.*

By now thoroughly frustrated and **enraged** by his inability to destroy **the woman** (Israel), the **dragon** (Satan) will turn his fury toward new targets. Some have identified **the rest of her children** with whom Satan will **make war** as the 144,000; others see them as believing Gentile Tribulation Saints, who are sons of Abraham by faith

Galatians 3:7 (NKJV)

⁷ *Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.*

It seems best to take this as an all-inclusive phrase, referring to all those who name the name of Jesus Christ.

They are further described as those **who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus.**

Entolas (commandments) is a word used frequently in Johns' writings to refer to New testament commands

John 14:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ *"If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

John 14:21 (NKJV)

²¹ *He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."*

The **testimony of Jesus** is not testimony about Him, but the testimony He gave, the truths He taught that are revealed in the New Testament.

These persecuted believers will give further evidence that their salvation is real by their obedience to the truth of Scripture.

Like his first two attacks directed against Israel, Satan's third attack on God' people will also fail.

At the sounding of the seventh trumpet loud voices will proclaim;

Revelation 11:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

All of Satan's efforts to prevent Christ's kingdom from being established are doomed.

The Lord Jesus Christ will triumph, He will reign on earth, and the surviving Tribulation saints, both Jews and Gentiles, will enter His earthly kingdom.

For the long-suffering people of Israel, the darkest hour lies ahead.

But it will be followed by a glorious dawn. The Elect remnant of Israel, having survived the most savage persecution in the nation's long history, will be saved and enjoy the bliss of the millennial kingdom

Romans 11:26 (NKJV)

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;