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Revelation 12



Revelation - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg delves into the 12th chapter of Revelation, which is part of a section that includes chapters 11 and 13. He notes that the majority of Protestants once held a Historicist view, which held that Jesus was cut off in the midst of the 70th week of Daniel. Gregg suggests that the seventh trumpet sound marks the end of the world and possibly the second coming of Christ. He then discusses the "great sign" that appears in heaven, which many Christians believe to be the woman with 12 stars on her head, and explores the symbolism of the pregnant woman and the dragon in the text.

Transcript

Tonight, we're turning to the 12th chapter of Revelation, and in chapter 11, we came to finally the seventh trumpet sounding. My belief, not everybody's certainly, but my belief is that the seventh trumpet signals the end of the world, the second coming of Christ, what Paul called the last trumpet. And between the sixth and the seventh trumpet, we saw that a new era, beyond that which has been considered previously in the book, seems to be introduced.

The introduction of the little book that, we will not go over the reasons again tonight, but in chapter 10, we looked at reasons to consider that the little book is not talking about the fall of Jerusalem, it is not talking about things that would shortly come to pass, it is not talking about things confined to Israel. While it is my view that most of the book is about those subjects. There is this section in the middle, this little book, this other prophecy, John was told he must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.

That's the last words we read in chapter 10. And then begins this section we have come into chapters 11, 12, and 13. Now in chapter 11, we saw we were introduced to a period of time which is called there, in verse 2 of chapter 11, it's called 42 months.

In verse 3, it's mentioned again as 1,260 days. Futurists believe that this speaks of a future tribulation period. Dispensationalists of the normal sort believe there are two three and a half year periods together, making seven year tribulation in the future.

Preterists usually identify this three and a half years with some past literal period of that length. Possibly the persecution conducted by Nero, which was about that length. Or the Jewish war, which was about that length.

Those are different sets of calamities, but the point is futurists look for a more or less literal three and a half years or two times three and a half years in the future. Preterists usually look for three and a half years somewhere in the past related to the fall of Jerusalem because they consider that the whole book is talking about the fall of Jerusalem and I have departed from my normal preterist approach at this point. Historicists, and you will not meet many of them unless you go to the Seventh-day Adventist church probably, but at one time the view of the majority of Protestants was historicism.

They believed that the three and a half years should be broken down into days, 1,260, and each day should represent a year. So the historicists believe that the period under question is 1,260 years and they consider it to be largely applicable to the age of the papacy. And the beast whose blasphemies continue for that many days or years in their thinking is the papacy and therefore they believed that the whole career of the Roman Catholic bishop of Rome would be from about 600 when the papacy begins, according to most historians, to about 1,860 when they thought it would fall.

Well now you know why there aren't so many historicists as there used to be because 1,860 came and went a long time ago, 150 years ago, and the papacy is still with us. So the historicist view has kind of run out of steam as it were on this matter. It's the idealists that actually see this period the way I do.

The idealist view holds that the number, the time designation of three and a half years, whether it is used the days, whether it's 1,260 days, whether it's the 42 months, or whether it's that strange expression that Revelation borrows from Daniel chapter 12, time, times, and half a time, that all of these are talking about essentially a period that if literal would be three and a half years, but the idealist does not think it's literal, but symbolic, that the period represents something rather than estimates or gives a literal time period. The real time in question is not anything like three and a half years, maybe in principle, depending on what the three and a half years is considered to call to mind. I have suggested it calls to mind the ministry of Jesus, and therefore it is a symbolic designation that suggests the completion of the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus was cut off in the midst of the 70th week of Daniel. He started his ministry at the beginning of the 70th week. He was cut off in the midst of the week.

There's another week unaccounted for. And it's possible that Revelation is hinting that that other half week is really not literal at all, but it's the whole completion of the unfinished ministry of Jesus, and that completion is done through his body, the church, which would suggest that the 42 months or 1260 days is the same length as the age of

the church. Not exactly the same length, because we have evidence that it begins at 70 A.D. The church began in 30 A.D., so it's the age of the church minus the first 40 years of church history.

So from 70 A.D. to the end of the age, until Jesus comes back, would be represented by this period. As you know, the reason I gave for that, the primary reason, the main indicator, although there are other lesser indicators, but certainly the strongest, is that we are told in chapter 11, verse 2, that the Gentiles would trample on the holy city of Jerusalem for 42 months. And Jesus said that the Gentiles will trample on the holy city of Jerusalem until the times of the Gentiles are over.

And so, Jesus, of course, in Luke 21, 23, when he says that, he's talking about the destruction of Jerusalem followed by the treading down of Jerusalem by the Gentiles. Jesus makes that length of time until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. And while that is a notoriously difficult phrase to dogmatically identify, since it's only found once in scripture, it sounds to me, at least, like he's talking about the rest of the church age, the rest of the time that God is bringing the Gentiles in.

He's given the Jews 1,400 years under the old covenant to get it right, 1,500 almost, and they didn't get it right. And so now, he's giving the Gentiles their chance. And Jerusalem will be trodden underfoot of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are over, and Jesus comes back.

Testing that theory, we saw that the two witnesses, if they are viewed as the church, they witness for that same period of time, 1,260 days. And at the end of their testimony, although they experience a brief defeat at the hands of the beast, yet they finally are vindicated and caught up into heaven as the church will be at the end of the church age. So, while we would not necessarily say that the matter is established beyond question, we at least have a workable theory, a plausible suggestion that the 1,260 days stands for the period from the destruction of Jerusalem until the second coming of Christ.

Now, we saw the seventh trumpet sound at the end of chapter 11, and thus the end of the world, if that is, in fact, as I'm thinking, the second coming of Christ. But in chapter 12, we go back to an earlier period again, and Revelation does this. There are overlapping visions that overlap each other chronologically, that run parallel to each other in time, and give us different aspects of the same period of time.

Perhaps it is the failure to see this that causes dispensationalists to believe there will be a seven-year tribulation, which is never mentioned in Scripture, but by thinking that the three-and-a-half years that we will read of now in chapters 12 and 13 is a different three-and-a-half years than that which we found in chapter 11. Anyway, it is my understanding that all the references to the three-and-a-half years are references to the same period of time symbolically depicted, and that every vision that has to do with that period gives us a different nuance, a different angle of what is going on, what God is doing, and what is

happening, and what the devil is doing during that period. In chapter 12, we will see that period mentioned twice, although the two times it is mentioned are parallel to each other rather than sequential.

In Revelation 12, verse 6, we will see that the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there 1,260 days. We will see that this chapter has a parenthesis in the middle, and that picks up the story at that same spot again down in verse 14, where it says, 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, which is again the same period of time, from the presence of the serpent. We will find that verse 6 brings us to the flight of the woman into the wilderness and tells us how long she will be there, but then it breaks off for this parenthesis at verse 7 and following, and it talks about things going on in the heavenly realm.

It tells us of the dragon being cast out of heaven, and then once it tells us of his being cast out, it picks up the story of the woman again, repeating the same information that we had in verse 6, only in verse 14, and then resuming from there. So we have in this chapter a woman who flees into the wilderness, and we have the story from the beginning of the chapter to the end of the chapter, broken in the middle by a parenthetical section that tells us about something going on in the heavens. So let's look at this chapter.

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 12 stars. Then, being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.

And another sign appeared in heaven. Behold a great fiery red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems, which are crowns, on his head. 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. And 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 to his throne.

Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God that they should feed her there 1,260 days. Who is the woman? Well, let's start with an easier question. Who is her child? Her child is not hard to identify because we are told about him in verse 5, he is to rule all nations with a rod of iron.

This is expected to be a recognizable statement from Psalm chapter 2, which all Christians believe is a messianic psalm, in which Jesus even speaks. In Psalm 2, verse 7, the Messiah is believed to be speaking here. All Christians at least believe this.

And the Messiah says, I will declare the decree, the Lord has said to me, that is Yahweh, the Father of Jesus, said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you. Now I just want to say that this statement, you are my son, today I have begotten you, is quoted in the New Testament and interpreted for us by none less than the Apostle Paul.

In Acts chapter 13, when Paul is preaching at Pisidian Antioch, he quotes this verse, in verse 33 he quotes it, and he said that as Jesus rose from the dead, it is written in the second psalm, you are my son, this day I have begotten you. In other words, Paul interprets this as being a prophecy of the resurrection of Christ, not the birth of Christ. The word begotten might throw us off, but the book of Revelation in chapter 1 referred to Jesus as the first begotten from the dead.

His resurrection is referred to as being begotten from the dead. We see that in Revelation 1.5, from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first born from the dead. So the resurrection of Christ is seen as a birth.

Likewise in Colossians chapter 1, in verse 18, it says of Jesus, Colossians 1.18, he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead. Christ is the first born from the dead, meaning the first resurrected into the new creation, into the family of God, as a glorified son. In Hebrews it says that God, in bringing many sons to glory, made the first of them perfect through suffering.

But God's program is to bring many sons to glory, Jesus the first to be glorified, we afterward. He is the first born of this new creation, of this glorified new covenant creation. And so, when the psalm says that God says to Jesus, you are my son, this day I have begotten you, Paul, who sees theology the way I was just suggesting, sees Jesus as the first born from the dead and says that's speaking about the resurrection of Jesus.

And then it says in verse 8 of Psalm 2, God still speaking to Christ says, ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance. And the ends of the earth for your possession. Christ will inherit all things.

Christ will inherit the earth and the nations. And God says to Jesus in verse 9, you will break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Now, it says in the Hebrew, you will break them with a rod of iron.

However, in the Greek, in the Septuagint it says you will rule them with a rod of iron. And the New Testament writers usually quoted from the Greek Old Testament rather than the Hebrew when they could. And so, Revelation 12 verse 5 says this child was to rule all nations with a rod of iron following the Septuagint in Psalm 2 verse 9, a privilege given to Christ.

Now, it is true that in one of the letters to the seven churches, he told those that would overcome that they would join with him in his rule and that like him and with him they

would rule all nations with a rod of iron. We see that in Revelation 2 where he is speaking to the church of Thyatira. Revelation 2, 26 and 27, Jesus says, and he who overcomes and keeps my works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.

He will rule them with a rod of iron as the potter's vessels shall be broken to pieces as I also have received from my father. Now, he quotes Psalm 2 about how he is given the privilege of ruling all nations with a rod of iron. He says that whoever overcomes will rule with me.

But it's clear that if they do, it's only as sharing in his rule. He is the one who is the king of kings and lord of lords. And even if we share in his rule in the resurrection, we don't become the king of kings and lord of lords.

He will always be that. We may be kings, but he'll still be the king of the kings. And so, this child who is born in Revelation 12 is Jesus.

Now, the futurists sometimes believe otherwise in that they say that this is a reference to maybe a male child represents the Jewish remnant, maybe the 144,000, maybe the tribulation saints are represented by the male child. This is much too complicated, making much too complicated what is a very simple statement that would be recognized by the readers as a reference to Christ rather than some more esoteric meaning like that. Jesus is the child born here and we have thus returned to the beginning of the church age with this chapter.

Now, the child not only is to rule all nations, but he's caught up to God and to his throne. That is, of course, what we know to have happened with Jesus. After his resurrection, he was ascended to the throne and sat down at the right hand of God.

The whole birth and resurrection of Jesus are slapped together here without any real reference to his life. It passes from his birth to his ascension without detail except that he is destined to rule all nations. It doesn't tell about his ministry.

It doesn't tell about his death or his resurrection, just his ascension. Now, that's not because other things are not important, but they're not important to this vision. This vision has other interests.

The focus here is not to be on the life of Christ, but on the outcome of his ascension, his rule. So, we now can say one of the characters is identified. Now, what about the dragon? He's another character not hard to identify because we're told precisely who he is in verse 9. In verse 9 it says, So the great dragon was cast out.

That serpent of old called the devil and Satan. Alright, that's not ambiguous. He's three different identifications.

He's called the devil. He's called Satan. Satan is a Hebrew word.

In the Old Testament, it's difficult to know whether Satan is even used as a proper name. You find in the Old Testament a few references to Satan in our English version, but the Hebrew word Satanus means adversary. So, in the Hebrew, where we find the name Satan, it can be translated the Satan or the adversary.

The Old Testament is not clearly using it as a proper name, but the reason we see it as a proper name is because when it comes over into the New Testament, which is written in Greek, the Hebrew word Satan or Satanus is still used. In other words, it is not translated for us into the Greek as adversary. It is carried over in its Hebrew form as if it's a proper name.

And so, we recognize Satan as a proper name for this particular adversary. In the Old Testament, an adversary or the adversary is a translation of the word Satan and some Bibles don't even use the word Satan in the Old Testament because of that. They translate it.

But in the Greek, there is a word that is essentially equivalent and it's Diabolos or devil. Now, in this place, it says he's called the devil and Satan, therefore giving a Greek title to him and his Hebrew name. And he's also said to be that serpent of old.

It's here in Revelation for the first time that we learn that Satan was that serpent in the Garden of Eden. Interesting, we take it for granted when we read Genesis 3 that that serpent is Satan. We almost think that it calls him that, but it doesn't.

Satan is not mentioned. The devil is not mentioned in Genesis. Not mentioned in Genesis 3. There's only a serpent.

He's treated as if he's just one of the animals as the story is told. As you go through the rest of the Old Testament, the serpent is never identified for us as Satan, although there are references to Leviathan, that twisted serpent that will be defeated and so forth. But it doesn't tell us that that's Satan until we get all the way to Revelation 12, almost to the end of the Bible.

We finally are told straight out, that old serpent, that's Satan. And so we have two of the three characters positively identified. There's a woman who we have not yet identified.

There's a child of the woman and there's the dragon. The child is Christ. The dragon is Satan, who is the woman then.

Now, since Jesus is the one born of the woman, it sounds like the woman might be Mary. That's how the Roman Catholics take it. In fact, in the traditional Catholic art, it's not uncommon.

And if you go to Mexico, you'll see many statues like this of Mary standing on the sun. I'm sorry, standing on the moon, clothed with the sun and with 12 stars around her head.

Because this vision of this woman is taken by the Roman Catholic Church to be Mary.

And reasonably enough, it seems, since she was the mother of Jesus and this woman gives birth to Jesus. But it's not that simple. Because later, we find the same woman fleeing into the wilderness and being nourished there for a period of time.

A period of time that I've identified as longer than 2,000 years or about that time. And even if I'm wrong about the number, there are statements out here that do not seem to apply to Mary. For example, at the end of the chapter in verse 17, it says, 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.

Now, I was not born of Mary. And I have the testimony of Jesus Christ. I'm a Christian.

I'm one of these offspring of this woman. I'm one of the rest of her offspring. But I didn't come out of Mary's womb.

And the Roman Catholics would say, well, Mary's the mother of us all. That's why they call her the Blessed Mother. She's the mother of all Christians.

But wait a minute. She's not the physical mother of all Christians. And if we're going to make this woman having children that aren't her physical children, then there's no reason to make her actual child, her first child, to be her physical child either.

In other words, if these children are not her literal, natural children, then there's no reason to apply that connection to the first child either. The woman, I believe, is not an individual woman. But she is identified by the things that are said about her.

She is clothed with the sun, verse 1 says, and she's in the moon, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. This imagery should not be hard to identify because it is identical to the imagery in Genesis chapter 37, where Joseph is sharing one of his two dreams with his brothers, dreams that position him as having the destiny of ruling over his brothers. And he shares these dreams innocently enough, no doubt, but they don't see it as innocent.

They see him as trying to elevate himself above them, and it's not very tactful of him actually to relate these dreams. These are probably dreams he should have kept to himself. On the other hand, if he had kept them to himself, we wouldn't know about them, so it's just as well.

And in Genesis 37, it says in verse 9, then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers and said, look, I've dreamed another dream, and this time the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me. So he told it to his father and his brothers, and his father rebuked him and said to him, what is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come and bow down to the

earth before you? Now, Jacob had no trouble recognizing the sun and the moon as representing Joseph's parents, and the eleven stars as his eleven brothers, perhaps because it was so similar to his previous dream, where the eleven brothers were represented as sheaves that bowed down to Joseph's sheep. But the point here is, the imagery in Genesis 37 is clearly borrowed into Revelation chapter 12 to give us the identity of the woman.

The sun, the moon, the eleven stars would be Jacob's, we could say Jacob's family. Jacob, his wife, his twelve children. Of course, he had more than one wife, but that's not, doesn't have to enter into our consideration.

The idea is it's Jacob's family. Joseph would be the twelfth star, of course. The eleven stars bowed down to Joseph, he would be the twelfth star.

There were twelve stars in this woman's crown. She is Israel. But she's not just Israel as a whole, because not all are Israel who are of Israel.

She is the remnant of Israel, because she is the part of Israel that's preserved when she flees into the wilderness. You might remember that what John has already depicted is the 144,000 who would be spared from this Holocaust. They escaped.

And how did they escape? Well, we know. They fled into the wilderness. The church in Jerusalem, the Jewish remnant there before it fell, escaped across the Jordan River into the wilderness area where they landed or stayed in a place called Pella.

And they were nurtured by God. That is to say, he kept them alive. I don't mean to say they received supernatural food like the children of Israel in the wilderness in the form of manna.

But here, the woman will flee from the dragon. Remember the dragon in Psalms and in Ezekiel is an image for Egypt. In this place, of course, Satan is the new Egypt.

The church escapes from Satan as Israel escaped from Egypt. We've seen that Christ accomplished a second exodus, and it was a deliverance from Satan and his power. But Satan here, represented as a dragon, is the same imagery which the Old Testament sometimes uses for Egypt.

The woman fleeing into the wilderness is like Israel fleeing into the wilderness from Pharaoh in the Exodus. And being nourished by God in the wilderness is very much parallel to Israel's experience of manna being provided by God to her. This imagery is intended to recall the Exodus.

But it's a different Exodus. It is the Jewish remnant who brings the Messiah into the world. It is the Jewish remnant who flees and escapes the wrath of the dragon.

And it is the Jewish remnant, not the nation as a whole, that is preserved by God. So we have, for example, over in Jeremiah chapter 4, one of what might be several Old Testament passages that convey the idea of Israel being like a woman pregnant to give birth. Sometimes she's giving birth to the Messiah.

Sometimes she's giving birth to the new Jerusalem. But nonetheless, Jerusalem or Israel is a mother giving birth. In Jeremiah 4.31, God says, For I have heard a voice as of a woman in labor, the anguish as of her who brings forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself.

The daughter of Zion is Jerusalem. In this case, the spiritual Jerusalem is depicted as a woman in labor. What would that labor be? Well, it is the labor that brought forth the Messiah and the Messianic kingdom.

It is the sufferings endured by the faithful Jews in the period before Jesus was born. They're like in labor. In Isaiah and Jeremiah both, there are frequent references to the sufferings of the Jews under the Babylonians and the Assyrians likened to men holding their loins like a woman in giving birth.

It's a very common expression in the prophets because the sufferings that the Jews were going through was like labor pains. And here, the Jewish remnant who are God's true people, not the whole nation, but the people who are faithful to God prior to the birth of Christ go through these horrendous labor pains to give birth to the Messiah. Now, the dragon is anticipating this.

He knows what's coming and he wants to kill the Messiah at the point of his birth. This we can see as having some fulfillment in Herod, certainly a very demonic character if you know about Herod the Great, how that he sought to destroy Jesus at his birth and killed a whole bunch of babies in Bethlehem trying to get at him. Failing that, Satan made other attempts on Jesus' life throughout his life.

People took up stones to stone him. Jesus walked through their midst and escaped because it was not yet his time. When it was his time, he was surrendered to his enemies.

And Jesus said to them when they came to a rest in the garden, this is your hour and the power of darkness. That is, Jesus was now going to succumb to the attacks of the enemy against him because it was going to fulfill a purpose. But we see the dragon depicted as posturing himself from the very beginning against the Messiah.

In fact, it may be that the sufferings coming on the woman are seen as the devil's way of trying to prevent the Messiah from coming into the world. The persecution that came on the Jews in the Old Testament era, especially in that shortly before the Roman conquest, in the Maccabean wars and so forth, the various times when people tried to essentially

stomp out the faithful remnant. So the woman then I take to be the faithful remnant that brings the Messiah into the world.

Yes, Mary was part of that remnant, but she was not the whole woman, not the whole woman here. There are things that happen to this woman subsequent to the birth that wouldn't apply to an individual woman, but to the remnant. So the woman gives birth.

Oh, I should say this about the dragon. He has in verse 3, he's red, he's got seven heads and ten horns. If you bear that in mind, you'll see those same traits in the beast in the next chapter.

It also says of the dragon in verse 4 that he drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Now you might say, well, that's easy. That's when a third of the angels fell with Lucifer.

Well, the tradition that a third of the angels fell with Satan is just that, a tradition. There's actually no reference in scripture to a third of the angels falling. And just so you know what the scripture does and does not say in that, the scripture does say there are angels who sinned.

In Jude verse 6, in 2 Peter chapter 2 verse 4, it talks about angels who sinned or who left their first estate and are said to be in chains under darkness or in Tardis awaiting the judgment of the great day. It does not say how many or what percentage of the angels sinned. It just tells us there are indeed angels who sinned.

There's no place in the Bible that mentions a third of the angels doing anything, sinning or doing anything else. There's no reference to a third of the angels in the Bible. However, the idea that a third of the angels sinned comes from this verse.

This is the only verse. The entire doctrine which almost all Christians presume to be true, namely that a third of the angels fell when Satan fell, is based on this one obscure verse, that the dragon's tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Now sometimes stars in the book of Revelation are angels.

There's no question about that, because for example in chapter 9, verse 1, it says, I saw a star fallen from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit. And then in verse 11 of chapter 9, it says, they have as the king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, Napoleon. It sounds like this angel is that star that fell.

So a star here represents an angel. Also the seven angels, or the seven stars in the hand of Christ are the seven angels to the seven churches. But that doesn't mean the word star always must mean angels.

And in this case, there's reason to doubt it. And the reason is simply this. The casting of

stars to the earth is an image that is here borrowed from Daniel chapter 8, in verse 10.

In chapter 8 of Daniel, it doesn't take any particular commitment to any school of thought to see that this is talking about Antiochus Epiphanes. I believe that a dispensationalist would see it as such, an Amillennialist would see it as such. It doesn't really matter what your viewpoint is.

You're going to recognize in chapter 8 of Daniel, in verse 10, the career of Antiochus Epiphanes. In 168, excuse me, 168 BC, he's the one who defiled the temple, put up an altar to Zeus, offered a pig there, and persecuted the Jews. That's where the Hasidim, the holy ones, the separated ones, arose.

Eventually the Pharisee party came out of their movement. But these people were willing to die for their loyalty to the Torah and to doing what God said. And yet Antiochus Epiphanes made it a crime, punishable by death, to circumcise your child, to own a copy of the Torah, to observe Sabbath, things that the Jews could not, if conscientious, could not avoid doing.

And therefore they fell by the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. He was a terrible tyrant until the Maccabean Revolt rose up as a guerrilla movement against him and conducted wars against him for several years and finally drove him out of Israel. But he was a terrible oppressor.

And it is in Daniel 8 that we read of him. He's a little horn that comes up out of the head of the he-goat. No, yeah, the he-goat.

And the he-goat is Alexander the Great. Antiochus was one of the successors of Alexander after his death and a ruler of Syria. And about this man it says in verse 10, it's Daniel 8.10, and it grew up, that is the little horn, grew up to the host of heaven.

The host of heaven is an expression for the stars of heaven. And it, the horn, cast some of the host and some of the stars to the ground and trampled them. Now casting stars to the ground is not something that literally happened in the day of Antiochus.

He did not have that kind of power. He was a mere man. He could not bring stars down and throw them down to the ground.

It's what he did, however, was trample upon the righteous, the faithful in Israel. And those are the stars he cast down. And Daniel gives us additional reason to think that because in Daniel chapter 12, it says in verse 3, those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament and those who turn many to righteousness like stars forever and ever.

It is righteous people who are likened to stars in Daniel. It was righteous people that Antiochus trampled upon, not angels. And since the casting of stars to the ground in

Revelation 12.4 is borrowed, the imagery is borrowed from a reference to Antiochus, the stars not being angels but people, then we could argue that the stars in Revelation 12.4 are also people here.

It's the same phenomenon. In fact, it could even be the same event. Because waiting for the birth of Jesus, the great trouble that came upon Israel was through Antiochus' epiphanies first, or principally.

And this could be the dragon sweeping these stars from the sky with his tail could actually be the very same event spoken of in Daniel where Antiochus, prior to the birth of Christ, persecuted the righteous Hasidim. In any case, it is not a clear reference to angels and it's not therefore possible to say with certainty anything about a third of the angels falling. It's all based on this one verse and one interpretation of this verse.

And by the way, even if they are angels, a third in Revelation need not be taken as a statistical, mathematical unit. It's more symbolic for a significant minority. So we see the woman pregnant.

She's in pain. The dragon is waiting to destroy the child. In the meantime, he's doing whatever damage he can to the Jewish remnant.

Finally, the child is born. He is not killed at the beginning. The dragon does not kill the child.

He is not able to get him until the end when he is crucified. He rises from the dead. He goes to heaven.

The details are passed over. Only what we need to know now is that the Messiah is reigning at the throne of God. He's caught up to heaven, to God, and to his throne.

Jesus has already said in Revelation 3 in verse 21, Revelation 3, 21, Jesus says, to him that overcomes, I will grant to sit with me upon my throne, even as I have overcome and am seated with my Father on his throne. So Jesus, in his ascension, has seated himself with his Father on the throne. He's been caught up to the throne of God.

So we have the birth of Jesus, we have the ascension of Jesus, and we have the hostility of the dragon of Satan toward the faithful remnant in Israel, which were essentially the first church. They received Christ. The faithful remnant received Christ on the day of Pentecost, 3000, later 5000, later more.

Eventually, Gentiles got to be part of this too, and they were the rest of the woman's seed. Besides, she has additional seed. She is the faithful remnant of Israel, but she produces more offspring because it was the Jewish church that evangelized the Gentiles.

But that comes up later in the chapter. At this point, we see the woman has to flee into

the wilderness. This, no doubt, corresponds with the flight of the Jewish remnant from Jerusalem before the fall of Jerusalem, because she remains in the wilderness for the same period of time that Jerusalem is trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, in chapter 11, verse 2, from 70 A.D. till the end of the world.

What this says is the woman is preserved by God, even though the nation of Israel comes under judgment. Now, it represents her fleeing from the serpent, and yet the disaster that came on Jerusalem is often represented as a judgment from God, not from Satan. But these need not disturb us.

Almost the agent of all God's dirty work is Satan. God uses Babylon. He uses Assyria.

He uses Egypt. He uses Satan. He uses evil spirits.

The Bible depicts all these things being the case. God uses these to be agents of his judgment. We could easily see that the horrendous things that were done to the Jews are more suited to the devil than to God.

In saying that it's God's judgment means that God releases the devil to do these things. When the Bible says, He sent an evil spirit, an evil spirit from the Lord came to Saul, it doesn't mean that God is on the same side as the evil spirits, but that they have no choice but to only attack people that God allows them to. They have to get his permission first.

Likewise, Job could not be attacked by Satan unless God gave him permission. Likewise, Jerusalem could not be destroyed unless God gave permission to the forces of Satan. The Romans were demon worshippers.

They were idolaters. They could be seen certainly as the agents of Satan in a different sense, but in an additional sense to be an agent of God's judgment. Both things are going on, Satan's malice and God's righteous judgment.

It's interesting to see that in Josephus, we are told that when Titus destroyed Jerusalem, he believed he was bringing an end to Judaism and Christianity because the Romans didn't know the difference. They thought all monotheists are the same. Their confusion is forgivable.

It's true. The Jews and the Christians were the only people in the world that the Romans knew who were monotheists. In addition to that, they worshipped a Jewish Messiah.

How could a Roman pagan who doesn't know very much even about Judaism, much less about this new religion springing up in Israel, following a Jewish leader and believing in this Jewish God, how could they not see this as just an arm of Judaism? So, Titus thought destroying the temple would destroy Judaism and Christianity, which was of course a mistake. Christianity fled. The temple went down, but Christianity continued.

The Jewish remnant was preserved through that. This is what I think suggested also in the measuring of the Holy of Holies in chapter 11, verse 1. It is measured for preservation. It's that part of the true temple where God is worshipped in spirit and in truth by the remnant.

The outer part of the temple is given over to the Gentiles. That is external Israel is trampled. So I believe this is really the flight of the Jewish remnant, the church in Israel, in AD 70 to a place of safety.

And then she is nourished in the wilderness. She is kept in existence. There still is that Jewish remnant alive today.

They're part of the church. And she is kept there alive rather than allowed to become extinct for 1,260 days. As I said, we pick that story up again from that point in verse 14, but now in the intervening verses we have some important information about what's going on in the sky, in heaven.

It says, in verse 7, war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 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. 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. And they, that is the brethren whom he had been accusing day and night, 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. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them, but 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 his time is short, he has a short time. Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But that's where we read of the woman receiving the wings of an eagle and flying into the wilderness.

So that picks up again at verse 6. Now how does all this heaven stuff, this war in heaven and its outcome, how does that correlate chronologically with the story we've been looking at on earth? Well, we can answer that fairly well. Because we see in verse 13 that it is when the dragon is cast to earth, that's the end of the battle in heaven when he's cast out. It's when he finds himself cast out of heaven into earth that he now turns his hostility toward this woman and she flees to the wilderness.

Well that's what she did in verse 6. So the war in heaven occurs and the victory of

Michael and his angels over the woman's flight. But how much prior? Well, we see this war in heaven between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. And there is a victory accomplished against the forces of Satan.

It is described as if the serpent is cast out and there is not any place left for him in heaven. This, remember, is a book written by John. And there is another important book written by John, the Gospel of John.

And in chapter 12 of that book, as in chapter 12 of this book, there is a reference to Satan being cast out. In John chapter 12 and verse 31, Jesus is speaking about his impending crucifixion. And of course the sequel, his resurrection and ascension, his enthronement and all that.

And he says in John 12 31, now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. Being cast out.

That's what we read of happening to the dragon in Revelation 12 and verse 9. So this war in heaven ends with the dragon being cast out. If the dragon is the same as the ruler of this world, and I think most Christians would assume that that is true. I do.

I mean Jesus mentions the ruler of this world three times. And it certainly looks in all three times like he is talking about the devil. Paul refers to the devil as the God of this world.

But the point here is Satan is cast out. Where? At the cross. Therefore the end of Jesus' earthly life is also the end of that war in heaven where Satan is cast out.

Meaning that the war between Michael and his angels, between him and Satan and his angels is taking place during the lifetime of Jesus. Both end at the same point. The ruler of this world is cast out when Jesus dies.

That's the end of Jesus' earthly life and it's the end of the war in heaven where Satan is cast out. And we have confirmation of that in Revelation 12 10. Because when the dragon is cast out, someone in heaven with a loud voice says, now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come.

So salvation comes at the cross. That's when Satan is cast out. Strength and the power of Christ and the kingdom of God come at that point.

And what else happens? The announcement says, for the accuser of our brethren who accused them before our God day and night has been thrown down. In other words, Satan has been thrown out of court. It's only in this verse in scripture that he's called the accuser of the brethren.

Although the word Satan means accuser or adversary like in a court of law. Like a

prosecuting attorney who's accusing somebody who's on trial. Well, he's been doing that day and night before God accusing the brethren.

We see it in Job. He's accusing Job. We see it in Zechariah chapter 3 when Satan is accusing Joshua the high priest.

This is apparently the regular activity of Satan against God's people before the time of Christ. In the New Testament, he's able to be right there in heaven accusing God's people. Well, that's changed.

What has changed? Well, he's been thrown out. His case is thrown out. It's like the prosecution has been thrown out of court.

He's been cast out of heaven and he cannot accuse God's people there anymore. And why? Because their guilt has been dealt with at the cross. Because they are justified by God, none can accuse them.

Isn't that what Paul said in Romans chapter 8? Romans chapter 8 verse 33 and 34. Paul says, Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died and furthermore is also risen.

Who is even at the right hand of God who also makes intercession for us? Christ dying, rising, and ascending to the right hand of God and making intercession for us is the reason why no one can accuse us. No one can condemn us. It's Christ who justifies us.

Who will be able to bring any accusation against us, Paul asked rhetorically, meaning no one can unless they're stronger than God or more effectual in their accusations than Christ is in his intercession. So, the accuser, the brethren is thrown out of court as it were. Prior to the cross, he could bring legitimate charges against even God's people, but now he can't because they are justified by God.

And therefore in the graphic picture of the vision of Revelation, Satan is thus thrust out of heaven, no longer able to accuse the brethren. Not in heaven anyway. However, he's now come down to earth.

He's now living where the brethren are still living. And he is still an accuser. He's just not able to accuse them before God anymore.

He can accuse us to our own conscience, however. He can accuse us to us. He can bring condemnation and guilt and try to make us feel alienated from God.

This is one of Satan's major activities. You know, we might think Satan's main interest is just to get us to sin. But why should he care if we sin or not? The purpose of getting us to sin is to get us to feel guilty and feel alienated from God.

Actually, he doesn't care whether we really sin or not. If he can make us feel like we've

sinned and get the same result that we feel guilty and alienated from God, he's happy with that. He just wants to alienate us from God.

And if our conscience is not clear, then he has done so. 1 John tells us, and to tell the truth I'm looking for the passage. I thought it was in 1 John 3. I don't have it in my notes.

But John says, Brethren, if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things. They said, Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, then we have confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask of him, we receive because we keep his commandments and do those things pleasing his sight.

I'm apparently 320. Thank you very much. I thought it was in chapter 3. Very good.

The same author who wrote Revelation, by the way, tells us that our hearts are attacked by condemnation. Why? Because if our hearts condemn us, then we don't have confidence toward God. He says, if our hearts don't condemn us, we do have confidence toward God.

Why should the devil care about that? Because then we have faith and confidence and we ask and whatever we ask we receive of him. In other words, our prayers, which are always our weapons against the powers of darkness in this warfare, our prayers are effectual when our heart is clear and our conscience is clear. And so John says, listen, if your heart does condemn you, don't listen to it because God is greater than your heart and who can condemn those that God has acquitted.

So here we have the devil. It used to be that he could actually approach God with accusations against us. He can't do that anymore.

God won't hear it. God knows there's a finished redemption and atonement and forgiveness of sins. No one can bring any charges against us before God, but we're not so clear on that sometimes.

And sometimes we do feel condemned and the devil's quite glad to do so because then our prayers are weakened. If I feel like, gosh, I think God's not really happy with me, I'm not going to come boldly before the throne of grace and expect my faith to see them answered. That's what the devil would like.

He's still the accuser of the brethren, but he's cast down to earth. He has to pursue his career as accuser on earth to the inhabitants of earth. But the saints who are accused by him overcome him.

This is a major part of our warfare, is overcoming the accusations of the devil. Another part is, of course, penetrating his domain with the gospel and taking from him territory that he has held unchallenged for thousands of years. That is preaching the gospel and bringing the kingdom of God and the light into the dark areas where Satan has really

held sway.

And so we see the warfare of the church broken down this way in verse 11, 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. Now the blood of the lamb, how is that effective in spiritual warfare? Well, remember who we're dealing with. We're dealing with the accuser.

When he accuses you, how do you plead? You plead the blood. In a court of law, when you're accused of something, the judge says, how do you plead? He expects you to say, I plead not guilty or I plead guilty. Those are usually the two options.

But before the accusations the devil makes, we can't say we're not guilty because a lot of times the accusations are quite true. We can't say not guilty because that wouldn't be quite right. But we also can't say guilty because our record has been expunged.

The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin. It says in 1 John again, 1 John 1. So John is telling us that we cannot be condemned if we are Christians walking in the light because Christ's blood cleanses us from all sin. So what am I going to do if the devil accuses me? Well, I don't say I'm not guilty.

Sometimes I have been guilty. Sometimes I've done the wrong thing. But it's irrelevant in a sense.

The plea is not guilty or not guilty. The plea is the blood of the lamb. That's of course the theology that's presupposed in that famous hymn, Just As I Am, without one plea.

Plea being a courtroom term. I have no plea to offer except that your blood was shed for me. That's the only plea I have.

I plead the blood of Jesus. Pentecostals sometimes talk about pleading the blood of Jesus in really kind of magical ways. They sometimes talk about pleading the blood over your house so that it won't burn down, you won't need insurance.

You plead the blood over your car, you'll never run out of gas. Plead the blood over your husband, he'll get saved. Plead the blood over your wallet and over your kids and you'll never go broke and your kids will never rebel.

There's all this magical blood of Jesus stuff that some Pentecostals get into. In fact I was teaching on spiritual warfare in a Korean YMN base in Toronto and I was making this very point and one of the staff members said, Steve you might not know but in Korea it's a very strong thing among the Christians to be pleading the blood over everything and what you're saying is really relevant to them. I didn't know that was true in the culture of the Christians in Korea but I've certainly seen it in America, not so much in recent years but back in the 70s there was this book called The Power in the Blood and it was all

about pleading the blood like a magic charm over everything to keep the devil away.

It's like you get this invisible shield over you that the devil can't penetrate when you're pleading the blood. Well that's not exactly taught anywhere in scripture. In fact nothing even remotely like that is taught in scripture.

The blood of Jesus doesn't work like magic. It is an atoning price that was paid for the cancellation of earned punishment. It is in other words our plea in court.

When the accuser accuses us we overcome him by the blood of the lamb. His condemnation, his accusation is conquered by the blood of Jesus. But the saints also overcome him by the word of their testimony which in revelation is the preaching of the gospel.

And in this we see the saints not only defend themselves against accusations but they go out to the devil's territory and defeat him in hand-to-hand combat taking territory that he has once held and bringing it to Christ through the preaching of the gospel. That is every time people come to Christ through the preaching of the gospel Satan has lost territory that he used to own or at least used to control. And so the spiritual warfare like most warfare has a defensive and an offensive campaign.

The defensive is to try to keep the flaming darts from killing you. That's why you have armor. That's why the blood of the lamb is there to protect your heart from condemnation and that which would keep you from having effective confidence toward God.

But then there's the offensive aspect where we go out to where the devil lives and we know where he sleeps and we go knock on his door and we say excuse me I'm here to clean out your house. I'm here to spoil your goods. And so preaching the gospel, taking souls away from Satan and giving them to Christ, this is the offensive aspect of warfare.

The warfare is both ways and the saints overcome Satan eventually through these means and by not loving their lives to the death. So the heavens are rejoicing because they understand all of this but the people on earth they need to get a grip on this because the devil has come down to them being wrathful and he knows he's got limited time. How long? We don't know.

But it's not unlimited time. His time is short. Shorter than what? Shorter than it was before.

He used to have as it were an open ended tenure of ruling over the nations but now Christ has sent the gospel to the nations and a commission to disciple the nations. Satan's ability to continue to deceive is limited now in a way that it was not before. It was never challenged before.

Now he's desperately trying to hold on to territory that he once held without a fight. And his time is not what it once was. He does not have a lot of leisure left.

And so when the dragon saw that he'd been cast to the earth, which was at the cross, he persecuted the Christian church in Jerusalem. Stephen got stoned. James got beheaded.

Peter got arrested. Saul of Tarsus was sent out to kill or to arrest Christians, bring them back to be killed to Jerusalem. He got saved.

Other people went out after him. Satan attacked the Jewish remnant, the church, but they escaped. His ultimate attack was the destruction of Jerusalem but the remnant got away and have survived until this time.

Now in verse 15 it says, So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman that it might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

What's this referred to? Well, the clue is that the water of the flood came out of his mouth. There's something comes out of Jesus' mouth in some of the visions in Revelation and that is a sword comes out of his mouth. It's clear that the sword that comes out of his mouth is his word which is like a sharp two-edged sword.

What comes out of the devil's mouth? Lies. As John 8.44 says, he's the father of lies. When he lies, he speaks of his own resources.

He is a liar. Out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth speaks lies. This is a flood of lies and deception.

You see, he's been using force and intimidation but that hasn't worked. So he now tries lies. There are two primary dangers the early church faced and still the church today faces.

The first of them was outright persecution from the Roman emperors and from the Jewish authorities. That is people trying to kill him. Persecution.

The other was error, heresy, perversion. And the early church battled heresy from the time of the apostles on. The Judaistic heresy, the Gnostic heresies that were creeping into the church and it was, I mean, the reason we have all the epistles of Paul is because there was this attack on the church in the form of heresy.

And Paul had to battle those heresies in his epistles. Kept him busy fighting this war of truth against error. The devil sent out a flood out of his mouth to try to sweep away the church.

Now it says the earth opened up its mouth and swallowed the flood. It's tempting to

think of this as saying, well, the church didn't buy it but the, you know, they swallowed, the world swallowed his lies. Maybe so.

But it may be also just the earth opening is intended to be an example, again, from the Exodus because the earth opened up to swallow the opposition that came against Moses and Aaron. Korah's rebellion. And it may be just another image from the Exodus indicating that God supernaturally preserved the church in spite of even this threat.

By the way, another reference to the Exodus is in verse 14. We passed over it. It says the woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness.

The wings of the eagle are a reference to God bringing Israel out of Exodus. God says, I'm the one who brought you out of Egypt on eagles' wings. Someone have that reference? Anyone have that? Is it 19.4? Yes, it is.

Thank you. Chapter 19.4. Thank you, Mike. You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself out here in the wilderness at Mount Sinai.

He carried Israel on eagles' wings out into the wilderness in the Exodus. And that's the imagery that Revelation uses. The woman was given two wings of a great eagle and she might fly into the wilderness.

So there's all this imagery of the Exodus, but of course it's not the old Exodus, it's the new. And it's the salvation of the remnant of Israel despite the hostility of the dragon who tried to kill Christ and did, but lost him when he ascended into heaven and then conducted his warfare against the church once he was himself cast out of heaven. In verse 17 it says 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.

Who might that be? Well, the woman is the remnant of Israel who believed in Christ. Who's the rest of her children? Obviously the Gentiles who are not the remnant of Israel, but who are part of her family now. People who testify about Jesus Christ and keep the commandments of God, obviously a reference to the church.

So the chapter closes with a warfare continuing against the church. Jerusalem is fallen. God's people are being preserved for the remainder of the time from that time until the end, 1260 days or time times and half a time.

And during that time it's a time of warfare. And we read in chapter 13 that that time of warfare involves two particular enemies who are in league with Satan. Satan has tried force in persecution.

He has tried deception, religious deception, heresy. And thus he calls two beasts to his

assistance. One of them a governmental system that uses force.

The other a religious system that uses deception and spiritual heresy. Those are going to be the two beasts that come out of the sea and the land in the next chapter. And that will be the last chapter that deals with this period of three and a half years.

But you can see each of these chapters has something different about that period that is brought out. In this one it's primarily the warfare during that period. And in chapter 13 it will be the main allies of Satan that he uses in that warfare.

So this is a depiction of an ongoing spiritual war through the age of the church. We'll have to wait and talk about those beasts next time however.