Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The War of the Ages, Part 1
Scripture: Revelation 12:1-6
Code: 66-41

Revelation chapter 12 is our study in the Word of God tonight. We're going to be looking at the first six verses, Revelation chapter 12 verses 1 through 6.

"And a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and a moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars. And she was with child and she cried out being in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and on his heads were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth so that when she gave birth he might devour her child. And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron and her child was caught up to God and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God so that there she might be nourished for one thousand, two hundred and sixty days."

This marvelous and rich text introduces us to the war of the ages. Since the fall of Lucifer, the son of the morning, the highest of the angelic host, since the day he became Satan the devil, the archenemy of God, there has been a constant war going on throughout the universe. This is the real star wars, a war waged between Satan and his demons and God and His angels.

Many of these battles, of course, have found their way to the theater of the earth. In fact, this great warfare is all about the earth. The earth becomes the featured center for the battles that make up this war. And that means men and women are also engaged on one side or the other.

When Satan fell he dragged a third of the angels into the warfare with him. And when Satan went into the garden of Eden and deceived Adam and Eve, he dragged the human race into the war as well. This war, the long war against God, has been going on then since Satan's fall and will finally culminate in the end of time when Jesus Christ once and for all and forever defeats Satan and all the demons and casts them in to the pit.

The conflict reaches its great climax then in the future in the time called the Great Tribulation. And that's why we find a discussion of it here in this part of the book of Revelation. At the time of the Great Tribulation, the latter half of a period known as Daniel's seventieth week, the time of Jacob's trouble, Satan will amass his greatest efforts against God and against Christ and against believers. He will make his most powerful effort ever to defeat God, to thwart God's plan. There will be war all

over the universe like never before, or after.

Now we already know who is going to be the victor in this because we've been told at the end of chapter 11. Go back to verse 14. The second woe is past, the third woe is coming quickly, the seventh angel sounded, there arose loud voices in heaven saying..." and here's the announcement of the victor. "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ and He will reign forever and ever." That is the announcement of the triumph. It is an eternal triumph given to Christ and it will go on forever and ever. So we know who the victor will be already.

Now remember, the seventh and last trumpet of judgment from God has blown, as I noted for you back in chapter 11. But the details that describe what that blowing causes don't begin until chapter 15 and they run through chapter 18. Before a discussion of the effect of the blowing of the seventh trumpet, this is this discussion in chapters 12, 13 and 14. And this section takes us back, all the way back, all the way back to creation, if you will, all the way back into eternity and the fall of Lucifer. And then it brings us all the way forward into the time of the Great Tribulation so that we view the Tribulation not only from God's perspective as we have in chapters 6 through 11, but now from Satan's perspective in chapters 12 through 14.

We see Satan's side and Satan's activities. We've already learned about God's perspective and God's side and God's judgment in the seven seals and the seven trumpets. And now we're taken back through the same period of time, in fact even beyond that, way back to creation and way back to the fall of Lucifer. And then ultimately we'll come right back to the time of the Tribulation. In fact, we find ourselves already there in verse 6. And we'll be taken back through that seven-year period to view the very same period of time from Satan's vantage point. We already know the role of God. We already know the enterprise of God. We already know the activity of God in the judgments and the work of salvation described on behalf of Gentiles and Israel. And now we're going to learn about the role and the enterprise and the activities of Satan as he operates in the same period of time. And this is why Jesus described it in Matthew 24 as a time like no other time in the history of the world, because not only is God going to be pouring out the maximum amount of fury, but Satan is going to be pouring out the maximum amount of fury as well. God pouring it out on the ungodly, Satan pouring it out on the godly.

So, it is going to be the coming together of all the worst possible and imaginable events...both from God's side and Satan's. And by the time we come back through chapter 12, 13 and 14 and hit 15, where we pick up the seventh trumpet, we will have a full picture of what has gone on in the time of the Tribulation leading up to the blowing of the seventh trumpet.

Now in order to give us a full understanding of why things are happening the way they are in the time of the Tribulation, the Holy Spirit designs to take John and therefore us all the way back to creation and even before creation, which we read about in those first three verses. We're going all the way

back to the start of the spiritual star wars. The first few verses of this chapter take us back to the beginning, back to Eden and even before that in the heaven. And with just a very brief comment on the fall of Satan, a brief comment on the effect of that fall on man in the fall of man, we then move rapidly to the end time and most of this section of chapter 12 from verse 6 on through chapter 14 deals with the last seven years.

We will then take a very great sweep through the rebellion of Satan, the conflict in the garden, all the way to the Great Tribulation culminating in the return of Jesus Christ as the great war comes to an end and He is the victor.

Now part of what we're going to learn is how Satan develops his rule on earth through the Antichrist and his cohort called the false prophet. We're going to see that as it unfolds for us in chapters 13 and 14.

Now the archenemy of God, obviously, is Satan. He's been trying ever since his rebellion to destroy the purposes of God. Satan hates God and does everything he can possibly do to thwart God's purposes. First, he attempted to destroy the paradise of heaven and led a mutiny against God among the angels. Then he attempted to destroy the paradise of earth and led a mutiny against God among men. And all of this will culminate in a great climactic effort in the time of the Great Tribulation to thwart the kingdom that God has prepared and promised and even to destroy God's plan for the eternal rule and reign of Jesus Christ. So Satan's long war against God is coming to its consummation right before our very eyes as we read this text.

Now the simplest way to understand chapters 12, 13 and 14 is to see them built around the main characters. It is a drama and there are a number of main characters that play a very important part. In fact, there are six of them and perhaps even a seventh, but there are for certain six of them that you'll want to note. There is the woman, the dragon, the male child, Michael, the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth...and then a seventh that could be identified would be the saved remnant. So we're going to be looking at these main characters that are playing out Satan's side of this great future prophetic time.

The first four of them are described in chapter 12, the woman, the dragon, the male child and Michael. And the last two, the beast from the sea and the beast from the earth are described in chapters 13 and 14. By the time we get through all of these chapters, we'll have the whole scenario laid out because around these main characters swirls the satanic action during the time of the Tribulation and the last three and a half years called the Great Tribulation.

Now for tonight I just want to introduce you to the first three, and they are the ones introduced to us in the text that I just read in those opening verses. First of all, let's meet the woman...the woman. Verse 1, "And a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under

her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars and she was with child and she cried out being in labor and in pain to give birth."

Just one little note, you see the word "great" in chapter 12 verse 1, I just read it, you'll also see the word "great" in verse 3, you'll see it again in verse 12, you'll see it again in verse 14. Everything that John sees in this particular vision seems to be massive. The Greek word is mega, it's all a mega vision, everything seems to be huge in size and huge in significance.

And the first thing that he sees that is great is a great sign which appeared in heaven. By the way, the word "sign" demands our attention, this is the first of seven signs in the last half of Revelation. This is the first of seven of them.

Now a sign means something is occurring that points to something else. A sign is a symbol of the reality. You understand that. If I am driving my car and I cross the border of California and enter into Arizona, I see a sign, it says, "Arizona." That is not Arizona, I don't climb on the sign and say, "Now I'm in Arizona." That is a symbol of the reality of the state. And when you see a sign in prophetic literature, it is something symbolic of a reality. And I just want to remind you that where you have the explicit statement of Scripture, "This is a sign," you have a good reminder of the normal interpretation of Scripture being literal. Where it is a sign, the Spirit of God generally tells us it is a sign. That affirms for us that the book of Revelation even is generally to be interpreted literally. When there is clearly a vision, clearly a sign, it is stated.

So here is a sign, semeionin the Greek, meaning a symbol pointing to some reality. So when we see a woman appearing in heaven, the woman is not to illustrate a literal woman, but is symbolic of some other reality.

Now this great sign appeared in heaven. John appears to be on earth in this scene, although we can't be certain...looking up to heaven and the events that are taking place will eventually, of course, take place on the earth. John looks up to see the symbolic representation. What does he see? A woman...a woman.

Now I need also to add there are four symbolic women in Revelation, four of them. The first one is in chapter 2 verse 20 and she is given the name Jezebel and she symbolizes paganism, sinful, wicked paganism. She is a representative woman of those who teach people to commit adultery.

The second woman that I would mention to you comes in chapter 17 and she is a scarlet woman...a scarlet woman, a whore or a harlot. And she represents the apostate church.

A third woman that appears in the book of Revelation is called the wife of the Lamb, and she is representative of...what?...the church, chapter 19 verse 7.

So there is Jezebel, a woman who represents paganism. There is the scarlet woman who represents the apostate church. There is the wife of the Lamb, the bride who represents the true church. And here we have the fourth and that is a woman who represents something else. What does she represent? I'll tell you right off the beginning of this, she represents Israel...Israel. Israel is depicted frequently as the wife of God, a disloyal wife, an unfaithful wife, an adulterous wife, but in the end God will bring her back to faithfulness. She is throughout the Old Testament the wife of God. So Israel is symbolized as a woman.

Some have suggested that this woman here in Revelation 12 represents the church. Let me say very quickly to you, no where in the Bible is the church ever called a wife. No where in the Bible is the church ever called a woman. When the church is spoken of in feminine terms, the church is always called a bride. She doesn't become a wife until the marriage supper of the Lamb in chapter 19 of Revelation, she is always a bride. She is never a woman, she is never a wife. And she is a chaste virgin, 2 Corinthians 11:2 says, she is a bride waiting for the marriage. You see that in the statements of Revelation chapter 19.

So it is better to see the woman as Israel. The rest of the context will make it very clear that it has to be Israel and can be no other, be represented by this sign of a woman.

Now we're not surprised at this. We're not surprised to Israel as a main player, are we, in the final scenario. Not at all. We're not surprised because we know that the seventieth week of Daniel is going to relate to Israel just like the first sixty-nine did, remember? Daniel chapter 9. We also are very much aware of the fact that God has made an inviable promise to Israel to bring them a kingdom. And that God through Zechariah said there would come a time when Israel would look on the one they had pierced and mourn for Him as an only son, and a fountain of cleansing would be opened and there would be salvation. And Paul in Romans chapter 11 said there's coming a day when all Israel will be saved. And the kingdom is promised to Israel. And the prophets said they will enter into that kingdom and they will reign and rule in that kingdom with their Messiah from Jerusalem and they will be the attraction of the whole world so that hanging on the garment of every Jew will be ten Gentiles.

So the Bible tells us clearly that Israel as a nation, as a people, is a very main player in the scenario of the end drama. Salvation of Israel and her promised kingdom is now very near. We're already at the seventh trumpet, the seventh trumpet is the last trumpet. The events in the seventh trumpet are the seven-bowl judgments which are poured out very rapidly. We're in the last few weeks, the last few days of the time of Tribulation just prior to Armageddon, the return of Christ and the establishment of the kingdom. It is at the most only a few months away. And so we're not surprised to see the woman, Israel, coming in to play here as the anticipation of the salvation of Israel and the kingdom starts to come into reality. God's plans through all of redemptive history have at their very

heart the nation Israel.

And we also know this, that if there's any nation on the face of the earth that Satan would want to destroy, who would it be? Israel. Because if he could destroy Israel, he could wipe out God's entire plan. He could make God a liar who couldn't fulfill His promise. So a special object of Satan's hatred and a special target for his destructive attack has been Israel, the Jews.

So we see Israel, not at all surprisingly. In the middle of Satan's final fury at the end of the war of the ages, the long war against God, and Satan is still trying to stop God from fulfilling His promise of a kingdom and still trying to destroy the Jews so they can't get there to receive it.

Now as we look more closely at the women, notice how she is clad. It says a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars. Now this is a fascinating description of the woman. And any Bible student who is aware of the Old Testament immediately thinks about Genesis chapter 37. Turn to Genesis 37 because you have an almost identical description way back in the first book of the Bible when God is laying out His plan. Genesis chapter 37 and verse 9, now we're in the life of Joseph. Joseph in some ways was the beginning of the nation of Israel. Although you say the covenant was given to Abraham, it wasn't until Jacob that the name Israel came, right? You remember Jacob's name was changed to Israel and Joseph being his son is the first real product of Israel...along with the other brothers.

Now Joseph was such a unique personality. One of the things that made him so unique was the dreams that he had. And in verse 9 of Genesis 37 we read this, "Now he had another dream and related it to his brothers and said, `Lo, I have had still another dream and behold the sun and the moon and the eleven stars were bowing down to me.' And he related it to his father and to his brothers and his father rebuked him and said to him, `What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?' And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept this saying in mind."

What's going on here? Well you know the story of Joseph, and, of course, that's exactly what happened. Joseph arose to the place of being a leader in the land of Egypt and eventually his entire family bowed to him. The sun represents Jacob and the moon represents Rachel, and the eleven stars bowing down represent his eleven brothers.

Now go back to Revelation chapter 12. This probably is connected in the background of what is seen here, although it's varied a little bit. Now the sign that John sees in Revelation chapter 12 has much the same imagery. Only now we see twelve stars, the twelfth back in Genesis 37, of course, being Joseph himself. The twelve stars now crown the head of the woman. But still she is clothed with the sun and the moon is under her feet. The woman represents Israel, the people of promise who will be exalted because of Messiah, Romans 9:4 and 5 describes how all of these benefits are coming to

Israel through the Messiah. The fact that the woman is clothed with the sun speaks of glory and brilliance and dignity, that is the unique glory, the unique brilliance, the unique dignity of a redeemed Israel that is going to be lifted up and exalted in the end. The moon under her feet, interesting to think about that. It could refer again to nothing more than exaltation, but it also could have the concept of covenant relationship there, since the moon was so central in the cycle of worship, they, you remember, worshiped in their yearly cycle through a series of new moons and feasts and festivals and sabbaths associated with them.

On her head a crown of twelve stars, this kind of crown is a stephanos, a wreath, a garland, a crown associated with suffering and struggle. And the twelve stars that make up that garland obviously refer to the twelve tribes.

So here is Israel in the fulfillment of its messianic hope which was initially seen even in the very dream of Joseph. Certainly if you think about it, Israel, the woman, was prefigured in the life of Joseph. Think of the parallels. Joseph and Israel were sold to Gentiles, enslaved in captivity, buried among the nations, yet prominent, preserved, delivered, saved, given authority and given a kingdom. Joseph is a wonderful picture of Israel.

So the imagery there in verse 1 leads us to the conclusion that this is a woman representing Israel. Verse 2, "She was with child." Israel here is depicted not only as a wife and as a woman, but as a pregnant woman, a woman about to give birth. Israel is seen as a mother here. By the way, that is also very familiar imagery in the Old Testament. Isaiah 26, Isaiah 54, Isaiah 66, the prophet Hosea chapter 13, Micah chapter 4, chapter 5. She is seen as a mother. And further I would add, as a footnote, the church is never seen as a mother, not as a woman, not as a wife, and not as a mother. She's not yet married until Revelation 19:7 to 9 and the marriage supper takes place.

So here is Israel viewed as a pregnant mother. And there's pain associated with it. Verse 2 says, "She cried out being in labor and in pain to give birth." There's something she's travailing about. There's something she's in pain about. And it's the bringing forth of a child. It wouldn't be too hard to figure out what that was, or who that was, would it? What did every Jewish mother long for? What did the nation wait for? What did they cry for? What did they hope for? The Messiah. Israel agonized and suffered for centuries, waiting and longing for the child that would eventually come and destroy Satan and sin and death and bring the promised kingdom. In fact, I think it's unarguably true that no nation in the history of the world has suffered as severely and as long as Israel. If for no other reason, no nation has existed as long as Israel. And through all of their existence it seems as though they have suffered. Suffered not only because of God's chastening for their sin, but suffered because of Satan's furious efforts to destroy Israel so the kingdom couldn't come.

Ever since the promise of Genesis 3:15 that the serpent would bruise his head, but that there was coming a man...bruise his heal, but there was coming a man who would bruise the serpent's head,

the evidence of the conflict between Satan and the promised seed has gone on. So here is a woman, Israel, travailing, languishing in pain and agony and suffering and struggle waiting for the child to be born who will deliver them from sin and Satan and death and bring the kingdom.

Then we meet the next figure, verses 3 and 4, the dragon. "And another sign appeared in heaven and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns and on his head were seven diadems. And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth and the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth so that when she gave birth he might devour her child."

Here is the woman's enemy, portrayed dramatically in the sky. He sees another sign. He sees a dragon. Satan is not a dragon, Satan is a spirit being. The imagery of a red dragon is only a sign pointing to the reality, symbolizing it. And by the way, Satan is called a dragon thirteen times in the book of Revelation, prior to this in New Testament literature he is identified as a serpent. A dragon is far more terrifying. The term dragon fits into the category of the Hebrew language where you get the word Leviathan, sea monster, a massive creature more awesome than a snake or a serpent, some large and ferocious and fearsome animal, vicious. A term dragon is used in the Old Testament in Psalm 91 verse 13, for example, a awesome, fearsome, deadly destructive fierce creature. And in those ancient times was associated with the sea. Some kind of reptile, it may well be even today that something like that still exists in the uncharted depths of the lowest parts of the sea.

In Ezekiel chapter 29, they, of course, drew their imagery of Satan from this fearsome beast, but in Ezekiel chapter 29 I just want to read you the first five verses so that you can get a little bit of a picture of this kind of imagery. "In the tenth year and the tenth month on the twelfth of the month, the word of the Lord came to me saying,`Son of man set your face against Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. Speak and say...Thus says the Lord God, behold I'm against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, the great monster that lies in the midst of his rivers that has said my Nile is mine, and I myself have made it and I shall put hooks in your jaws and I shall make the fish of your rivers cling to your scales and I shall bring you up out of the midst of your rivers and all the fish of your rivers will cling to your scales, and I shall abandon you to the wilderness, you and all the fish of your rivers. You will fall on the open field, you will not be brought together or gathered, I have given you for food to the beasts of the earth and the birds of the sky."

In depicting Pharaoh as the enemy of God, Pharaoh there is called a great sea monster, a great dragon, some awesome beast that rose out of the sea. And that's the imagery that you have here to describe Satan.

Notice the color is red. Not only is he fierce and cruel and vicious and deadly and frightening, but red speaks of bloodshed...bloodshed. The question immediately comes...the woman is Israel, who is the dragon? Look at verse 9, "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called

the devil and Satan." Very clearly is this imagery identified. Chapter 20 of Revelation verse 2 says, "The angel coming down from heaven who had the key to the abyss and a chain in his hand, laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old who is the devil and Satan." Clearly then we are now introduced to Satan.

Israel is going to play a main part in the time of the Tribulation, and so is Satan, as you well know. Now Satan is further described in some very interesting ways in verse 3. Not only as fierce and deadly and dangerous and bloody, a killer. As Jesus said, he is a murderer from the beginning. But he has seven heads and on his seven heads are seven diadems or crowns, royal crowns. So this thing that he sees is this massive red, fierce reptile like some sea monster and it has seven heads. We'll learn more about that as we get in to chapter 17 where it describes them in verse 9, "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings, five have fallen, one is and the other has not yet come and when he comes he must remain a little while, and the beast which was and is not is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven and goes to destruction." When we get to that, we'll get into detail. Suffice it to say, the seven kings represent seven worldly kingdoms, all the way to the end. Seven worldly kingdoms. And Satan is over them all. He is depicted as the seven-headed monster who rules the world, the seven heads represent the seven kingdoms of the past and we'll go in to those in detail as we get in to chapter 17.

Then it also says he has ten horns. Horns represent strength and power. And animals' horns are its weapons, its indications of power and strength. We find them also in chapter 17 of Revelation, we'll learn more about that when we get there as well. But just to remind you that it says in verse 12, "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings." Back in the book of Daniel chapter 7 we read about that, don't we? Daniel 7:7, 7:20, 7:14, Daniel describes the final form of world rule in an imagery of ten kings. And he describes it as ten horns in chapter 7 verse 7, again in verse 20 and down in verse 24 says, "As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise." So it is the final form of world rule with a ten-king confederacy. And we'll learn more about that, as I said, in chapter 17. The point to note here is this, Satan is represented as dominating the world. The seven heads with crowns indicate that he has been the ruler of all the kingdoms of the world, past, present and future. And the ten horns representing ten kings show that in the final form of world rule he will dominate it all. Satan has ruled the world, he will rule the world until the blowing of the seventh trumpet. And then the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of...whom?...our Lord and of His Christ. Up until then it is the kingdom of Satan.

Satan then has through all of the centuries, operating through the world system, been making every hellish effort to inflict pain, suffering and death on the woman...wanting to destroy Israel. That's been his effort. He has inflicted incredible and incessant injuries and wounds and pain on the Jews. Up until the time of Christ and even after that, he has continued this unceasing onslaught. In fact in Daniel 8:24 it talks about the final form of Satan's rule, "Destroying to an extraordinary degree, and he will destroy mighty men and the holy people." He's been always after God's people. First of all Israel,

and certainly in the end time the church as well.

To give you a little hint about this, look at 1 John. It's kind of an obscure place for this to be tucked away, but 1 John 3:12. Very interesting, you remember way back, of course, in the book of Genesis the story of Cain and Abel. Cain killed Abel, right? Why did he kill him? Jealous? God accepted Abel's sacrifice and didn't accept Cain's. Abel was a saint, Abel was an obedient man, Abel did God's will. Abel was one of God's people. So Cain killed him. Look at verse 12, 1 John 3, "Not as Cain who was of the evil one, and slew his brother." From the very beginning Satan was doing everything he could to kill the saints. And he even used Cain. This warfare has been going on a long, long time.

Genesis chapter 6, Satan sends his demons in some bizarre cohabitation with women to produce an unredeemable race that God has to drown in the Flood. Satan did everything conceivable to corrupt the people of God. He's still trying to do it. He declared his war on God in heaven, read Isaiah 14 verses 12 to 15, read Ezekiel 28 verses 12 to 17, and in those two passages you get an insight into Satan's rebellion against God. And ever since that time he has been fighting God for control of the universe. He wants to rule. He hates God. He wants to destroy God's purposes. He wants to destroy God's people. He wants to rule and reign. And he's fighting for his very life because he knows the Bible better than us, and he knows what his destiny is if he doesn't win.

You say, "Well he also can read the Bible and find out he's not going to win." Yeah, but he doesn't give up that easy. His desire has been to kill the woman before she can have the child. He didn't succeed in that. She had the child. Then he tied to kill the child. He couldn't kill the child and keep Him dead. The child died, but He died under the predetermined will of God and He died for our sins and He rose again, and ascended to the Father and Satan is still trying to work to kill the saints and to kill the Christians and to kill the Jews to thwart the plan of God.

I mean, go back in history, let's take just a moment and go back to Exodus chapter 1. "A new king arose over Egypt," verse 8, "said to his people," in verse 9, "`Behold the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we, we've got to be smart in how we deal with these folks.'" They figured out a plan. Verse 15, "The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah, and the other was named Puah, and he said, `When you're helping the Hebrew women to give birth, and see them upon the birth stool, if it's a son, kill it. If it's a daughter, let it live.' But the midwives feared God and didn't do as the king of Egypt had commanded them, but let the boys live. So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, `Why have you done this thing and let the boys live?' And the midwives said to Pharaoh, `Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and they give birth before the midwife can get to them.'" That's a nice lie. "So God was good to the midwives." They didn't need to lie, but God was good to them, "Because they didn't kill the babies. The people multiplied and became very mighty. And it came about because the midwives feared God that He established households for them. Pharaoh commanded all his people saying, `Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile and every

daughter you're to keep alive.'" We've got to destroy these men, we've got to wipe this race out.

Why did Pharaoh want to do that? What's the point in that? Because Pharaoh was an agent of Satan. Pharaoh was a representative dragon of the ultimate dragon.

"A man from the house of Levi...chapter 2...went and married a daughter of Levi, and the woman conceived and bore a son and when she saw that he was beautiful she hid him for three months." Why? Because she didn't want them to kill him. Now it's not the midwives job, it's everybody's job to kill them. "When she couldn't hide him any longer, she got him a wicket basket...wicker basket, covered it with tar and pitch, put the child into it, set it among the reeds by the bank of the Nile." She hid it in the Nile. She didn't send it off down the river, she put it in a place where she thought it would be safe, and the sister, Miriam, stood at a distance to find out what would happen. "The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the Nile with her maidens, walking alongside the Nile saw the basket among the reeds, sent her maid and brought it to her. When she opened it she saw the child and behold the boy was crying. She had pity on him." It was Moses, wasn't it? The nation was saved by a tear. Satan was doing everything he could to wipe out the Jews. Satan had already tried to prevent Abraham from having a son of promise. He tried to destroy Jacob. Tried to kill the line of Judah. Tried to take Israel captive and eliminate ten tribes later on in the divided kingdom and failed. Though the captives from the north never returned, representatives from all ten tribes had filtered into the south and so all twelve tribes are still in tact. The archenemy of Israel tried to destroy the Jews through pagan kings and God used judges to deliver them. The dragon tried to get Saul to murder David and end all messianic hope through the line of David, and he could never succeed. Haman became Satan's tool to attempt genocide, but the nation was saved by Esther and Haman was executed on his own gallows.

One of the most amazing accounts of Satan's efforts to destroy the woman and to eliminate the possibility of the seed comes in 2 Chronicles 21 and 22. Just an absolutely incredible account, read chapter 21 verses 1 to 7, read on in to chapter 22 down in to verse 12, and there you will see that the very messianic line got down to one fragile child, one little baby, twice. And those babies were supposed to be killed and God never let that one thread on which all messianic hope hung die. The line was one person away from extinction and all the promises of God, one person away from not being fulfilled.

Satan's desire was always to exterminate the woman, exterminate the line of Messiah one way or another. He was never successful and Israel felt much pain because of his efforts.

And he wasn't operating alone. Go back to the book of Revelation chapter 12 and there you will read that his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven, and threw them to the earth. When he fell, what that's telling you is, when the dragon fell out of heaven, he took with him a third of the angels. Now that leaves two thirds left which means the forces of God are double that of Satan. He has one

third, God has two thirds. This takes us back to the original rebellion. Now we're going past the garden, past the time of creation, past the time of the patriarchs, all the way back into the eternity past and the initial rebellion. And when Satan fell, he took a third of the angels with him. When he lifted his own heart up and when sin rose up within him and he was proud and said, "I will be like the Most High," he said, "I will, I will, I will," all those times, five times in a row. And God said, "No you won't." Cast him out of heaven, he didn't go alone, he had pulled off a mutiny that engulfed a third of the angels, all of whom were sealed in wickedness to be damned forever in a place prepared for the devil and his angels, a place called hell, a lake of fire which burns with fire and brimstone.

And so in the rebellion he took a third of the angels with him, and so it isn't just him against Israel, it's all of them. And there are uncounted thousands upon thousands and thousands of thousands. In fact, there are so many that two hundred million of them are released from the Euphrates during the time of the Tribulation who have been held captive and bound there. We don't know how many are loose, but there are two hundred million more to be released, to say nothing of the pit in chapter 9 of Revelation that's going to belch out all of those who have been in chains temporarily. Down in verse 7 you see the devil and his angels waging war in verse 7 there.

So he's not alone in his slaughter against Israel, he's got this incredible heavenly host. And he also has his earthly agents like Athaliah and others who have attempted to destroy the people of God in the past. He operates a powerful spiritual host of angelic beings who commiserate with him in his unholy star wars and he works his work through human beings as well.

Then in verse 4 it says, "The dragon stood before the woman just waiting, who was about to give birth so that when she gave birth he might devour her child." He had all these efforts to try to wipe out the line, he couldn't wipe out the line. And so he wanted to destroy the child. He wanted to devour, kataphago, to eat, like a dragon would, to consume. And he tried. First there was Herod, right? And Herod came along and he wanted to kill every little baby born in that time. Verse 13 of Matthew 2 says, "Herod's going to search for the child to destroy Him. So they took the child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt and there was a place there for them to remain until Herod died. When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the Magi, he became enraged and sent and slew all the male children in Bethlehem, all its environs from two years old and under according to the time which he had ascertained from the Magi." Slaughtered them all figuring He's hiding somewhere, I'll just massacre all of them and I'll catch Him in the massacre. He was the agent of Satan trying to wipe out the Messiah, trying to eat the child just after He had been born, before He could accomplish His work.

You find, for example, in the fourth chapter of Luke, Jesus is preaching at Nazareth, His own town and verse 28 says, "In the synagogue they were filled with rage, they heard these things, they rose up, they cast Him out of the city, they led Him to the brow of the hill in which their city had been built in order to throw Him down the cliff, but He passed through their midst." Satan wanted Him dead there and he couldn't kill Him.

In Matthew chapter 4 Satan said to Him, "I'll tell You what, throw Yourself off the temple, if You're the Son of God, the Bible says He'll give His angels charge concerning You, throw Yourself off." I believe that Satan's hope was that Christ would do that and be destroyed. He did everything he could to devour the child, but he couldn't do it.

Even in modern times, you know, I think he tried to keep Him in the tomb but he couldn't do that either. In modern times this has gone on. The woman is still being attacked, still suffering, even after the child is born. In Germany, Jews were blamed for the Black Plague and torturously treated. The year that Columbus discovered America, 1492, Spain drove every Jew out of the nation. The Roman Catholic Inquisition slaughtered Jews in the name of Jesus Christ and the numbers of them are beyond counting, massacred in the name of Christ. In 1882 the Russians committed atrocities in the massacre of Jews, 1894 was the infamous Dryfuss Affair, an effort to blame Jews for every national problem and to get them out of the ranking places out of the military. Then came Hitler, we all know about the six million Jews that he massacred and now it's the Arabs who given the slightest provocation would do anything to wipe the Jews from the face of the earth.

But the Satan can't kill the woman. And he can't kill the hope of the kingdom. And he can't kill the child. John Phillips writes, "Significantly the turning point came in Moses' life when he saw in the desert that mysterious burning bush which flamed and blazed away, but for all the crackling of the fire was not consumed, despite the ceaseless hatred of her foes because God is in her midst. Israel cannot be assimilated into the nations, nor can she be exterminated by the nations. She is a burning bush in the wilderness. She burns but she's never consumed," end quote.

Now that takes us to the last character in our little piece of the drama tonight, the child, verse 5...the child, verse 5. And it obvious to us now who the child is. "She gave birth to a son, a male child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron and her child was caught up to God and to His throne."

She gave birth to a son. Isaiah said it would be like this, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son, Isaiah 7:14. Isaiah said it again in chapter 9, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." This is the Son and He is in every sense a Son of the woman, is He not? A Son of Abraham, tribe of Judah, star and scepter of Jacob, descendant of David. Jesus was a Jew. And the woman gave birth to the child. This refers to the birth of the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. And here in verse 5 you see His incarnation. In spite of all of Satan's efforts, the child was born, the incarnation occurred. Then immediately you see His coronation. This is the child who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. That's directly out of Psalm 2. I told you last time you're going to hear a lot about Psalm 2 in the remainder of the book of Revelation, it's quoted numerous times. Psalm 2 said there is coming a Son, there is coming a child begotten of God. This child will have the nations as His inheritance, the very ends of the earth as His possession, and will break them with a rod of iron and shatter them like earthenware. This is the Son to whom you do homage or you perish in the way, says Psalm 2.

So the Son is going to come and rule. We'll read more about that in chapter 19 where again it refers to Psalm 2. It says when Christ returns out of His mouth comes a sharp sword so that He can smite the nations and He rules them with a rod of iron. That same imagery. Swift, immediate judgment. By the way, the word "rule" you'd be interested to know is from poimainowhich means to shepherd, to pastor, to give guidance, to feed, to lead and to guard. There's a tender side of His guardianship and His leadership and His guiding and His feeding but it is also with a rod of iron, a resolute rule. I think it will be a time when justice will be immediate and swift and God's biblically revealed moral order will be enforced by the Messiah, immediately. Justice will be swift and it will be sure and it will be as God ordained it in Scripture.

So a child is born, you see the incarnation. He will rule with a rod of iron, you see the coronation. And then the last component of verse 5, "Her child was caught up to God and to His throne," and there you see the exaltation. They're a little out of chronological sequence, it was incarnation, exaltation, coronation. The exaltation, the child was caught up to God and to His throne, we call that His ascension, right? What does it signify? What is the signification of the ascension? It is the Father saying that the Son has accomplished redemption, right? Satan couldn't stop Him from being born. He couldn't stop Him from accomplishing redemption and therefore being exalted to the right hand of the Father as a perfect Savior. And he can't stop Him from being coronated as a King. Couldn't stop the child from being born, he couldn't kill Him. He couldn't destroy Him after He arrived, he couldn't stop the incarnation. He couldn't stop the child from dying, to rise again. He couldn't stop Him from purchasing salvation. He couldn't stop Him from delivering the death blow to his own head. He couldn't stop the exaltation. He couldn't stop Him from ruling with a rod of iron in glory and righteousness over the whole of the universe, he can't stop the coronation. And isn't it important for us to know all of this? Because Satan is really going to work feverishly during the time of the Tribulation but he can't succeed. We already know that because we've heard the victory note in chapter 11 verse 15, which I read earlier.

But this defeated foe is relentless...relentless. And if he can't destroy the Messiah at His incarnation or His exaltation or His coronation, then he's going after the people and he's going to try to massacre all the saints and all the believers. And there will be millions of them martyred, as we've already noted, and he's going to try to wipe out the nation Israel as he has tried in the past with the genocides that occurred in ancient times and in modern times under Hitler and Stalin so that there's no one left to inherit the kingdom.

So in just five verses we've come from eternity past and the fall of Satan all the way to verse 6, to the end of the Tribulation. And it says the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Satan's going to come after the woman during the time of the Tribulation. And the Lord's going to hide her. This is exactly what was spoken of by Jesus in Matthew in the Olivet Discourse. Matthew

24 verse 15, "You'll see the abomination of desolations," it happens in the midpoint, three and a half years in. "Let those in Judea flee to the mountains, don't even go down from your housetop into the house to get anything. If you're out in the field, don't go back home to get your coat, just run. Too bad for those who are trying to take little children and nursing babies. Pray that your flight might not be in winter or on a sabbath, for there will be great tribulation...great tribulation."

I believe it is that period of time that's going to send Israel fleeing out of the land. It's going to be inaugurated when the Antichrist comes in and desecrates the Holy of Holies, sets himself up as God and starts the slaughter against the Jews and they're going to run. And verse 6 says they're going to run to the wilderness. What wilderness? Well most likely the wilderness always has been to them Moab, Ammon and Edom, and that's just east, over the Jordan River, across the Dead Sea, around the southern tip of the Dead Sea, however you can get there, you go to ancient Moab, Ammon and Edom. Read Daniel 11, Isaiah 16, Isaiah 26 seems to be allusions and references to those very places, somewhere out there. Some people think they're going to be hidden in what Isaiah called Sela or Petra, the rosered city of the dead down in Edom, incredible place you can only enter through an opening fit for one individual. And inside when you come through this narrow place, you find a massive city carved out of the rock walls. Some people think that they're going to be hid there. In fact, I've known some people who have stashed Bibles in secret places so they'll have the Word of God to read when they arrive. We don't know where the place will be but God will provide for them. And I think He'll feed them like He fed them manna. It says He will nourish them. He'll take care of them again. And I think that's when they're going to be being saved, right up until the end. And whoever is still remaining in Jerusalem at the very end, as we saw, will come under the influence of the two witnesses and their resurrection and give glory to God. And that salvation will occur there in a culminating way as we noted when we were studying the first part of chapter 11.

So for three and a half years, that's what twelve hundred and sixty days are, they will be cared for by God in the wilderness. Verse 14 is kind of interesting. It says, "Two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman in order that she might fly into the wilderness." And I'll say more about that in our future study. Apparently they're going to fly there on an eagle, so there might be some special flights taking them way off somewhere. But I'll tell you one thing, there are no people on the face of the earth as resourceful in the midst of disaster as the Jews, the Israelis, and with the power of God on their side they're going to be protected. Why? Romans 11, "So all Israel shall be saved." They're going to receive their kingdom, but not without the fury of Satan being unleashed on them.

So we meet the first three characters. Next time character number four, an incredible angel by the name of Michael.

Father, we thank You again that we can come to Your Word with confidence, confidence that is built over and over again in the very process of reading and studying, the ring of truth so powerfully comes over and over to us. The more we study, the longer we study, the deeper we study, the truer it

appears. O we thank You for Your Word, we thank You that we are not without direction and we are not confused about the future but that it's all so clearly outlined for us. And, Lord, knowing that these things are going to come to pass and how the world will end, should compel us to preach the saving mercy of Christ, should compel every soul in the hearing of my voice to come running to You for deliverance from the horrible holocaust of judgment that's coming in the future. What fool could reject the saving gospel that promises the forgiveness of sin and eternal glory in heaven and blessing? What fool would hold on to the sin that damns him to an eternal hell of torment when he's offered forgiveness in the grace of salvation? Merciful God, reach down and touch that unconverted heart, that hard rebellious heart, that sinful heart that will not yield and faces the inevitability of doom and judgment, and bring to them the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. Remove the darkness. And as those who gave testimony in the waters of baptism tonight, may many turn to the Savior and know the joy that only He brings now and forever. Amen.

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