

Message #30

Revelation 12:1-6

As we come to Revelation 12, we come to what many consider to be “the heart of the book.” **Here is the point in the Great Tribulation, when everything turns toward Israel.**

In the Bible, there is one nation and one people who have been specifically promised a Righteous Land, a Righteous King and a Righteous Kingdom. That nation is Israel and the people are the Jewish people. These are the people who are the physical descendants of Abraham.

When Jesus Christ came into this world, He was specifically born a Jew. Those who initially followed Him were Jews and when it came time for Him to select His disciples, He only chose those who were Jews.

When He first began His ministry, He made it very clear that it was specifically for Israel. He said, “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5-6).

When He was here, He also said that He was specifically sent to the lost people of Israel: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15:24).

So what we clearly see here is that Israel is very important to God and to Jesus Christ. She has a relationship to God as no other nation ever has had or ever will have.

Grace Age Christianity owes a tremendous debt to the Jews (Romans 9:1-5). In fact, Jerusalem was the center of Christianity in the early stages and development of the church and had it not been for the Roman wars against the Jews, which scattered them and destroyed Jerusalem, Jerusalem would still be the center of Christianity.

The first believers of the Church were Jews and those who wrote the New Testament books of the Bible for the Church were Jews, with the exception of Luke.

Since Israel is so critical to the Bible and the whole program of God, it is only logical to assume that Satan will hate the Jews, will wage war against the Jews and seek to destroy the Jews. Since part of the reason for the Great Tribulation is to “regather Israel” to establish a Kingdom on earth (Matt. 23:37-39), we may expect that at some point in the Tribulation Satan will unleash a destructive barrage against Israel in an attempt to destroy her.

That point is stressed and that does happen in Revelation 12. What we have here in this chapter is this thesis:

SATAN HAS ALWAYS HATED ISRAEL AND HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO DESTROY ISRAEL, AND DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION HE WILL INTENSIFY HIS EFFORTS BUT HE WILL NOT SUCCEED BECAUSE GOD WILL NOT LET HIM SUCCEED.

Now in these first six verses, we get a panoramic overview of Satan's hatred of Jesus Christ, of God and of Israel.

From this we may conclude that all hatred of God, Jesus Christ and Israel is Satanic. Let us be very clear on this point: **any Anti-Semitism that hates Israel is Satanic.**

As this moment is launched in the Tribulation, there are two main signs that show up in these verses:

SIGN #1 – The sign that relates to Israel. **12:1-2**

The first sign is called a “great sign” or, as it reads literally in Greek, “a mega sign.” This will be a mega sign in heaven in terms of external literal size and measurement (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 281).

We believe this gigantic sign will be visible “in the heaven.” By virtue of the fact that the sign is mentioned along with the sun and moon and stars, we suspect this sign will appear in the stellar heaven and all on earth will be able to see it.

The sign is designed to show that Israel is the great nation of God in heaven and Israel is the great nation of God on earth. Although this nation appears to be least esteemed on this earth, it is most esteemed in heaven and will be the dominant nation on earth.

From **verse 1** we learn that the sign is “a woman” who is clothed with the sun and the moon and on her head is a crown of 12 stars.

This imagery comes right out of the book of Genesis and the dream of Joseph (Gen. 37:9-10). In that dream, the sun was Jacob, the moon was Rachel, and the stars were the 11 brothers of Joseph or eleven tribes of Israel. In fact, Jacob, Joseph's father, actually gave the interpretation of this dream in Genesis 37:10.

In his interpretation, he saw the Jewish family bowing down to Joseph. As we will see, this sign in heaven will lead to the nations of the world bowing down before Israel. So this imagery in Revelation is clearly connected to Israel from the book of Genesis.

The sun, moon and stars are majestic planets that have been created by God that display the glory of God. Israel is a majestic nation created by God and she is to reflect the glory of God. Even though it has not been much of a reflection of God's glory lately, there will come a time in the future when Israel will reflect that glory.

In **verse 2** we learn that this woman was with child and was about to give birth to Him. We learn from **verse 5** that this was a son. So the question here is who is the woman? And who is the son?

Well, from Isaiah 9:6 which says, “A child will be born to us, a son will be given to us,” we learn that this “us” is a reference to Israel.

The Catholic church says this is a reference to Mary. Some Protestants say this is a reference to the Church. **But the Apostle Paul was clear that Jesus Christ was not born through the Church, but through Israel (Romans 9:4-5).**

The image of **verse 2** is that the prelude to the birth of this Son is a very intense, long, painful and difficult pregnancy and labor. The prophet Isaiah predicted that giving birth to this Son for Israel would be a long, painful process:

Isaiah wrote: “As the pregnant woman approaches the time to give birth, she writhes and cries out in her labor pains, thus were we before You, O LORD. We were pregnant, we writhed in labor, we gave birth, as it seems, only to wind. We could not accomplish deliverance for the earth, nor were inhabitants of the world born” (Is. 26:17-18). Clearly, Isaiah connects this to Israel.

Jeremiah wrote: “For I heard a cry as of a woman in labor, the anguish as of one giving birth to her first child, the cry of the daughter of Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands saying As woe is me for I faint before murderers” (Jer. 4:31). Jeremiah predicts that there will be a horrible time when Israel will cry out to God for deliverance.

Micah wrote: “Writhe and labor to give birth, Daughter of Zion, like a woman in childbirth; for now you will go out of the city, dwell in the field and go to Babylon. There you will be rescued; there the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies” (Micah 4:10).

“Therefore He will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child. Then the remainder of His brethren will return to the sons of Israel” (Micah 5:3).

Clearly this sign in heaven has to do with Israel. There have been many hard, laborious years of Satanic attack and struggle for Israel. **There have been many years of national persecution against Israel but a Son is about to come from the Sky who will deliver her and that Son is Jesus Christ.**

Things will become very intense for Israel in her worst labor pains ever, but that Son will be born and will come and all are seeing this sign in the Sky. **So this first sign is a sign concerning National Israel.**

SIGN #2 – The sign that refers to Satan. **12:3-6**

Verse 3 says, “Then another sign appeared in the heaven.” The pronoun “another” means another of the same kind of sign appeared in the same place, the heaven. Again we believe these signs will be visible signs that those on earth will be able to look up and actually see.

When John uses the another of the same kind pronoun, we think this is another sign connected to Israel. So there is another sign in heaven connected to Israel just as the first sign was connected to Israel.

The sign that appears is a sign of a “great red dragon” (v. 3). There are times in the Old Testament when this monster type of language is used to describe Israel’s Satanic enemies.

For example, in Psalm 74:13-14, Asaph said God will eventually deliver His people from monsters and Leviathan. Isaiah said the same thing (Is. 27:1).

Now this dragon is described as “a great red dragon.” **We are not left to guess who this is because he is specifically identified in verse 9 as being Satan.**

He is adjectively called “great” because of the size and intensity of what he will do at this point in the Tribulation. There are seven specific facts brought out about him here:

Fact #1 - He is red. **12:3a**

There can be no doubt this color at this point has to do with the fact that he is murderous and out for blood. Jesus said that Satan is the father of lies and a “murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44). Satan is out to destroy and murder people.

Those who are connected to Satan are often death-oriented. There is no question that Satan is behind many killers, suicides and abortions. Satan has no regard for human life. He is involved in all things that kill people such as drugs and murder. It is no coincidence that many of those who are connected to Satan dress in dark clothing and like dark things.

At this point in the Tribulation, he is about to kill at a mega level and this sign will be seen in heaven and the red signals that to the world.

Fact #2 - He has seven heads. **12:3b**

We learn from Revelation 17:9-10 that the seven heads are seven major political world powers who are controlled directly by Satan who will dominate Israel. We think this has reference to the total number of powers that are permitted to dominate national Israel in Israel’s history.

It cannot be a mere coincidence that in the Bible there are a total of seven empires that have been permitted by God to dominate Israel:

- 1) Egypt.
- 2) Assyria
- 3) Babylonia
- 4) Medo-Persia
- 5) Greece
- 6) Rome
- 7) The final power yet to come which will revive the Roman Empire.

What we learn here is that the real leader or head of these powers that dominate Israel is Satan. As we pointed out last time, the political world is under Satanic power and is being run by beasts. During this period of time, Satan will have complete control, which is what the number seven illustrates.

Fact #3 - He has ten horns. **12:3c**

The ten horns are ten world leaders who will give their allegiance to Satan in the final division of the Roman Empire in their war against Israel and God (Rev. 17:12-13). These powers will exist when the Antichrist exists.

Daniel saw exactly the same thing: “After this I kept looking in the night visions and behold a fourth beast dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet and it was different from all the beasts that were before it and it had ten horns. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise and another will arise after them and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings.” Daniel 7:7, 24

Satan will empower these leaders during the Tribulation to become powerful world leaders under the control of the Antichrist. That is exactly what these 10 horns represent.

Fact #4 - He has seven diadems. **12:3d**

There is no question that when we read he has seven diadems on his head that he has royal power and authority over seven major powers of the world. These powers will be under his control during the Tribulation and he will use these reigning powers to try to completely destroy Israel.

There is no question Satan is a powerful angelic being and he does have authority and power. If we consider the fact there are seven continents in the world: Europe; Asia; Africa; North America; South America; Australia; and Antarctica, we suspect at this point in the Tribulation he will be the royal and dominant force of the whole world.

During the Tribulation, as part of a worldwide judgment, God will permit Satan to be the royal power for a short time. He will use that power to try to destroy Israel and anything connected to God.

Fact #5 - He controls one-third of the angels. **12:4a**

God wants His people to know that Satan controls 1/3rd of the angels, which means he does not control 2/3rds of the angels.

From Ezekiel 28:13-17 and Isaiah 14:12-14 we learn that 1/3rd of the angels defected with Satan when he led his revolt against God.

We believe that this came when God said He would create man in His image. So after the fifth day of creation when God said He would make man in “our” image (Godhead) that is when Satan’s jealousy led him to say, “I will be like the most high God.” At that point 1/3rd of the angels defected and followed him.

Apparently it was a one-time decision that angels could make. An angel could decide to stay with God or go with Satan. We know from Daniel’s account that fallen angels or fallen stars from heaven fall to the earth and target Israel (Dan. 8:9-12).

Fact #6 - He has a specific objective. **12:4b**

Satan’s specific objective is to destroy Jesus Christ and anything connected to Jesus Christ. As soon as Jesus Christ was born, Satan used his angelic force to try to kill that baby. Herod slaughtered babies in an attempt to kill Him (Matt. 2:16).

Satan and his forces have been out to kill anything connected to God on this earth. It started by killing Abel when he offered the acceptable sacrifice to God (Gen. 4). Then Satan tried to pollute the Jewish line by producing Ishmael instead of Isaac (Gen. 16). Then Satan tried to destroy Israel by killing all Israeli babies in Egypt (Ex. 1:9, 16).

When Jesus Christ was finally born, Satan tried to kill Him. All throughout history Satan has hated Israel and has wanted to exterminate her because she is the nation of God and the nation of Jesus Christ.

But when this sign appears in heaven, it will be the worst onslaught against Israel to ever hit this world. He will be led by Satan and his fallen angels.

Fact #7 - He will fail. **12:5-6**

This is a very critical point. Satan cannot ever beat God. His plan to destroy Jesus Christ and Israel will never succeed.

Verse 6 is extremely important for it proves that even though Satan will try to rid the world of the Jews for 1,260 days or 3 ½ years, he will not succeed. We may notice that the same number appears again in **verse 14** and is identified as “time and times and half a time.” This is one year (time) plus two years (times) plus one half a year or 3 ½ years.

This is exactly the same time frame Daniel gives this (Daniel 7:25; 12:7). For 3 ½ years Satan will have authority over the world he has never had before. He will try to eliminate Israel.

What we learn from **verse 6** is that he will not succeed. Many Jews will flee to a place where God will protect her. The place is described as the “wilderness.” The wilderness will be a sovereign safe haven provided for Israel by God during this part of the Tribulation.

We believe this has two Biblical applications for Israel:

- 1) Many Jews will literally flee Jerusalem and go into the literal wilderness and mountain areas where she will be literally protected. Matthew 24:15-21
- 2) Many Jews will literally flee Israel and go into Gentile nations who will protect her. Matthew 25:31-40.

Now the thing that will show everyone this Satanic time is going to hit will be these two signs. These two signs signal a major turning point in the Tribulation and people will clearly see them in heaven.