

52. The Book of Revelation—12:4-6

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(8-25-21)

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We are currently in a parenthetical section of the book which runs from Chapters 10 through 14.

Chapters 12 and 13 don't advance the narrative chronologically, but recap and amplify what has already taken place and give us some extra details that we didn't get from the preceding Chapters.

Chronologically, we have already entered into the second half of the 70th week of Daniel (Chapter 9), but Chapter 12 takes us back—first of all to Jesus' birth—and then fast forwards us to the midpoint of the Tribulation Period.

Revelation 12:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.

The woman in Revelation 12 symbolizes **Israel** (as indicated by Genesis 37:9-11) who we see symbolically giving birth to the Messiah—

Revelation 12:2-4 (NKJV)

² Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. ³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads [diadem—the crown of a king]. ⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

“His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth...”

These '*stars*' are a reference to angels—angels are depicted symbolically as **stars** elsewhere in Scripture (Job 38:7; Revelation 9:1).

When we talk about how one-third of the angels in heaven followed Lucifer in his rebellion against God—this is where we get it from. These became “fallen angels” Lucifer being chief among them—Jesus mentioned his fall:

Luke 10:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸ And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven..."

The question is—“*When did Lucifer fall?*”

There are those who say it happened sometime after Genesis 1:1—but before Genesis 1:2. This is a somewhat controversial interpretation known as—the Gap Theory.

Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

¹In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:2 (NKJV)

²The earth was without form, and void...

The phrase “**without form and void**” in Hebrew is “*tohuw va bohuw*”. ‘*Tohuw va bohuw*’ is a term in Hebrew that almost always denotes judgment having taken place.

There are Hebrew scholars who say the Hebrew, “**and the earth was without form and void**”— could be translated “**and the earth became a desolate wasteland.**”

They point out the Hebrew word for ‘**became**’ is an active verb that denotes a change—like “*Lot’s wife became a pillar of salt.*” (Genesis 19:26)

What’s so intriguing about that is—this translation would contradict Isaiah 45:18—

Isaiah 45:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it [the earth] in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “I *am* the Lord, and *there is* no other.

The word ‘**vain**’ (Isaiah 45:18) is the Hebrew word ‘tohu’ which is the same Hebrew word used in Genesis 1:2 for ‘**void**’. So, proponents of the Gap Theory claim that God is saying in Isaiah 45:18 that He didn’t create the world in **vain** (*ruined* and *desolate*)—He created it fully formed and functional and ready to be inhabited—He didn’t make it “*tohuw va bohuw.*”

Again, if Isaiah says God did not create the earth originally “*without form and void*”, but Genesis 1 says the earth was (or became) without form and void—what’s going on—what caused the world to become a desolate wasteland?

Well, there are scholars and commentators that believe it was an event that took place between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2—described in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.

It was an event where the most powerful cherub in all of God’s creation, an angel named Lucifer launched a rebellion against God.

Some believe that the earth could have originally been the domain of Lucifer and it became the focal point in a cosmic war where God is allowing Satan to do battle with Him—and if the earth was his domain in the ‘first creation’ (Genesis 1:1), that God judged it and told the devil—“*Go ahead and recreate it to prove how much ‘like the Most High’ you really are.*” (Isaiah 14:14)

Also that the devil with all of his power couldn’t recreate the world transforming it from a desolate wasteland into something beautiful and inhabitable—and after who knows how long God finally stepped in and said, “*Let there be light...*” and recreated the earth (Genesis 1:2).

One last thing about the Gap Theory and we’ll move on.

Many “Gap Theory” proponents claim that in this gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 is where all the dinosaurs and the fossils came from. But even if the Gap Theory is true (and it might be...)—it can’t be used to explain the extinction of dinosaurs and the fossil record—why?

Because the Bible says plainly that death came into the world through Adam’s sin (Romans 5:12), and since fossils are the result of death, they could not have happened before Adam’s time.

Revelation 12:4 (NKJV)

⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. **And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.**

There is at least 4000 years between the first and second sentences of verse 4.

This “**Child**” is the Messiah, Jesus Christ—which we know for sure from verse 5—

Revelation 12:5a (NKJV)

⁵ **She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron...**

Psalms 2:8-9 (NKJV)

⁸ Ask of Me, and I will give *You* The nations *for* Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "

Revelation 19:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron...

Revelation 12:4 (NKJV)

⁴ His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. **And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.**

This I believe, in the narrow sense, is a reference to Herod the Great trying to kill the baby Jesus when the Wise Men came to him with news of His birth as the King of the Jews—some 18 months after the birth of Christ. Herod eventually ordered the death of all the male children in Bethlehem two years old and under.

However, there is a much broader application that’s in view here than simply what Herod tried to do.

In fact, as we understand this broader interpretation—Chapter 12 sheds a whole new light on anti-Semitism!

If the promise of God’s redemption (Genesis 3:15) depended upon the birth of a Redeemer—a Redeemer who would be born from a particular family belonging to a specific nation—if God’s plan for the redemption of the world was conditioned upon the existence and perpetuation of a nation—

If Satan could destroy that nation, he could defeat the plan of God in sending a Redeemer, a Messiah to die on our behalf—thus making the redemption of the human race impossible.

When you understand that—the whole Bible takes on new insight!

Anti-Semitism is a demonic thing that goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden—

Genesis 3:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed [Antichrist] and her Seed [Jesus Christ]; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

As a side note—this is the first glimpse of the virgin birth of Messiah since—the woman doesn't have the seed the man does. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23)

➔ Theologians and Christians of ages-past have nick-named Genesis 3:15 the proto-evangelium (pro-to-e-van-gel-eeum), which translated means: "*the first announcement of the Gospel*".

God is promising that someday He would send a Savior who would crush the serpent's head—i.e., destroy his authority and judge him.

Satan didn't like the idea of having his head crushed by anyone—so he decided to launch a pre-emptive attack against the purposes of God to keep this Messiah from ever being born.

- *The killing of Able by Cain*
- *The whole world corrupted in the days of Noah (Genesis 6)*
- *The attempt by Esau to kill Jacob*
- *Pharaoh tried to kill the Hebrew baby boys (the Egyptian midwives feared God and wouldn't obey Pharaoh's command to drown the Hebrew boy babies in the Nile River)*
- *King Saul trying to kill David*
- *The attempt by Queen Athalia (mother of King Ahaziah) to wipe out the royal line—2 Chronicles 22:10-12 (Only Joash was left)*
- *Haman getting the King of Persia to issue a decree to have the Jews exterminated*
- *Herod the Great ordered all the Jewish boys in Bethlehem killed that were 2 years old and under*

The devil throughout history has done his best to destroy the Jews and in particular the Messianic line so that Messiah could not have been born.

As the Lord made His plan of redemption more and more specific concerning the Messiah's birth—what nation—what tribe—which family—Satan was able to focus his attack more and more.

➤ "*Alright, but Jesus has come, died and rose again—so why is Satan continuing to persecute the Jewish people?*"

Because the devil still hates the Jews and wants to kill them out of revenge and as a way to get back at God who loves the Jewish people!

Genesis 12:3 (NKJV)

³ I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

It is true that any person or nation that has persecuted the Jewish people has been cursed by God. We see in Scripture how that Egypt enslaved the Jewish people and God judged them and they went from the superpower of the known world to a third world country. Later on, the same happened with Assyria and then Babylon (both world empires)—they oppressed the Jewish people and God reduced them to third world countries.

Britain was the world superpower around the beginning of the 20th Century. They had so many nations around the world that they had conquered and controlled that a motto was born that “*the sun never sets on the British Empire*”.

But all that began to change with the Balfour Declaration in November of 1917. The Balfour Declaration said that the British government endorsed the establishment of a homeland in Palestine for the Jewish people. The Jewish people were very excited at the prospect of having a nation again in their ancient homeland.

However the British government dragged their feet and in May of 1939 the British government altered its policy in a White Paper recommending a limit of 75,000 further immigrants and an end to immigration by 1944, unless the resident Palestinian Arabs of the region consented to further immigration. Zionists condemned the new policy, accusing Britain of favoring the Arabs.

After that the British Empire began to decline, and Britain went from superpower status to a relatively insignificant country.

We see the same thing with Germany and its defeat in WWII and its decline afterwards because of the way it treated the Jewish people.

Furthermore, I believe that the ascendancy of America after WWII to the greatest nation on the face of the earth was due in part to how it blessed the Jewish people by supporting the establishment of the modern state of Israel (President Harry Truman recognized Israel as an independent state (country) immediately after it declared its independence on May 14th, 1948).

For many years we were Israel’s greatest ally and God continued to bless us as a direct fulfillment of the promise He gave to Abraham 4000 thousand years ago that He would bless those who blessed the Jewish people and curse those who cursed the Jewish people.

Of course, our support of Israel has declined over the last 35 years, and we have even done things that has put them in dangerous positions with regard to their enemies—and God is not happy about it and has let us know it.

Revelation 12:5 (NKJV)

⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.

Most see this as a reference to the *ascension* of Jesus forty days after His resurrection where He sat down at the right hand of the Father on His throne.

Acts 1:9-11 (NKJV)

⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, ¹¹ who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV)

² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

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.

There is a time gap of 2000 years between the 5th and 6th verses of Chapter 12—between the ascension of Christ back to heaven after His resurrection, and the fleeing of the Jews in Jerusalem into the wilderness after the Antichrist sets up his image in the Holy of Holies—

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.

As we shall see, when Antichrist enters the rebuilt Temple, sets up his image in the Holy of Holies and demands to be worshiped as God—the great tribulation Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:21 will begin.

This will be 1,260 days (Revelation 12:6) of unparalleled hostility, persecution and suffering that will break loose against the Jews perpetrated by the Antichrist and his followers—which is why Jesus told the Jews to flee to the *mountains* when they see this event take place (Matthew 24:15).

➤ "Yes, but what mountains—where in the wilderness?" Well, we don't even have to guess:

Daniel 11:40-41 (NKJV)

⁴⁰ "At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm *them*, and pass through. 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 [modern day Jordan].

Isaiah 16:1-4 (NKJV)

¹ Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, From Sela to the wilderness, To the mount of the daughter of Zion. ² For it shall be as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest; So shall be the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon. ³ "Take counsel, execute judgment; Make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day; Hide the outcasts, Do not betray him who escapes. ⁴ Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler [reference to the Antichrist]. For the extortioner is at an end, Devastation ceases, The oppressors are consumed out of the land.

Many scholars and commentators believe this place in the wilderness—the mountains where the Jews in Jerusalem will flee to, to escape the murderous rage of the Antichrist—is the rock city of Petra, southeast of the Dead Sea.

As your margin might say, "**Sela**" (Isaiah 16:1) means "*Rock*" or "*Petra*."

Petra is truly an amazing city made popular by the third Indiana Jones movie, "*Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*."

Petra is located in Moab, or present-day Jordan. This city of stone carved out of (and into) a mountain has stood for centuries, preserved largely because the sole entrance is a passageway only ten to twelve feet wide.

➤ You may say, *“Do the Jews know of these prophecies, and do they take them seriously?”*

A Jordanian guide told one of our Calvary pastors that from January through June each year a thousand Jews a day come to Petra to see this city. It could be that God has already revealed to many of the Jewish people that Petra is going to be the place where they’re going to take refuge during *“the times of Jacob’s trouble”*—

Jeremiah 30:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Alas! For that day *is* great, So that none *is* like it; And it *is* the time of Jacob's trouble, But he [Israel] shall be saved out of it.

Christian businessmen have stocked the place with food and evangelistic tracts and New Testaments written in Hebrew—God has prepared this place as a refuge for His people Israel.

If you would like to know more about what it means to be a Jesus-follower—please reach out to us. It would be our greatest privilege to lead you into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

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