

REVELATION – SERMON 49

SATAN'S LONG WAR AGAINST ISRAEL

Revelation 12:13-17

INTRODUCTION

- The holocaust of the 20th century was simply one of many attempts throughout history to repress, remove or exterminate the Jews:
 - ✓ Egypt (17th Century BC)
 - ✓ Assyria (722 BC)
 - ✓ Babylon (606 BC)
 - ✓ Haman (473 BC)
 - ✓ Seleucids (169 BC)
 - ✓ Rome (70 AD)
- Many nations have expelled them from their jurisdictions
- Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism all have a long history of antisemitism
- The one thing that unites the far-right, the far-left, Muslims, Hindus, Catholics and Protestants is antisemitism
- Revelation 12 informs us of the source of this irrational hatred: Satan
- Yet as bad as things have been for the Jews in the past, the worst is yet to come

- The seven-year period of Tribulation is called “the time of Jacob's trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7)
- Two-thirds of the Jews will be cut off and die, but a third will survive (Zechariah 13:8; cf. Daniel 12:1)
- “God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew” (Romans 11:2)
- It is for his “elect’s sake” (Israel), that God will “shorten those days”, or else “no flesh should be saved” (Matthew 24:22; Mark 13:20)
- In Revelation 12, John was given a representative vision (wonders/signs) which introduced a woman (Israel), a man child (Christ) and a dragon (Satan)
- v.4 describes Satan’s initial fall when iniquity was found in him, then his hostility towards Christ, and Israel
- vv.7-9 describe the war in heaven that will take place at the mid-point of the tribulation when Satan will be banished from heaven, and confined to the earth
- In these verses, we will learn more of what Satan will do after he is cast down to the earth, particularly his attempt to destroy Israel, while God gives her protection

I. THE DIVINELY FURNISHED REFUGE FOR ISRAEL (6,14)

A. Flight to the wilderness

1. Christ gave instruction for Jews who will be alive at this time (Matthew 24:15-24)

- a. The abomination of desolation is the trigger for these events (Matthew 24:15)
- b. They must flee to the mountains first, then to the wilderness (Matthew 24:16)
- c. They must flee in great haste (Matthew 24:16-20)
- d. They must not believe reports that Christ has come, which may lure them from their refuge (Matthew 24:23-24)

2. The location of the wilderness

- a. This appears to be a specific location “prepared of God” (v.6)
- b. This wilderness refuge is described as a secure and fortified location (Isaiah 26:20-21)
- c. Isaiah 16:3-4 indicates that Moab is the location of this place of refuge (Isaiah 16:1-5)
- d. In connection with this, a pathway “from Sela to the wilderness, unto...Zion” is referenced, where “Sela” can be translated as “Petra” or “a rock” (Isaiah 16:1)
- e. It is thought that when Israel flees Judea, they will be received into the land of Moab, and given safe passage south to Edom and the fortress of Petra, where they will be protected until, the Messiah takes his throne (Isaiah 16:5)

- f. When antichrist conquers the nations, many shall be overthrown, but Edom, Moab and Ammon “shall escape out of his hand” (Daniel 11:41)
- g. At the coming of the Lord, the “inhabitants of the rock” (Petra) will sing and give glory to God (Isaiah 42:11-12)
- h. When Christ comes, he is describes as him “that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah” (Isaiah 63:1-5)

B. The wings of an eagle

- 1. This imagery hearkens back to a similar event in Israel’s history when God delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh (Exodus 19:4)
- 2. God will assist Israel in their flight from the devil, and protect them from his attacks (Deuteronomy 32:11-12)

C. God will nourish Israel

- 1. The word for “nourish” indicates “feeding” (Matthew 6:26)
- 2. As God fed Israel in the wilderness previously, he will again “furnish a table” for them (Psalm 78:24-25)
- 3. This will be the more miraculous, as those without the mark of the beast will be unable to buy or sell (Revelation 13:17)

D. For a time, and times, and half a time

1. According to Daniel 11:13 (margin), “times” refers to “years”
2. The various descriptions of this period being three and a half years, “forty and two months” and “a thousand two hundred and threescore days” leave no room for an allegorical interpretation (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2; 12:6; 13:5)

E. From the face of the serpent

1. It appears that the Jews will not only be protected by God against the devil’s attacks, but hidden from his view

II. THE DRAGON’S FOILED RAMPAGE AGAINST ISRAEL (13,15-16)

A. The dragon persecutes the woman

1. The word for persecuted means “to pursue, to chase, hostile pursuit”
2. The Satanically empowered antichrist will seek to hunt down and destroy the fleeing Jews

B. A flood from the dragon’s mouth

1. This may be a literal flood, though it is most likely figurative as with the other “signs” in this chapter
2. Floods of waters are often used to describe great and overwhelming military forces (Psalm 124:1-5; Jeremiah 46:7-8; Daniel 9:26; 11:21-22)

3. Another view is that his assault may be in the form of deceiving words, as the flood proceeds from his *mouth* (Revelation 13:5-6)

C. The earth helped the woman

1. In some way, God will intervene and use the earth to thwart the onslaught of Satan
2. On numerous occasions, God has used the forces of nature to deliver his people
3. Similar language is used of Korah, Dathan and Abiram's death, when "the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up" (Numbers 16:28-33; 26:10; Deuteronomy 11:6; Psalm 106:17)
4. As God opened the Red Sea to deliver Israel (Exodus 14:21), then stretched out his right hand against the Egyptians so that "the earth swallowed them" (Exodus 15:12), so God will again miraculously deliver his people

III. THE DRAGON'S FURY ON THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL (17)

A. Satan will be wroth (enraged) with the woman

1. His failed attempts at her destruction will infuriate him

B. He makes war with the remnant of her seed

1. This may mean the rest of the believing Jews who did not flee to the wilderness

2. It may be the 144,000 (7:3-4; 14:1)
 - a. Note that the term “remnant” is always applied to Israel (Romans 9:27; 11:5)
 - b. The context of chapters 12-14 has a distinctly Israel focus
3. It may refer to all believers in the tribulation
 - a. The beast makes war with “the saints” (Revelation 13:7)
 - b. The saints are all those who “keep the commandments of God” (Revelation 14:12; 22:14; 1 John 5:2)
 - c. The tribulation martyrs are described as those who bore “the witness [testimony] of Jesus” (Revelation 20:4)

CONCLUSION

1. Every attempt to destroy Israel has failed, and brought divine judgment on those who have tried
2. Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33)
3. But Jesus also said, “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)
4. In a time of great distress, David cried, “Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.” (Psalm 55:6)

5. Eagle's wings are promised to all those who wait upon the Lord, not in order to flee trials, but to strengthen us to overcome them (Isaiah 40:31)
6. "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small."
(Proverbs 24:10)
7. The "wings" of God's grace are sufficient for us (2 Corinthians 12:9), and are to be found at the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16)