

54. The Book of Revelation—12:12-17

A message by Pastor Phil Ballmaier
(9-8-21)

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Tonight, in our study of the Book of Revelation we will be continuing in Chapter 12—a Chapter that many commentators claim is difficult to understand.

I personally don't see it that way—*if* we properly understand who the woman is that the Chapter opens up introducing us to.

The reasons commentators get '*messed up*' and find it difficult when it comes to interpreting Revelation 12 is because they wrongly interpret the woman to be Mary the mother of Jesus, or the Church—when in fact, as we have already demonstrated—this 'woman' is representative of the nation of Israel.

An interpretation that is clear, based on the dream that Joseph had as recorded in Genesis 37 and interpreted by his father Jacob.

Now with that in mind—let's read the first six verses once again—remembering that we are currently in a parenthetical section that runs from Chapters 10 through 14 and which amplifies what has already taken place, giving us some extra details that we didn't get from the preceding Chapters:

Revelation 12:1-6 (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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

As we said last time, 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.

When the Antichrist sets up his image in the Holy of Holies in the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem—it will mark the beginning of the last 3 ½ years of the 70th week of Daniel known as the 'Great Tribulation' (Matthew 24:21).

Remember, a biblical year is 360 days—so half of the 70th week of Daniel (3 ½ years) would equal 1260 days (Revelation 12:6).

This will be a time 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).

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.

And so, with all of this in mind and remembering that the chronology is the midpoint of the 70th week of Daniel—we now come to verse 7:

Revelation 12:7-12 (NKJV)

⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. ¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

Satan's work of accusing believers only ends here when he is cast out of heaven and no longer has access to the throne of God.

Today, we have (and *need*) an *advocate* and an *intercessor*—His name is Jesus Christ! (1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25)

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ And they [Tribulation Saints] **overcame him** [Satan]...

How they did so is most instructive.

They did not defeat him by means of "Christian" incantations ("I bind you Satan!", or "I plead the blood!"), or by repeating "Christian mantras" or by "rebuking" the devil.

There is a lot of false doctrine that has come into the Church for dealing with and defeating the devil that is very popular—but not very biblical. (Explain)

James 4:7 (NKJV)

⁷ **Therefore submit to God** [place yourself fully under His authority and control]. **Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

Notice that James doesn't say, "*Rebuke the devil and he will flee from you*" he says "*Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*"

I bring this up because many Christians have been taught to rebuke the devil and bind him in the name of Jesus. You hear Christians praying, "*Satan I bind you in the name of Jesus.*" Now, I know what they're saying but that's an unbiblical concept to think that we can "bind" Satan with our words so that he can't do his dirty work.

I realize that those who hold to this teaching take it from what Jesus said, "*Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*"

But if you study the context, Jesus wasn't talking about spiritual warfare (fighting the devil)—He was talking about evangelizing the lost. (Explain)

If that's your concept of fighting spiritual warfare you will be very frustrated and defeated in your Christian experience. Now of course we can pray that God would protect us or deliver us from the devil's oppression and persecution.

Also, we can pray that God would use us to spread the Gospel and expand His Kingdom on earth through our ministries which will take territory away from Satan and lessening his area of influence.

But if you think you can bind Satan as if you're tying him up and making him powerless to carry out his evil deeds—you are very much mistaken.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NKJV)

⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

If this doctrine of binding Satan was valid then why didn't Paul use it when he was being attacked by the devil? It's because the doctrine isn't biblical! Besides, as we have already said last time, Satan can't do anything to us unless God allows him to (Job).

Satan is serving the purposes of God in our lives to teach us how to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ; how to persevere under pressure; and to conform us into the image of Jesus.

So, if you confront the devil 'head on' trying to bind him from what he's doing—you might be fighting the purposes of God in your life Who is allowing the devil to act in your life for His purposes.

"So, you're saying I shouldn't do anything when Satan attacks me, I should just submit to it?"

No, I'm not saying that—do as Paul did (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)—pray to God that, if it is His will, He would stop the enemy from attacking you. But be ready because He may say to you what He said to Paul—*"My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."*

But also, if God doesn't answer you, do what James and Peter said:

1 Peter 5:8-10 (NKJV)

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

So, we are commanded to *resist* the devil being steadfast in the faith—but we are not ever commanded to *bind* him.

We resist him by putting on the whole armor of God every day and walking closely with the Lord. (Eph.6:11) and then pray without ceasing. (Ephesians 6:18)

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

One pastor put it this way—

“How many of you have ever had a hard time getting to Bible study, but somehow got there? I commend you because had you succumbed to those pressures, you would have faced them again and again. You see, because Satan isn’t omniscient, because he can’t read your mind or see into your heart, he’s dependent solely upon trial and error to see what works. Therefore, if he sees that a headache will keep you from worship and Bible study, guess what will happen. You’ll have headaches perpetually. If he sees that your kids acting up causes you to pull back, stay home, and not be where you should be, he’ll have found the key to slowing down your walk.

I am convinced that many people experience unnecessary hell in their homes or trials in their lives because they don’t understand this verse. They don’t realize that if they resist the devil, he will indeed flee.”

Jesus has already bound the devil at Calvary’s Cross and won the victory—

Matthew 12:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

Colossians 2:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [in or through the cross].

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.**

1. The Blood of the Lamb

It overcomes Satan's accusations - those accusations mean nothing against us because the price has already been paid by Jesus Christ.

Also, the blood of the Lamb defeated Satan on the cross and now we are in Him which means His victory is our victory!

2. The Word of Their Testimony

A second way these Tribulation saints overcame Satan’s assaults was through the word of their testimony. Their testimony includes the preaching of the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation.

But also, this will not be a time of luxury, comfort and ease for the people of God—they will be hunted, hated, persecuted and martyred for their faith (testimony).

Yet, their testimony in the face of all of this and the way they will die with peace, forgiveness and even praising God will be a powerful witness to unbelievers bringing many to Christ—as those first century believers did through their testimony and the way they died for their faith.

3. They Did Not Love Their Lives to the Death

It overcomes Satan's violence; if they do not cling to their own earthly lives, then there really is no threat Satan can bring against them. If they believe *to live is Christ, and to die is gain* (Philippians 1:21), then how can Satan's violence against them be effective? (Philippians 1:23-24)

Another translation makes it clearer—“...for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.”

Revelation 12:12 (NKJV)

¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

Satan's power is real and terrifying—but not because he is triumphant—but because he knows he is beaten and has a *short time* left. So, like a wounded, cornered animal—he will fight with great ferocity against the people of God during the Great Tribulation—trying to bring as many unbelievers to hell with him as he can!

➤ You might be thinking to yourself—“Why doesn't he just give up?”

One author offers a possible answer to that question—

“Don't forget that Satan is utterly depraved, and probably “insane” - he may have deceived even himself into thinking that he has a chance.

No matter how desperate their situation looks, no matter how furiously Satan rages against them, believers can take comfort in knowing that his ultimate defeat is certain.”

It reminds us of the words of Martin Luther's magnificent hymn *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*:

*“The prince of darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.”*

Revelation 12:13 (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*.

The *Great Tribulation* begins at the mid-point of the last 7 years and corresponds with the devil being thrown out of heaven. In the Old Testament this period of time is called the “*time of Jacob's trouble*.” (Jeremiah 30:7)

Matthew 24:15-21 (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.

Knowing that his time is short and having no more access to heaven—the adversary now cast down to the earth, directs all of his anger toward the inhabitants of earth.

- He begins with Israel (the woman) and creates a wave of anti-Semitism.
- Satan has always hated the Jews because they are God's chosen people and the instrument through which salvation came into the world in the Person of Messiah Jesus.
- Satan would like to destroy the nation—particularly as the time draws near for the Messiah to return to earth to establish the promised Kingdom.

A Jewish remnant must be ready to receive Him and form the nucleus for the Kingdom (Zechariah 12:9–14:21; Revelation 1:7).

God will prepare a special place where the Jewish remnant will be protected and cared for.

Revelation 12:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle.

There are those who believe that these “**two wings of a great eagle**” might be a reference to America since the eagle is our national symbol.

➤ They raise the question, “*Could it be that the United States will airlift the people of Israel to Petra?*”

I used to think “*maybe*”—but after seeing how our government couldn’t even airlift our own people out of Afghanistan—I now think that possibility is laughable with this current president and his administration.

I do believe that somehow the Lord will take His people to the place He has prepared for them in the wilderness.

Although we can’t be certain of the identity of the “**two wings of the eagle**”, this much we do know—God has used this terminology before.

One author and pastor made this observation—

“This is figurative language that symbolically depicts Israel’s escape from Satan’s assault. The striking imagery of “**the two wings of the great eagle**” is taken from Exodus 19:4: “*You yourselves 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.”

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.**

The ‘**serpent**’ is the devil who is controlling the leader of the one world government (the ‘beast’ of Chapter 13—the one we refer to as the ‘Antichrist’) who will be hunting down the Jews living in Jerusalem during the second half of the 7-year Tribulation Period a.k.a.—the 70th week of Daniel:

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.

Isaiah 16:4 (NKJV)

⁴ Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab (a possible reference to the city of Petra); Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler. For the extortioner is at an end, Devastation ceases, The oppressors are consumed out of the land.

The survival of the Jewish people throughout history is a testimony to the existence and faithfulness of God—and the validity of His Word (since He promised in His Word that Israel would never cease to exist).

Queen Victoria said to her prime minister, who was a Christian and had been witnessing to her about the Bible being the Word of God—“*Show me one thing that proves the Bible is absolutely true.*”

His response was interesting and right on the money—“*The Jew madam, the Jew.*” (Explain)

Revelation 12:15 (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.**

This could be a literal flood of water, or it could be—“*the flood of an 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.

The “**flood**” mentioned in verse 15 could simply be a reference to the total effort of Satan to destroy the nation of Israel—as he is using all of his power to persecute and exterminate the Jewish people.

Revelation 12:16 (NKJV)

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.**

It may be that one of the frequent earthquakes during the Tribulation (Revelation 6:12; 8:5; 11:13, 19; 16:18; and Matthew 24:7) will cause the ground to split open and swallow the waters of this flood—whether this “*flood*” is literal water or some kind of earthly or demonic army.

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.**

This probably refers to the 144,000 Jewish believers plus other Jewish and Gentile Christians that are living during the last 3 ½ years. → Revelation 7:9-14

Revelation 7:9-14 (NKJV)

⁹ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹ All the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom, Thanksgiving and honor and power and might, *Be* to our God forever and ever. Amen." ¹³ Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴ And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Now that brings us to Revelation 13—which we will begin next time.

I hope you have found the first 12 Chapters our study in Revelation interesting and informative.

But understand that starting next week with Chapter 13 and progressing through Chapter 18—we will be looking at prophecies that date back to the first century A.D. (some further back than that) that are so relevant to what's going on in the world today that it will 'blow you away!'

I mean as we study prophecies given 2000 years ago and compare them with what we are see unfolding before our very eyes in the world around us—it will absolutely amaze you!

I have been doing research that I will be presenting that will absolutely rivet your attention on how close we are to the things in the Book of Revelation coming to pass based on current world events.

The signs are all there and end times prophecies and being fulfilled at a 'breathtaking' pace.

You don't want to miss these next studies in Revelation—so COME ON BACK!!

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