

# *Jewish Persecution*

## **Revelation 12**

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May 15, 2022

### Introduction

- Antisemitism is on the rise in the world today.
- Antisemitism is not a new phenomenon, but is as old as the garden of Eden
  - Satan moved Cain to kill his brother, Abel.
    - 1 John 3:12-- *“Cain was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil, but his brother’s righteous.”*
  - Satan sought to pollute the gene pool of the human race by producing a race of people that was half-demon, half-human. Genesis 6
  - Satan reserved his hatred for Israel and the Jewish people
    - Israel enslaved in Egypt, the decree of Pharaoh to kill all baby boys, and God’s preservation of Moses.
    - During the time of the Judges, Satan used Israel’s pagan neighbors to oppress them.
    - Satan urged King Saul to attempt to murder David, thus destroying the messianic line.
    - Satan used Athaliah to murder all of the royal heirs of the line of Judah (2 Chronicles 22:10), but God spared Joash, and thus preserved the messianic line.
    - Since the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 to the present time, there have been numerous attempts to destroy the Jews.
- Satan loses the war in heaven, and is banished to the earth. And while there will be great joy in heaven, there will be “hell on earth”
  - Revelation 12:12-- *“Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! 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 he has a short time.”*

### ***Jewish Persecution—Revelation 12:13***

#### **A. The Persecuted: The “Woman with a male Child”**

- Revelation 12:1-5-- *“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 twelve stars. Then begin 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 on his heads. 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. 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 His throne.”*
1. John sees a “great sign”. A “sign” is a symbol that points to a reality.
  2. ***Who is the “Woman and the male Child” ?***
    - a. Those who believe that the church replaces Israel in God’s prophetic program, and believe that the book of Revelation records the history of the church in its struggles with Satan and evil, believe that the “woman” is the “believing, covenant-messianic community” or the church
      - 1) The intent of the passage is to explain the persecution of the believing community, not the persecution of Israel and the Jewish people.
      - 2) The throes of childbirth emphasizes the church’s pain and suffering, and the “birth” itself does not picture the birth of Christ but rather the travail of the community of believers from which the Messiah has arisen.
      - 3) The “male child” is not Jesus Christ alone, but rather Jesus plus the community of believers.
      - 4) Thus, the believing, covenant-messianic community, the church gives birth to the Messiah and to the believing, covenant community, the church. This is nonsense!

- b. Those who believe in a literal, grammatical, historical approach to Revelation, believe that...
- 1) **The “woman” symbolizes the “nation of Israel” or the Jewish nation.**
    - Revelation 12:1-- *“clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.”*
  - a) The description of the woman is reminiscent of a dream God gave to Joseph.
    - Genesis 37:9-11-- *“Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, ‘Look, I have 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, ‘What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?’ And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.”*
  - b) In the Old Testament, Israel is pictured as a woman, the adulterous wife.
    - Jeremiah 3:20-- *“‘Surely as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel,’ says the LORD.”*
    - Hosea 2:19-20-- *“I will betroth you to Me forever. Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.”*
    - 2) **The “woman”, Israel, gives birth to the “male Child”, that is, Jesus Christ.**
      - a) Jesus Christ was of Jewish lineage.
        - Isaiah 9:6-- *“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government shall be upon His shoulders. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”*
      - b) Support that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the “male Child”
        - (1) Satan’s attempt to *devour her child as soon as HE was born* and his attempts throughout Jesus’ earthly life to destroy Him before the cross.
        - (2) The male child *“was to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.”*
          - Psalm 2:7-9-- *“I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’”*
        - (3) The male Child *“was caught up to God and His throne”*
          - (a) Jesus Christ today is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven.
            - Hebrews 1:3-- *“Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”*
          - (b) Jesus Christ today is the exalted Lord
            - Philippians 2:8-11-- *“humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death on the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those on the earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

## B. The Persecutors

### 1. The “serpent or dragon”—Satan

- a. Since he could not stop Jesus from going to the cross and defeating Him there, he will instead assault the Jewish people, Jesus’ brethren according to the flesh.

- b. For if he is able to destroy the Jews, then the Jewish nation cannot be saved as prophesied.
    - Zechariah 12:10-- *"look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn...In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."*
    - Romans 11:26-27-- *"so all Israel will be saved, as it is written, 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is My covenant with them, when I will take away their sin.'"*
  - c. No surviving Jewish people, no millennial kingdom over which Jesus Christ will reign.
2. **Satan primarily works through the Antichrist and the False Prophet.**
- a. The Antichrist will initially appear to be the "good guy", offering Israel peace and security.
    - Daniel 9:27a-- *"Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week."*
  - b. In the middle of the tribulation, the "good guy" becomes the "beast" of Revelation 13 as he is indwelt by Satan himself.
    - Revelation 13:2-- *"dragon give him his power, his throne, and great authority."*
  - c. In the middle of the tribulation, the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and will put an end to religious freedom for the Jews.
    - Daniel 9:27-- *"But in the middle of the week he shall bring an end to the sacrifices and offerings. On the wing of abomination he shall make desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined to be poured out on the desolate."*
  - d. In the middle of the tribulation, the Antichrist will set up in the temple the "abomination of desolation", thus causing the Jews to abandon the temple area.
    - Daniel 9:27b-- *"On the wing of abomination he shall make desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined to be poured out on the desolate."*
- 1) During the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, the "abomination of desolation" was the erection of an altar to the Greek god Zeus Olympus and the sacrifice of a pig on the altar.
    - Daniel 11:31-- *"forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation."*
  - 2) The "abomination of desolation" by the Antichrist
    - a) Set himself up in God's temple as God
      - 2 Thessalonians 2:4-- *"Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."*
      - Revelation 13:8-- *"For all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."*
    - b) *"The image of the beast who was wounded by the sword and now lives"--* Revelation 13:14

## C. The Persecution

1. **Begins with the "Abomination of desolation"**
  - Matthew 24:15-22-- *"Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened."*

## 2. The First Assault.

- Revelation 12:13-- *"Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child."*
- a. The word "persecute" means "to pursue, to chase, to hunt", and thus to persecute.
  - Acts 26:11 -- *"And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities."*
- b. The fleeing Jews will receive assistance from individual Gentiles
  - Matthew 25:31-40-- *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothed You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"*
- c. The fleeing Jews will also receive supernatural help
  - Revelation 12:14-- *"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, from the presence of the serpent."*
  - Exodus 19:14-- *"You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself."*
  - Psalm 57:1-- *"Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by."*
- d. The location to where the Jews flee is unknown.
- e. God will supernaturally protect and provide for them during a time when people cannot buy or sell without the mark of the beast.
  - Revelation 13:16-17-- *"He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive the mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."*

## 3. The Second Assault

- Revelation 12: 15-16-- *"So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened up its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth."*
- a. The "flood" represents an invading, destroying army.
  - Jeremiah 47:2 -- *"Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, water rise out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood; They shall overflow the land and all that is in it, the city and those who dwell within; Then men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall wail.'"*
- b. Antichrist's army will be destroyed by the earth opening up and swallowing them
  - Exodus 15:12-- *"You stretched out Your right hand; The earth swallowed them."*

#### 4. The Third Assault

- Revelation 12:17-- *"And 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."*
- a. Who are the "rest of her children"?
  - 1) The 144,000?
  - 2) Gentile tribulation saints?
  - 3) All-inclusive of all believers, Jews and Gentiles who are scattered throughout the world.
    - a) *"Keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus"*
    - b) That they are saints is clear from Revelation 14:12-- *"Here is the patience of the saints: here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."*
- b. Unlike his attempts against the "woman", the Antichrist will be successful in his pursuit of believers in Christ.
  - Revelation 13:7-- *"It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation."*
- c. The outcome for many of "rest of her children" will be martyrdom.
  - Revelation 7:9-10-- *"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!"*
  - Revelation 7:14-- *"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*
- d. But ultimately Satan will fail, and Christ's kingdom will be established here on earth.
  - Revelation 11:15-- *"There were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever.'"*

**Application for us today:** God knows how to deliver, to protect, and to provide for us today.

- 2 Peter 2:9-- *"The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment."*
- Matthew 6:25-33-- *"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So, why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothed the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is thrown in the over, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, do not worry, saying 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."*