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Reading: Revelation Chapter 12

EXPLORING THE FUTURE

18. WHY SOME PEOPLE HATE THE JEWISH RACE

The story is told of Napoleon that one of his generals asked him what he believed to be the greatest miracle of all time. Without hesitation Napoleon answered, "THE JEWS." There's no question that Israel is one of the greatest phenomena that history has witnessed. What God has done to that nation, for that nation, and through that nation is remarkable. The Jew is remarkable. Is it not remarkable that:

As a race, he was old when Rome was young ?

That He has outlived every nation and empire that has persecuted him ?

That in every field of endeavour to which he has turned his hand he has known astonishing success ?

That He has defied the laws of history and preserved his racial identity though scattered in a hundred countries for hundreds upon hundreds of years ?

His long sufferings through the ages in many, many lands ? It seems that throughout history someone has always been inciting violence against the Jews. One of the great films of our times, "*Fiddler on the Roof*," shows the dilemma of the Jews in a little village in Russia about a 100 years ago. What happened there has happened a thousand times in a thousand places to many hundreds of thousands of Jews. Have you ever wondered why ? Why is there this feeling of Anti-Semitism ? Why do some people hate the Jewish race ? Well, I believe this chapter answers the puzzling mystery of Anti-Semitism. For it shows that anyone who hates and persecutes the Jew is actually doing so at the instigation of the devil who hates all Jews ! And the devil hates the Jewish people because their race brought the Saviour into this world.

Now this is a chapter that is filled with powerful symbolism. Do you recall (1:1) ? "*And He sent and sign-ified it.*" In other words Christ made known his revelation to John by signs or symbols and our task is to discover what these symbols really mean. Now to understand the symbols of (Rev 12) we should remember that we are viewing Earthly scenes from Heavens point of view ! Do you recall that in (Ch 4) John was caught up to heaven and shown all the things that follow from (Ch 4-ch 19) Now when you look at Earthly events from Heaven's standpoint time is never a factor.

You see this vision in (Ch 12) does not present a sequence or an ordered chronology.

It presents occurrences arranged according to their meaning and importance, from a Heavenly eternal perspective. Events that may be widely separated in time may be clustered together in eternity's view. From Heavens' perspective we are shown here what happens not when it happens. Now if we keep that in mind this chapter with all of its symbols that once seemed obscure will pop into focus.

This is a chapter of Great Things. Notice a "*Great Wonder*," (12:1) "*A Great Red Dragon*." (12:3) "*Great Wrath*." (12:12) and "*two wings of a Great eagle*." (12:14) Before us is a most dramatic scene.
(Rev Ch 12) has to do with *THE WOMAN: THE WAR: THE WOE*.

(1) THE WOMAN

This is the second of four women mentioned in the Book of the Revelation. (1) Jezebel: (2:20) (2) Israel: (12:6) (3) The Scarlet Women: (17:1) (4) The Lamb's Wife: (19:7) Look for a moment at:

(a) *THE SIGNIFICANCE of the Woman:*

The word "*wonder*," means "*sign*." A miraculous signpost, something that should cause men to see the hand of God in history. This brings us to the Mystery of the Woman ! Why is she clothed in the sun ?

Why is the moon under her feet ? Why are twelve stars arranged in a crown over her head. Now there are several theories as to whom or what this woman represents. Mary Baker Eddy has no hesitation in equating this person with herself. The male child she bore was seen as the Christian Science Movement which came into being in the year 1879. This view holds no water as far as biblical truth is concerned. Roman Catholic scholars tell us that she is Mary the mother of Jesus. You see there seems to be doubt as to the Identity of the Man-Child. Look at (12:5) Now the Ruler here is Christ, and this is a millennial scene, (Ps 2:9) so it seems to make sense that the mother of the child would be Mary. The problem is that you can't fit Mary into (12:6) That never happened to Mary, and it never will. So the woman is not Mary.

Some Bible scholars say that The Woman is the church. Certainly in (19:7) the Church is pictured as a woman, the Bride of Christ. The problem is that its impossible for the Woman to represent the church, because she is depicted as giving birth to Jesus. (12:5) Now tell me: when did the church gave birth to Christ ? My the church did not produce Christ, Christ produced the church. The church was "*Born*," out of the wounded side of Christ. Who then does this woman represent ? Well, look at clues. (12:1) Now there is only one other place in Scripture where you find all these symbols clustered in one place. (Gen Ch 37) the story of Joseph, the boy-dreamer. (Gen 37:5-11) You see the sun, moon and stars represented his father,

mother and eleven brothers. He himself would be the twelfth star, and so these symbols of the sun, moon, and stars make it clear that the woman represents Israel. Look for a moment at (Rom 9:1-5) So here again, in the symbolism of The Woman clothed in the sun, with the stars at her head and the moon at her feet, we have a picture of Israel coming again into prominence in the last days ! (a)

(b) THE SUFFERINGS OF THE WOMAN:

No nation on earth has suffered so severely and for so long as Israel. Notice we are left in no doubt as to:

(1) THE CAUSE OF ISRAEL'S SUFFERINGS:

Look at (12:3) The word " *dragon*," occurs 13 times in the Book of the Revelation. We are in doubt as to the Identity of this dragon. Look at (12:9) He is pictured here as a great red dragon, an eloquent symbol for cruelty, blood-lust and power. He is the cause of Israel's sufferings. He has a special hatred for the Jewish people and has been the power behind Anti-Semitism in the Past, in the Present, and in the Future. (12:6 13-17) For think of

(2) THE COURSE OF ISRAEL'S SUFFERINGS:

Sacred and secular history tell the sad tale. Israel has often been in the fire.

*** IN BIBLICAL TIMES:**

Do you recall Pharaoh's attempt to exterminate the Jews ? In 722 B.C. the Assyrians sacked Samaria and marched the Hebrew captives into exile. In 586 B.C. it was the turn of the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar demolished Jerusalem, destroyed the Temple, deported the Jews to Babylon. In 473 B.C. Haman instigated a purge of Jews throughout the Persian Empire a purge that was averted because of the courage of Esther. (Esther Ch 3) In 169 B.C. a half mad Syrian tyrant named Antiochus Epiphanes captured Jerusalem and put the Jews to the sword. And in AD 70 Jerusalem fell to Rome. *

*** BY ECCLESIASTICAL TREATIES:**

In 1096 Pope Urban the Second proclaimed the First Crusade to rid the Holy Land of the Muslims. Suffering spread and Jews by the thousands were massacred. In 1290 King Edward the first banished all the Jews from England and they were not permitted to return until the time of Oliver Cromwell. In 1306 all Jews were ordered out of France by Philip the fourth and out of Spain in 1492. In 1475 all Jews in the Italian city of Trent were killed. Oh, the Suffering of Israel, by * *

*** FROM NATIONAL TYRANTS:**

When Theodore Hertzl was in Paris he heard the words, "*death to the Jews*," echoing through the streets, and he decided that Europe was no place for the Jewish people. Nearly 3 million Jews were killed during Stalin's reign, part of the tens of millions of people massacred by that notorious dictator. But the darkest hour in the long history of Anti-Semitism was yet to come. For Hitler's goal was to exterminate every Jew in Europe and with what thoroughness did the Nazis pursue their cause. For their "*final solution*," to the "*Jewish problem*," was that 6 million Jews more than half the Jewish population of Europe were slaughtered. My no matter where one looks in the world this the Jews have few friends. Anti-Semitism in Russia, Germany, in the Arab bloc. One Arab leader said: "*There are 50 million Arabs, what does it matter if we lose 10 million to kill all the Jews.*" But if the Past was bad the worst is yet to come for in the middle of the Tribulation, there will come a wave of Anti-Semitism such as the world has never seen. (12:6) (a) (b) but look at:

(c) *THE SEED OF THE WOMAN:*

Look at (12:5) In the fullness of time Christ was born of a virgin, a woman of the royal house of David, of the tribe of Judah. You see:

**** SATAN COULD NOT HARM HIM FOR HE CAME:***

John says, "*And the dragon*" (12:4) Do you recall that Herod was Satan's tool at that time ? Herod slew all the babies of Bethlehem under two years of age, but all in vain. Christ came. He escaped the edge of the sword.

**** SATAN COULD NOT HALT HIM FOR HE CONQUERED:***

For we read, "*And she forth a man child His throne.*" (12:5) He was manifest that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 Jn 3:8) Demons, disease, death, and disaster all fled before Him. He invaded death at Calvary and tore its bars away. He rose in victory, having spoiled principalities and powers triumphing over them openly in His cross. And now He is seated at God's right hand on glory. Satan could not halt Him even for a moment. * *

**** SATAN COULD NOT HINDER HIM FOR HE CONTROLS:***

Look at what John says, "*And the woman Days.*" (12:6) Is this not the same period at which we've been looking ? My during the last half of the Tribulation period, Satan will do his worst, but his plans will be foiled

for God has prepared a place already where the fleeing Jews (possibly the godly remnant, those who have trusted the Messiah and have refused to submit to the Antichrist) a place where they will safe. You see it's the Lord who is in control ! Do you need to be reminded of that this ? My God is control in relation to the Purpose, the Time, the Circumstances of your suffering ! Indeed, "*God will not suffer escape.*"
(1 Cor 10:31) (1)

Notice that in (12:7) the scene abruptly changes and we pass from the (1)

(2) THE WAR

Instead of looking at earthly scenes from a heavenly perspective we now become spectators to a scene which takes place in heaven itself. It is a scene of conflict. John says, "*And there was war in heaven.*" (12:7) Look at:

(a) THE REALM OF THIS WAR:

One of the last places you would ever expect to find war is in heaven, but according to (12:7) a war is going to take place there. Now I think we've got to make a distinction between (12:4) and (12:7)
(12:4) seems to refer to the fall of Satan, when he and his host's revolted against God. (Is 14:12-15) However, the casting out described in (12:7-10) is yet future. But think of this. War in heaven. You see even today Satan has access to heaven. (Job 1-2) He cannot since he sinned abide there in the holy presence of God, but evidently God allows Satan to appear before Him on limited occasions. My it is right here that Satan accuses the brethren ! (Zech 3:1) But look at;

(b) THE REASON FOR THIS WAR:

Look at (12:9) You see this war is fought:

*** TO CAST SATAN DOWN FROM HEAVEN:**

" *Michael and his angels in heaven.*" (12:7-8) Do you recall one we looked at (Dan 10:10-13) and we discovered that while the Persian Empire was ruled by a Human Prince, Cyrus (Dan 10:1) in the Unseen World it was ruled by a fallen angelic prince. There was one assigned by Satan to look after the nation of Persia and the nation of Greece. (Dan 10:20 These Satanic angelic princes supervise on Satan's behalf the affairs of the nations over which they rule. Now when God called Abraham out of the Ur of the Chaldees, He said to him, "*I will make of thee a great nation.*" (Gen 12:2) In God's time this nation emerged as a power to be reckoned with on earth. It was a new divinely- created nation, and Satan had no angelic prince over it. On the contrary, an angel of God, Michael "*one of the chief princes,*" was set

over Israel in the spirit world. Michael is called " *your prince*," and the " *prince which standeth for thy people*." (Dan 10:13, 21: 12:1) He is also called by Jude " *the archangel*," (Jude 9)

What I am trying to say is this, Michael is identified with the nation of Israel, he defends Israel and God's interest's in this nation against the ceaseless attacks of Satan's emissaries.

My (Rev Ch 12) describes the casting down of Satan and his hosts from the " *heavenly realms*." Already he has been cast out of heaven into the air (Eph 2:2) here he will cast from the air to the earth then from the earth to the bottomless pit, (20:1) and finally from the bottomless pit to the lake of fire. (20:10) My are you not glad this that Satan is on his way down ? My this war is fought *

* TO CAST SATAN DOWN TO EARTH:

Look at (12:9-10) Now the door is shut. My Satan's way into the presence of God is bolted and barred forever. Now, in the presence of God instead of the vices are rehearsed the victories of the saints. They tell each other in glory of the Cleansing of the saints, how they overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. They tell of the Confession of the saints, how they overcome Satan by the word of their testimony. They speak of the Courage of the saints, how they loved not their lives unto death. No wonder this proclamation in heaven ends with the summons, " *Therefore rejoice ye heavens*." (12:12) Satan is cast down from heaven and Satan is cast down to earth. Incidentally, did you notice that Satan is the accuser of the brethren ? One of the most persistent popular myths about Satan pictures him complete with pitchfork, horns and pointed tail as being in charge of hell. My Satan is not in hell, in fact he has never been there. He will not be sentenced to the lake of fire until after his final rebellion is crushed as the end of the Millennium. (20:7-10) And when he does not enter hell Satan will not be in charge, rather he will be suffering the most horrible punishment. You see, Satan divides his time between roaming the earth " *seeking whom he may devour*," and coming before the Lord to accuse the brethren.

My do you see Satan's purpose ? He works on earth to turn God's children against God and He works in heaven to turn God against His children. " *Oh, by the way God, did you notice Denis Lyle down there in Moira ? He really blew it today in his so called Christian life. Just thought you'd like to know*." But no sooner does the prosecutor make his accusation than our personal advocate, steps to the front of the courtroom, and says, " *You don't have anything against Lyle. I paid the penalty for his sins on the cross, so drop this case for lack of evidence*." My what a battle you and I are involved today and that is why I want you to notice:

(c) *THE RESOURCES IN THIS WAR:*

You see there is a way of victory over Satan and its revealed in (12:11) "*They*," refers to the "*brethren*," of (12:10) Here's a 3 fold plan for defeating the attacks of Satan.

(1) *PLEAD THE BLOOD OF CHRIST:*

Have you heard the devil accusing you in your conscience ? Has an inner voice ever said, "*What right do you have to call yourself a Christian ?*" How do you handle such accusations ? Do you remind Satan that you're covered by the Blood of the Lamb ?

(2) *SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY:*

"*And by the Word of their testimony.*" (12:11) Perhaps the message of the gospel first entered your life through the testimony of a friend, a neighbour, who cared enough about to share his testimony with you ! Are you in turn sharing that message with others ? Are you overcoming Satan by the word of your testimony ?

(3) *PUT EVERYTHING YOU HAVE ON THE ALTAR FOR CHRIST:*

John records, "*they loved not their lives unto the death.*" (12:11) In other words, they loved Christ more than everything, even more than their own lives. They would rather die than bring shame to their Lord and His name. Now when you plead the blood it means you have exercised Faith: when you share your testimony it means you are exercising Love, when you sacrifice all you're exercising Hope the Hope that the loss of all means nothing compared to the promised inheritance ! Faith, Hope, Love. My these are the weapons with which to slay the dragon (1) (2)

(3) *THE WOE*

Look at (12:12) "*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea.*" Since the devil cannot touch the child, he attacks the woman who brought the child into the world. Now a number of factors come into view in connection with The Woe. Notice for example,

(a) *THE SATANIC PERSECUTION:*

"*And when the dragon saw he persecuted.*"
(12:13) Satan has always hated and detested Israel because they are God's chosen people and the vehicle through which salvation came into the world. And Satan

would like to destroy the nation, especially as the time draws night for the Messiah to return to the earth to establish the promised kingdom. And so the devil himself will personally supervise the last bloodbath of anti-Semitic persecution. My what a time of terror lies ahead for Israel.

(Zech 12:9-14:21: Matt 24:20 25:31-46) But what is important in these verses to note is that God will care for this believing remnant in a supernatural way. (the fleeing woman represents the believing remnant 12:6 12:17) for look at:

(b) *THE SPECIAL PLACE:*

(12:14) (12:6) speaks of this as a "*place prepared of God.*" Many Bible scholars believe the faithful Jews of the last days will flee to the city of Petra, south of the Dead Sea, just across the Israeli border in the land of Jordan a strangely beautiful city hewn out of the rock of the earth, and that is presently an attraction for tourists and archaeologists in the Holy land. (Is 63:1)

Many years ago the noted Bible scholar

W. E. Blackstone, on the basis of these verses, hid thousands of copies of the N.T. in and around the caves and rocks of Petra. He felt that someday the terrified survivors of the antichrist's bloodbath will welcome the opportunity to read the Word of God. One thing is sure, God will prepare a Special Place where this Jewish remnant will be protected and cared for. Is God's loving care for the nation of Israel amazing ? Today they continue to be seen as the apple of His eye. They have an intrinsic role to play in the fulfilment of His prophetic programme. They remain an integral part of His eternal purpose and even in the dark days of the Great Tribulation, God will look after them. And when you stop and think about it, He does the same for you and me right now ! Now how long will this go on ? Well notice:

(c) *THE SPECIFIC PERIOD:*

"*A time, and times and half a time.*" (12:14)

That equals three and one half years. (Dan 7:25 9:27 12:7) The last half of the Tribulation period. The phrase "*water as a flood,*" may refer to an outpouring of Anti-Semitic propaganda, or it may symbolise armies that invade Israel and seek to defeat the remnant. To see in the phrase "*two wings of a great eagle,*" an airlift from the U.S.A. Sixth fleet in the Mediterranean may be stretching it a little to far. One thing is sure and that is:

(d) *THE SUPERNATURAL POWER:*

That God will show for His own. (12:16-17) True, some people will give their lives (12:11 13:7) but others will be spared. (Acts 12:1 Zech 13:8) So while Satan strives with all his power to persecute and exterminate Israel, God will use natural and supernatural means to stop this, and to carry a remnant of Israel safely through

their time of great tribulation.

But just for a moment let's pull back from this examination of future events and look at the world around us. What sort of events are you hearing about on your radio, T.V., newspaper ? Do you feel that all around you the pace of events in the world is quickening ? Do you sometimes feel as though you are moving on a river that is approaching a waterfall ? If that is true, then there is an urgent question staring us in the face this the question is: how are you doing in your personal battle with Satan ? Amid the decline, and steadily worsening conditions of this world, how are you doing ? How is your Faith ? How is your Hope ? How is your Love ? My God's triumph over Satan is coming in the not-too-distant future. We can take comfort in knowing that his ultimate defeat is certain. In the words of Martin Luther's wonderful 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.”***