

## **The Ancient Spiritual War—Part 3**

Revelation 12:13-17

We come again this morning to another astounding passage in our study of the book of Revelation. This is the third exposition in our series, “The Ancient Spiritual War.” And we find ourselves this morning in Revelation chapter 12 verses 13 through 17. So if you will join me there, Revelation 12 beginning with verse 13. Follow along as I read the text for us this morning.

And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

We return, again, to our Lord’s amazing revelation of what will happen at the end of human history when he judges all who have mocked him and oppressed his people, that time when he will finally end his chastening of his chosen people Israel, having chastened them for millennia for their sin, for their unbelief. And he will finally reconcile them unto himself.

Because Israel is chosen of God and central to his sovereign plan to glorify himself both on earth and in heaven, Israel has always been the lightning rod of Satan’s fury. In fact, they have been persecuted more than any other people group on earth. Now certainly our adversary the devil also hates all who belong to Christ including the Church, but by this time during the tribulation the Church has already been translated into heaven, removed from Satan’s attacks.

Now some will say, “Well, I thought that the Church and Israel were the same. After all didn’t the Lord say in Matthew 21 that the kingdom was taken away and was given to a nation that would produce the fruit of it?” Well, indeed, that is true. In fact, the Lord also said in Luke 20 that the Jews were the vineyard. They were the sphere of God’s saving purposes. They had the privilege and responsibility to disseminate the truth of God’s saving grace. They refused all of that so the gospel was taken to the Gentiles. And, yes, indeed, the keys of the kingdom were taken from the Jews and were given to a new people with a new set of leaders, namely the apostles, the New Testament prophets, the evangelists, the pastor teachers. These became the new vine growers of Luke 20.

So the Jews were, indeed, set aside and a new guardianship was established in the Gentile Church. But, beloved, please understand, the custodianship of divine truth that was taken

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<sup>1</sup> Revelation 12:13-17.

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away from the Jews because of their rejection, has only been *temporarily* transferred to the Gentile church. This is not something that is permanent. Israel was temporarily displaced. It was not permanently replaced. God is not finished with Israel. Scripture abounds with that fact unless you somehow deny the normal meaning of Scripture. Certainly Romans 11 helps us understand this as well as the text before us today.

Now before we look at the text closely I want to give you the big picture because I find that from some of you—and certainly from different ones in our listening audience around the world through the internet—that there can be confusion in terms of the overall plan that is occurring here. The context for this amazing scenario of which I have just read in verses 13 through 17 is in the middle of the tribulation. That is the time that is also known as Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. You will remember in Daniel nine and verse 24 we read, “Seventy weeks,” or, in other words, 70 sevens, or 490 years, “Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy place,”<sup>2</sup> which is a reference to the millennial temple.

The prophecy there goes on to describe important events that transpired during the first 69 weeks of those judgments or 483 years, 483 years of judgments that were ultimately completed at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 by the Romans. But, there are seven more years left, one more week of years yet to come. This will begin—according to Daniel 9:27—when the antichrist will sign a peace and protection covenant with Israel. We read of this from the prophet Daniel in verse 27 of chapter nine. “And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week,”<sup>3</sup> referring to the antichrist with Israel. “But in the middle of the week...”<sup>4</sup> In other words, in the middle of the tribulation, “He will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”<sup>5</sup>

Now, our text this morning describes the events of what will happen in the career of Satan during this time, after he has been permanently expelled from heaven, cast from heaven down to earth as we studied last week. And because of his humiliating defeat and because he knows that his time is short according to verse 12 of chapter 12, he will be absolutely apoplectic with rage, and he will vent his spleen on Israel whom God will supernaturally protect and ultimately reconcile unto himself and finally establish them in their land in their long anticipated kingdom.

I wish to give you some further context for the text that we have before us to hopefully make it come alive for you.

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel 9:24.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel 9:27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

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Before the Lord returns to establish his millennial kingdom he promised to restore his covenant people Israel to their land in unbelief and then restore them unto himself in belief. We see this illustrated, for example, in Ezekiel chapter 37. Remember, there is the dramatic prophecy there of a valley of dry bones that will come to life. And in that text there is the illustration of this two phase restoration.

First the dry bones, which are symbolic of a dead nation, are scattered randomly, bleached for thousands of years over many sunny days. And then suddenly in verse seven of Ezekiel 37 we read:

There was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew, and skin covered them; but there was no breath in them.<sup>6</sup>

Well, later in verses 11 and 12 the prophecy is interpreted and explained. There we read that though their hope had perished and they feel as if though they have been completely cut off, God says, “I will bring you into the land of Israel.”<sup>7</sup> So, beloved, this prophecy depicts Israel’s physical restoration to the land though she remains lifeless in terms of her spiritual condition.

I am utterly awestruck to realize that in my lifetime I have been able to witness the beginnings of this. Literally out of the ash heap of the Nazi holocaust, the dry bones of millions of Jews have suddenly moved and returned to their land, a land that for millennia had been abandoned and neglected, a barren land. In some places it was nothing more than a huge swamp that was infested with mosquitoes that carried malaria. But they have returned as predicted and they have utterly transformed that land, agriculturally, economically, militarily, even architecturally. You wouldn’t even dream that that is the same place that it was a number of years ago. We have artist renderings and even some pictures of it.

But even though they have returned physically, they have not returned to life spiritually. Indeed, back to Ezekiel he said in verse eight, “And I looked, and behold, sinews were on them, and flesh grew and skin covered them; *but there was no breath in them.*”<sup>8</sup> But then suddenly something amazing happens. In verse nine we read, “Then He said to me, ‘Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they come to life.’”<sup>9</sup> Now this is indicative of the Holy Spirit. We read of that, for example, in John 3:8 where the Lord said of him that, “The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel 37:7-8.

<sup>7</sup> Ezekiel 37:12.

<sup>8</sup> Ezekiel 37:8.

<sup>9</sup> Ezekiel 37:9.

<sup>10</sup> John 3:8.

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And then the prophet Ezekiel goes on to say, “So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.”<sup>11</sup> Then the Spirit of God interprets this for us in verse 14 of Ezekiel 37 and he says, “‘I will put My Spirit within you and you will come to life, and I will place you on your own land. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken and done it,’ declares the Lord.”<sup>12</sup> And the text goes on to describe more of their spiritual life. And in verse 23 we read, “They will be My people, and I will be their God.”<sup>13</sup>

Now, beloved, this two stage restoration is described in numerous other Old Testament passages. But keep in mind, first there will be a restoration to their land in unbelief and then there will be a restoration to their Lord, the Messiah, in belief. And we are watching the physical restoration today in our lifetime as the Jews return to Israel. But we still await their spiritual restoration.

I wish I could take you all to Israel. I hope to go back soon. Once you get through customs at the Ben Gurion International Airport there in Tel Aviv, you will pass through a beautiful exit area where up on the wall in front of you is a very large and colorful tapestry that welcomes you into the land of Israel. And on that tapestry there is a picture of thousands of people coming from various directions, going into the gates of Jerusalem. And in Hebrew there is written there on that tapestry the prophetic words of Jeremiah in chapter 31 and verse 17 pertaining to the ingathering of the exiles. And it reads, “‘So there is hope for your future,’” declares the LORD, ‘Your children will return to their own land.’”<sup>14</sup>

I remember when I saw that I was fascinated with it, but I thought, I only wish they could have gone further in Jeremiah’s prophecy in verse 31 where he says:

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”<sup>15</sup>

Be sure, dear friends, this will happen when the Lord returns. So many texts make this clear, that time when all Israel will be saved as Paul tells us in Romans 11:26:

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<sup>11</sup> Ezekiel 37:10.

<sup>12</sup> Ezekiel 37:14.

<sup>13</sup> Ezekiel 37:23.

<sup>14</sup> Jeremiah 31:17.

<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah 31:31-33.

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THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB. THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.<sup>16</sup>

Beloved, this will be the time when all the blessed promises of the Abrahamic, the Davidic and the New Covenants find their confluence in the millennial kingdom that will be ruled by the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, some more context here before we get to our text. I believe the next event on the prophetic calendar is the snatching away of the Church, sometimes called the rapture of the Church. Sometime after the rapture of the Church and before the antichrist signs this covenant I believe the Gog and Magog war of Ezekiel 38 and 39 will take place. I made my case for this position in my exposition of the first seal when we studied Revelation six verses one and two. And I might also add there are many others that would share this position.

Now with the world in chaos after the disappearance of millions of Christians and the United States in no military position to be able to protect Israel, a Russian-Arab coalition will launch a massive strike against Israel, the prophet tells us. And we know that God will miraculously defend Israel against these invaders and will utterly destroy them in a humiliating defeat. The entire world will be dismayed. And, certainly, the Islamic world will be stunned because most of these will be Islamic forces.

At that time they will be forced to admit what they have denied for centuries and that is that the God of Israel is the one true God and their God that they call Allah is a figment of their imagination, a deception from Satan himself. It will take seven years, the prophet tells us, just to burn the weaponry, and seven months to bury the dead in order to cleanse the land. And all of the nations of the world will suddenly view Israel as a power to be reckoned with.

After describing that supernatural defeat of the Russian-Arab alliance God speaks through the prophet Ezekiel and he says this in Ezekiel 38 verse 23, “I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD.”<sup>17</sup> And in chapter 39 verse seven he says, “My holy name I will make known in the midst of My people Israel; and I will not let My holy name be profaned anymore. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.”<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, beloved, they will know, as many know today, who the true God is, but they will not bow. They will continue to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. And after this defeat the Arab Muslim world will be powerless to prevent Israel from destroying their sacred Dome of the Rock on the temple mount of Jerusalem and replacing it with a Jewish temple, which the orthodox Jews will erroneously believe to be the millennial

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<sup>16</sup> Romans 11:26-27.

<sup>17</sup> Ezekiel 38:23.

<sup>18</sup> Ezekiel 39:7.

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temple in fulfillment of Ezekiel's detailed description and promise in Ezekiel 40 and following.

Israel's new found power, combined with the economic and political and religious upheavals in the world will then be the perfect storm out of which the antichrist will arise. As Satan's ape, the antichrist, representing a European confederacy, which is rapidly becoming an Islamic confederacy, will see the need to ally himself with Israel. So he will negotiate a peace covenant with them.

It is fascinating as you think about it. For the first time in modern history Israel will actually go to an international negotiating table and not have to give up something and instead they will actually receive something. The signing of this covenant will then trigger the tribulation. It will set it into motion. And in the first half of the tribulation as we have studied, Israel will experience a false or temporary peace that antichrist will help negotiate and help cause to occur. But that will be the calm before the storm. And during that time God, of course, will be pouring out his wrath upon an unbelieving world resulting in millions of casualties both of unrepentant Jews and Gentiles. And, by the middle of the tribulation Satan will be cast out of heaven as we studied last week. And, again, enraged by his humiliating treatment and knowing that his time is short to be able to prevent the establishment of the messianic kingdom upon the earth, that he is now allowed to rule, and also being furious with the testimony of the 144,000 and the indestructible two witnesses, he will then influence the antichrist to invade Jerusalem.

We read of this, for example, in Daniel 11 beginning in verse 44:

He will go forth with great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain.<sup>19</sup>

That is, between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea. As Daniel prophesied in 9:27 and as the Lord prophesied in his Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24:15 as well as the apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, the antichrist will then invade the temple mount. He will put an end to sacrifice. He will put an end to the worship and he will seat himself in the holy of holies and display himself as being God. That is what is called the abomination of desolation.

The temple land at that point will be ritually defiled and many Jews will flee into the wilderness where God will protect them and nourish them as we will learn more today. That will be the time, according to Daniel 12 and verse one, quote, "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Daniel 11:44-45.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel 12:1.

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Daniel goes on in verse five and following and says:

Then I, Daniel, looked and behold, two others were standing, one on this bank of the river and the other on that bank of the river. And one said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be until the end of these wonders?"

I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time.<sup>21</sup>

That is three and a half years.

And as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed. As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My lord, what will be the outcome of these events?"

He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. "Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days."<sup>22</sup>

Once again, the last half of the tribulation.

Well, all of this will be set into motion when Satan is thrown down out of heaven which leads us to our text this morning. I have divided it into three simple sections. We will see, first, *the dragon's pursuit*, secondly *the woman's flight* and, finally, *the dragon's redirected animosity*.

First, *the dragon's pursuit*, verse 13. "And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child."<sup>23</sup>

"Persecuted" translates a Greek word meaning "to chase" or "to hunt" or "to pursue with the intent to do violence." And here Satan is depicted as a dragon-monster chasing the woman who, as we know is Israel, the one who gave birth to the male child, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is consistent with other Old Testament prophecies, especially Daniel's prophecy of which the Lord referred to in his Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 regarding this time. Remember Jesus said, quote:

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel 12:5-7.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel 12:7-12.

<sup>23</sup> Revelation 12:13.

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Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.<sup>24</sup>

Let me pause there for a moment. This is the region to the east of Jerusalem, the wilderness mountain region. In fact, in Daniel 11:41 we read more of this. He says, “But these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon.”<sup>25</sup> That describes the people groups that lived in this region. This will be the area where the Jews will flee to when the antichrist comes in. The Lord went on to say in Matthew 24:

Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath.<sup>26</sup>

Let me pause there. Travel is virtually shut down in Israel on the Sabbath, on Shabbat, and, therefore, what the Lord is referring to here is that those that would violate the law and travel on the sabbath would encounter the fury of the legalistic Jews who would try to impede their travel. The Lord goes on to say of this time:

For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.<sup>27</sup>

This scene the Lord describes is one of a surprise attack. You see, Israel will not be expecting her ally, the antichrist, to turn against them. Remember, he has promised peace and safety. Unlike any other city in the world Jerusalem has already been besieged 27 times. This will make number 28. This will be the final season of judgment upon God’s stubborn and stiff necked people. And during this siege of Jerusalem the Lord of hosts, we know, we will strengthen some of the Jewish soldiers that will fight against the antichrist. We read this in Zechariah 12:5-9 and Micah four verses 11 through chapter five and verses one. And, according to Zechariah’s prophecy in Zechariah 14:2, the antichrist will only be able to recapture one half of the city. This will probably be the eastern section of the city since we know later when the Lord returns, according to Zechariah 14:4, the Mount of Olives is going to split in two and each side of the mountain will move north and south and, thus, this will allow an east west escape route for his remnant across the Kidron Valley right through the middle of the Mount of Olives

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<sup>24</sup> Matthew 24:15-16.

<sup>25</sup> Daniel 11:41.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew 24:17-20.

<sup>27</sup> Matthew 24:21-22.

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where they can join the others in the Judean wilderness that fled earlier from the wrath of the antichrist.

As a footnote, the word split referring to the Mount of Olives that will split, translates the Hebrew word *baqa* (baw-kah') and it is the same verb that was used at another great split in Old Testament history, another split that allowed safe passageway for God's people to flee from a pursuing army. And that was when God split the Red Sea in Exodus 14.

In some future day the Jews will read these texts. They may even listen to this exposition as well as many other ministers of the Word and they will understand exactly what the God of Israel is going to do. Keep in mind that the Pharaoh was the *type* of the antichrist and the antichrist is the *antitype*. And even as God blocked the pursuit of those Egyptians at the Red Sea, once again he will block the pursuit of the armies of the antichrist. In fact, as we study the prophetic Word we understand that the armies will be prevented from fleeing north and south leaving them utterly vulnerable in the Kidron Valley, which is also known as the Valley of Jehoshaphat which means, "God will judge." And there, indeed, he will judge those armies and utterly destroy them.

So here in verse 13 we see Satan pursuing Israel through the antichrist. And in verse 14, "But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent."<sup>28</sup>

This leads us to the second division of this text, *the woman's flight*. The phrase, "the two wings of the great eagle," is one that is familiar to Jewish people. John would have certainly understood very quickly what this referred to. By the way, it has nothing to do with an airplane as sometimes you hear people interject. In fact, the Ben Gurion airport is in Tel Aviv that is 30 miles west of Jerusalem and that will be the precise region where the forces of the antichrist will be encamped. Remember, as Daniel 11 says, "He will pitch the tents of his royal pavilion between the seas and the beautiful Holy Mountain,"<sup>29</sup> which is Mount Zion.

But this phrase, "the two wings of the great eagle," is in keeping, once again, with the terms and the concepts of Israel's former great deliverance that we read about in Exodus 19, their deliverance from Egypt. In Exodus 19:4 we read, "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself."<sup>30</sup> Beloved, once again, the God of Israel will deliver his people in a miraculous manner.

The imagery of wings is emblematic of speed and great strength as we study other Old Testament passages. But it is most frequently used to describe divine protection. For example, in Moses' great song of deliverance after God had destroyed the Egyptian charioteers we read in Deuteronomy 32 beginning in verse nine:

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<sup>28</sup> Revelation 12:14.

<sup>29</sup> Daniel 11:45.

<sup>30</sup> Exodus 19:4.

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For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, And in the howling waste of a wilderness; He encircled him, He cared for him, He guarded him as the pupil of His eye. Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, That hovers over its young, He spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions.<sup>31</sup>

I have to pause here. All of us who have walked with God have experienced those times where he has protected us in such a way. I think of the psalmist's words in Psalm 36:7, "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings."<sup>32</sup> In Psalm 63:7 we read, "For You have been my help, And in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy."<sup>33</sup> And many times I have rejoiced and echoed the words of the psalmist in Psalm 91 and verse four where we read, "He will cover you with His pinions, And under His wings you may seek refuge."<sup>34</sup>

Oh, dear friends, what a mighty God we serve. What a faithful God, a God full of mercy and grace who hides us in the shadow of his wings. And here, again, as we come to this text we see his omnipotent wings delivering his people from the dragon that would devour them.

Now this text does not tell us how he will do this. But clearly it will be through some miraculous intervention, even as he split the Red Sea. He will, no doubt, dispatch a division of his angelic forces under the leadership of Michael the archangel as we read earlier in Daniel 12:1. "Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise."<sup>35</sup> But notice in verse 14, "But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent."<sup>36</sup>

So here we can understand that many of the Israeli remnant will be supernaturally transported into some region of the wilderness mountains east of Jerusalem. If you wanted to know what that looks like, just look at the news the next time they show pictures of eastern Pakistan and western Afghanistan. It looks very similar to that. That is why it is so difficult for our soldiers to get in there to do anything. There the Lord will once again care for his people, nourishing, which literally means feeding them. Perhaps he will use manna once again. Perhaps he will feed them quail. We do not know. That is what he did 3400 years ago when they were in the wilderness in their wanderings there.

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<sup>31</sup> Deuteronomy 32:9-11.

<sup>32</sup> Psalm 36:7.

<sup>33</sup> Psalm 63:7.

<sup>34</sup> Psalm 91:4.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel 12:1.

<sup>36</sup> Revelation 12:14.

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Some suggest that maybe they will hide in the fortress city of Petra, the city of ancient Edom, a city that is protected by massive mountains and cliffs and a very narrow entry way, but we don't know that for sure. In fact, if you consider the cataclysmic judgments including the asteroids and the earthquakes that will have already taken place by this time, that city may not even exist. Moreover, enemy aircraft today and missiles could easily penetrate that fortress, so we don't know. The shield will ultimately be the Lord himself.

On that note I recall the pillar of cloud which was the shekinah glory of God that led the children of Israel. And remember when the Egyptians were chasing them, right when they came up to the Red Sea we read how that that pillar of cloud went from the forward part of the company to the back and separated the Egyptians from the Israelites and protected them. It was light to one and darkness to the other. We can only imagine what kind of miraculous force field the Lord will use to protect his people. But he will energize something to protect what he calls "the apple of his eye." Do you know what it feels like to just barely poke yourself in the eye? That is how precious his covenant people are to him. And, likewise, to all of us who have already been snatched away into his presence. But whatever he uses, it will thwart every attempt of the enemy to reach them.

Notice in verse 14 he will hid them from the serpent, it says, "For a time and times and a half a time."<sup>37</sup> Again, the final three and a half years of the tribulation. And of that day the Lord spoke through Jeremiah 30 the portion of Scripture that I read to you earlier this morning. In verse seven he says, "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it."<sup>38</sup> Not like Auschwitz, not like anything of the holocaust, none like it. "And it is the time of Jacob's distress, but he will be saved from it."<sup>39</sup> Verse eight.

"It shall come about on that day," declares the LORD of hosts, "that I will break his yoke from off their neck and will tear off their bonds; and strangers will no longer make them their slaves. But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them."<sup>40</sup>

That is referring to the greater David in David's dynasty, the Messiah King, the Lord Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of the covenant promises in 2 Samuel seven that God gave to David.

Dear friends, there was another period of three and a half years in which God presented to Israel their Messiah. It was the three and a half years of Jesus' public ministry, the time when he offered them forgiveness from their sin and they rejected it; He offered them a kingdom; and they delayed it. But, beloved, when the Lord returns he will accomplish all of this. He will bring salvation to his apostate people.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Jeremiah 30:7.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Jeremiah 30:8-9.

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Oh, dear friend, what a magnificent picture of sovereign grace, isn't it? What an incredible picture. Grace that is bestowed upon those who refuse to believe it, what a picture of my life and your life, a picture of every man who is born again.

I think of the psalmist's words of Psalm 130 and verse seven. There he said:

O Israel, hope in the LORD; For with the LORD there is lovingkindness,  
And with Him is abundant redemption. And He will redeem Israel From  
all his iniquities.<sup>41</sup>

It is so important there. "Hope in the Lord."<sup>42</sup> You must look to the Savior first and redemption second. For only in the former will you ever be able to find the latter. For centuries the Jews and countless others have looked to find salvation with no regard for Christ. They looked unto the keeping of the law rather than looking, first, to the one who fulfilled it. We must look, first, unto Christ our Redeemer.

What did he say? He said, "Come to *Me*, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."<sup>43</sup> He did not begin by saying, "Take my yoke upon you."<sup>44</sup> No, we must look to Christ first.

My dear Jewish friends that may be listening to me, this is the plea that I would give to you because many have looked to everything *but* the one who alone can save. And, once again, during this "time of Jacob's trouble," grace will condescend to sinners and the Jewish people will finally see the Messiah for who he is. And according to Zechariah's prophecy in chapter 12 verse 10 God says this, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."<sup>45</sup> Oh, the bitter tears of genuine repentance, how precious they are.

Well, we have seen *the dragon's pursuit* and *the woman's flight* where God protects his own from the servant. Finally, *the dragon's redirected animosity* in verse 15. "And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood."<sup>46</sup>

In general, the imagery of a flood is found in Scripture to be emblematic of impending catastrophe. It speaks of some kind of terrible trouble that is approaching. But, more specifically, in various passages we read how that it symbolizes an invading force that is sweeping towards a vulnerable foe.

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<sup>41</sup> Psalm 130:7-8.

<sup>42</sup> Psalm 130:7.

<sup>43</sup> Matthew 11:28.

<sup>44</sup> Matthew 11:29.

<sup>45</sup> Zechariah 12:10.

<sup>46</sup> Revelation 12:15.

## The Ancient Spiritual War—Part 3

Revelation 12:13-17

For example, Jeremiah speaks of this in chapter 46 verse eight. He said, “Egypt rises like the Nile, Even like the rivers whose waters surge about; And He has said, "I will rise and cover that land; I will surely destroy the city and its inhabitants.”<sup>47</sup>

So, beloved, here in verse 15 we see the serpent, through the agency of the antichrist and his forces, sweeping like a mighty flood toward the Jews that have been delivered now miraculously into the wilderness. But notice the Lord’s glorious protection in verse 16. “But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.”<sup>48</sup>

Now we can’t be sure, but as we look at the context and the symbolism of the earth swallowing up this approaching horde, we can believe that perhaps the Lord will use some kind of a massive earthquake to eradicate them. He did that before only with the water, remember, as the waters came and literally swallowed up the Egyptians. In fact, Moses said in Exodus 15:12, “You stretched out Your right hand, The earth swallowed them.”<sup>49</sup>

God has opened up the earth to swallow his enemies before as you will recall. Remember the story of Korah, Dathan and Abiram? Remember when they challenged Moses’ leadership in Numbers 16 and God became furious? And he told Moses to tell the people of Israel, the congregation, to get back away from where these people dwell. And in verse 31 we read:

As he finished speaking all these words, the ground that was under them split open; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah with their possessions. So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly.<sup>50</sup>

So here we learn that Satan’s forces under the rule of the antichrist will meet a similar fate. And because he is, once again, prevented from carrying out his nefarious scheme to destroy the Jews in the wilderness, he redirects his animosity towards this other group, verse 17. “So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”<sup>51</sup>

The rest of her children, or it could be translated “seed,” will certainly include the Jews that will remain under siege in Jerusalem, but I think even more specifically the 144,000 Jewish evangelists that continue to fearlessly preach the gospel as well as all believers who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

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<sup>47</sup> Jeremiah 46:8.

<sup>48</sup> Revelation 12:16.

<sup>49</sup> Exodus 15:12.

<sup>50</sup> Numbers 16:31-33.

<sup>51</sup> Revelation 12:17.

## The Ancient Spiritual War—Part 3

Revelation 12:13-17

That is an amazing phrase. Grammatically these two phrases, “the commandments of God” and “the testimony of Jesus” are what we call subjective in Greek meaning they could be translated “the commandments *which* God gave” and “the testimony *which* Jesus bore.” In other words, the truths that he taught. So, beloved, this is a testimony that is more than one that just tells people about Jesus, but rather these people are preaching the divine truths that Jesus taught, namely the New Testament.

So Satan will go after those who preach and teach the New Testament. That is what this text is saying, which will include what I am teaching you today. The *Apokalupsis Iesou Cristou*, the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ, that also reveals Satan’s defeat and the Messiah’s triumph. If you think this is not politically correct now (what I am preaching to you), can you imagine what it will be like then?

Oh, dear child of God, rejoice in the protector, the Savior of Israel, the one who has saved us by his grace and has made us fellow heirs of promise. And dear sinner, please hear me. Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ because he is returning soon.

Let’s pray together.

*Father, we thank you for these eternal truths. We praise you because as we contemplate them it drives us to the very depths of our understanding of our own sinfulness. Therefore it causes us to ascend to the very heights of your grace. Lord, cause these truths to impact our lives in such a way as to bring great glory to you. And, finally, Lord, use them to bring conviction to those who do not know you, who do not confess you as Savior and serve you as Lord. I ask all of this in the precious name of Jesus and for his glorious sake. Amen.*

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**Transcript Explanation:** Each transcript is a rough approximation of the message preached and may occasionally misstate certain portions of the sermon and even misspell certain words. It should in no way be considered an edited document ready for print. Moreover, as in any transcription of the spoken word, the full intention and passion of the speaker cannot be fully captured and will in no way reflect the same style of a written document.

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