

Revelation Series, Rev. 12:13-17, “Satan’s Plot to Destroy”

8.15.18

Take a look at this quote on the screens and tell me if you can figure out what it’s talking about...

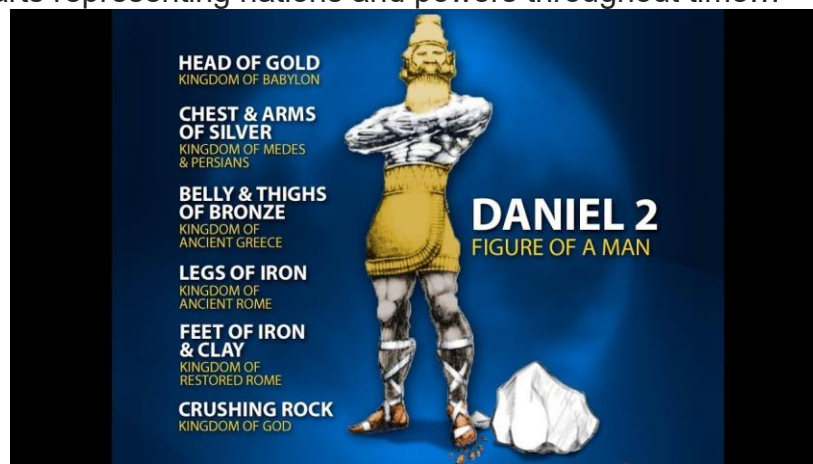
I saw an eagle with thirteen feathers, colored red and white and blue. Over time it grew thirty-five more feathers. Then many nations waged war on the eagle. But the eagle threw burning fire on its enemies two times, and the war ended. After this, I saw the eagle grow two more feathers.

Of course we understand this to represent our country and the fifty states that make up the nation of the United States of America. We are, of course, very familiar with the symbolism of an eagle, red, white and blue and the two wars... WWI and WWII. But, people of other countries or nations...or even people 200 years from now might not understand this symbolism. They'd have to do some serious research to figure it out. But, as Americans, we know these symbols because they are everywhere...on our money...on flags...in our government buildings. We certainly have no problem recognizing this symbols and their meaning.

The reason I share this is this is because the book of the Revelation is written in such a way that it is often difficult to tell what is meant to be taken literally and what is meant to be taken figuratively in a given passage. The book of the Revelation is written in a way that the people of John’s day would readily understand it. The symbolism used by John was very familiar to the nation of Israel. Scholars tell us the Book of the Revelation is a genre of the Bible known as: Jewish apocalypse, or apocalyptic writing (end time writing), a genre known for its heavy use of symbolism.

I was told for years that the book of the Revelation was written in symbolism and figurative language to keep it from the Romans, so the Apostle John could get the letter off of the Isle of Patmos to the 7 churches in Asia. Yet, I just don’t believe that’s true. There is no evidence of that. The truth is...End Time...apocalyptic writing is often symbolic. The Book of the Revelation is filled with symbols that come from common Jewish and Christian sources of that day...centuries past.

Now, think of the Apocalyptic writing of Daniel from Daniel 2. Remember the figure of the man with the different body parts representing nations and powers throughout time...



This is symbolism as well. You see, when you and I come to Apocalyptic writing and the Book of the Revelation, sometimes within a passage we can see past, present and future, just like in Daniel’s writings and this is what makes these books open to so many varied interpretations. But there are proper hermeneutics for studying Scripture. We don’t get to just choose what we like. We need good hermeneutics. What are hermeneutics? It’s the proper method and structure for interpreting a text.

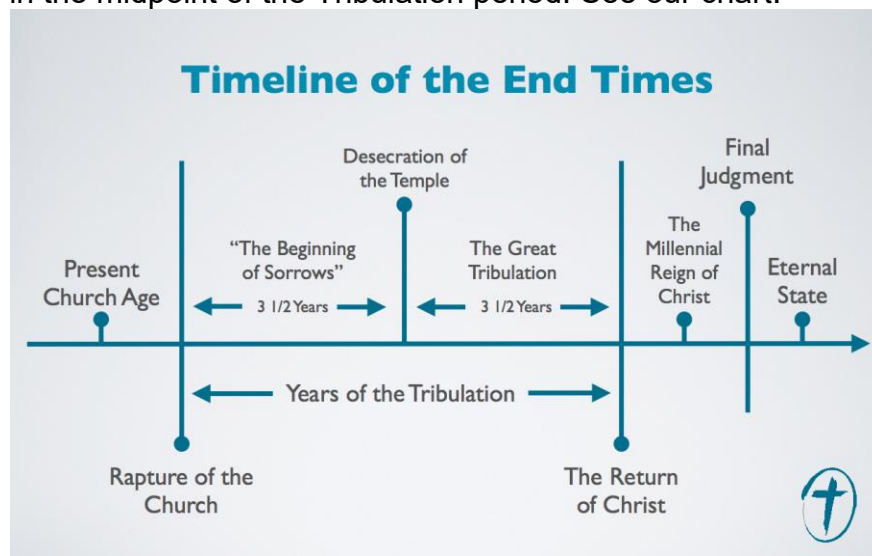
Proper Biblical hermeneutics or a normal interpretation of a Scripture passage means that unless the verse or passage clearly indicates that the author is using figurative language, it should be understood in its normal, literal sense. We're not to look for other meanings if the natural meaning of the sentence makes sense. Also, we are not to spiritualize Scripture by assigning meanings to words or phrases when it is clear the author, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, meant it to be understood as it is written. My tack, as a Bible teacher, has always been to take literally what makes sense to take literally, and where taking something literally is unsensible, then I won't and I'll seek to understand the background of that imagery in the context of when it was written, by whom it was written and to whom it was written. That's proper Biblical Hermeneutics.

This understanding of hermeneutics comes in handy when studying Revelation 12. Look at 13-17.

Revelation 12:13-17

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. ¹⁵ The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. ¹⁶ But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. ¹⁷ Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Remember the woman is Israel, the male child is Jesus, and the dragon is Satan. Now where are we in time? We're in the midpoint of the Tribulation period. See our chart.



Remember how we ended last week. **Jump back up to verse 12...** Remember Satan has been thrown down to the earth in GREAT WRATH. See this again...

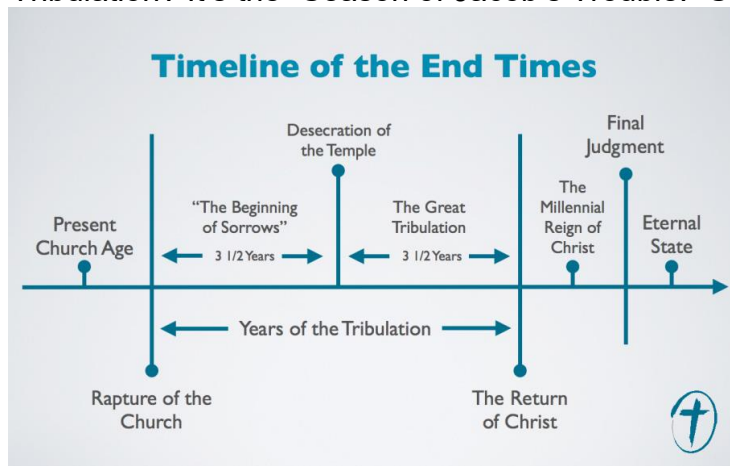
Revelation 12:12

¹² Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

We are now in the midpoint of the Tribulation period and the Antichrist is on the warpath. He has turned on the nation of Israel after having made the peace agreement with them 3 1/2 years earlier. This is the abomination that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:15. The Antichrist is no longer offering

peace...he is now an instrument of chaos, destruction and evil. He is making the world's population take his mark: 666 to buy, sell or trade. He is killing those who refuse to take his mark. He has now revealed his evil and it's personified in his desire for power and authority and his hatred of the Israel and the people of God.

Remember, what is the Tribulation? It's the "Season of Jacob's Trouble." See the chart again...



See the "Beginning of Sorrows?" Whose sorrows? Jacob's. Israel's. The Woman...see verse 13.

Revelation 12:13-14

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

Listen, Satan has been pursuing Israel since Pharaoh tried to destroy them. Satan has tried to stop the plan of God when he prodded King Herod to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem, to Hitler's plan to exterminate the Jews under his Nazi reign. During the last half of the Tribulation, there will be unequalled Anti-Semitism on the earth.

Remember Jesus talked about this in our study of the Gospel of Matthew. **Turn to Matthew 24** and let's be reminded of this... Matthew 24 is part of the Olivet Discourse where Jesus describes what will happen during the Tribulation Period prior to His second coming.

Matthew 24:15-22

¹⁵ "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), ¹⁶ then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, ¹⁸ and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. ¹⁹ And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰ Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹ For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²² And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.

Satan, through the Antichrist, will be on the warpath as has never been seen before...destroying people who have not taken his mark. Jesus said, "Get out!" And this fleeing ties into what we just read from Revelation 12. The Lord, God will protect Israel...by way of the "two wings of the great eagle" that will deliver the people into the wilderness where they'll be cared for during the last half of the Tribulation.

Now here's that figurative language we were talking about. Language the Jews would know well. This imagery that has been taken from the deliverance of the nation of Israel from Egypt as recorded in the book of Exodus.

Exodus 19:3-4

³ while Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

There's the symbolism...and we see it also in Deuteronomy 32, Moses reminded the people how God had cared for them in their 40-year desert wandering using similar language...

Deuteronomy 32:9-12

⁹ But the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage. ¹⁰ "He found him in a desert land, and in the howling waste of the wilderness; he encircled him, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. ¹¹ Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions, ¹² the Lord alone guided him, no foreign god was with him.

Think about God's provision for the nation of Israel through the years. How many times were they rescued by God when it seemed they would be destroyed. Over and over again, we see the nation of Israel outnumbered by massive armies of marauding nations...and yet, the Lord provides and they survive.

Now let me point out something else and we saw this last week. Think back with me...what did we see last week? Satan comes to heaven and makes war in heaven one last time and he fights with Michael and Michael throws him and his demons to the earth one last time.

Daniel the prophet describes what happens after that on earth...

Daniel 12:1

"At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book.

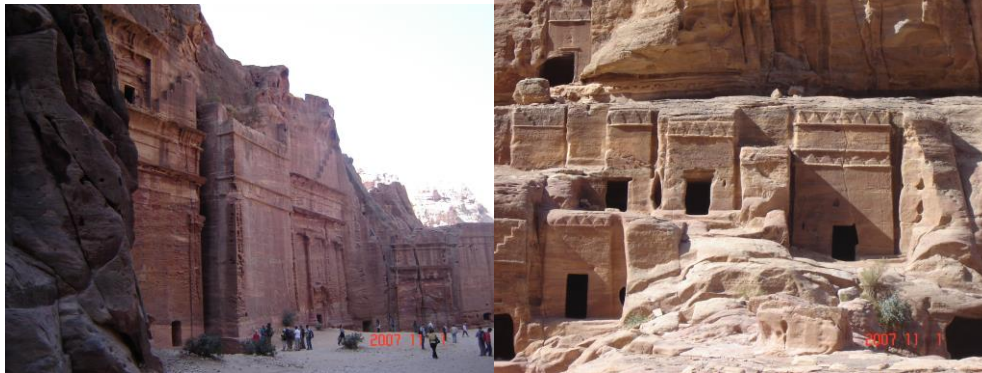
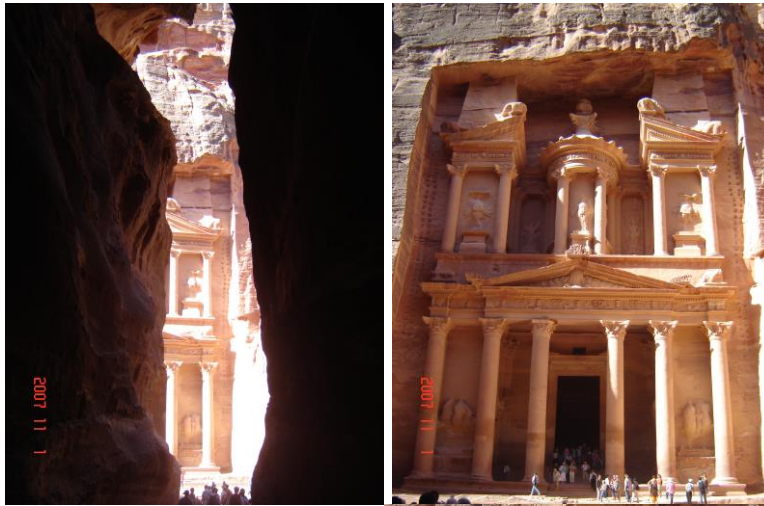
Now notice it said, "everyone whose name shall be found written in the book..." that's the Book of Life and this speaks of the fact that Jews and Gentiles are being saved and becoming part of the family of God. How? By the preaching of the two prophets during the first 3 ½ years and by the 144,000 Jews (12,000 from each tribe during the last 3 ½ years).

And so now, we return to Rev. 12 with this symbolism and imagery in hand and we see the Lord is going to protect those who refuse to take the mark of the Beast, the Antichrist. See it again...

Revelation 12:13-14

¹³ And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

Where is this wilderness? We don't know. But, through the years many scholars have thought it could be the Rose Red City of Petra found in present-day Jordan. I went there in 2007.



This city was built by nomads called: Nabataeans, who roamed the Arabian desert. Now why Petra? Because of the myriad of tunnels and caves that go deep into the mountains many miles! Spelunkers say these cave systems and tunnels run miles and miles into the mountains and there is such labyrinth of these caves that it's very difficult to map and find your way in and out.

So, we can't say for sure where the "wilderness" will be that God protects His people, but we do know He will protect them. He did it for 40 years when they wandered the wilderness desert heading for the Promised Land. He provided manna and quail and water. He allowed their clothes and shoes to grow with them and never wear out. And we can never forget that He split the Red Sea for them...



And then the Sea closed in on Pharaoh's army and destroyed them.

David wrote in Psalm 124...

Psalm 124:1-8

¹ If it had not been the Lord who was on our side—let Israel now say— ² if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when people rose up against us, ³ then they would have swallowed

us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us; ⁴ then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; ⁵ then over us would have gone the raging waters. ⁶ Blessed be the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth! ⁷ We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped! ⁸ Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

“The Flood would have swept over us...” It’s interesting...speaking of water...how the Apostle John describes Satan’s attack in verse 15...

Revelation 12:15

¹⁵ The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood.

Of course, Satan is the serpent and he will come after the woman (Israel) by pouring out water from his mouth... What does this mean? Well again, it’s figurative language and imagery...but, what has Satan always poured out of his mouth? Lies! He’s the father of lies. He wants to bring doubt! Remember how he came to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and said, “Did God really say?” He was trying to cast doubt on the Word of God.

He continues to do that today. He will do anything he can to cast doubt on this book. If he can get us to doubt the Word of God...which is our authority and the revelation of who God is...what Jesus did...and how to be saved...then, the rest is a house of cards.

Never forget...Satan is the great deceiver. How does he deceive? With a flood of doubt... Listen, starve the doubt...FEED YOUR FAITH.

Remember the words of Jesus’ half-brother, James from...

James 4:7-8

⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Don’t listen to the lies of Satan in your life. He will try to get you off track...he will try to get you to doubt...to question everything you believe and know is true...he will try to get you into a tail-spin of emotions and he seems you are being overwhelmed by a tidal wave of fear... Listen...submit those fears and lies to God...and when you do...you will resist the devil and he will flee... Listen...draw near to God and He’ll draw near to you! Don’t waffle back and forth with a double mind on the things of God and the lies of Satan...resist those lies in the Lord and Satan will flee. The Lord will help us... **See verse 16...watch how the Lord will help those believers in the Tribulation...**

Revelation 12:16

¹⁶ But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.

What has been happening throughout the Tribulation on earth that has caused tremendous upheaval? Earthquakes... the earth opening it’s mouth. You go back and look as the Seal judgment in Rev. 6:12, 6th seal, came upon the earth...what happened? Earthquakes. And just like Korah, the evil man opposing Moses in Numbers 16 was swallowed up by the earth...I believe the

Lord will use the earth to swallow up many of those of the Antichrist's army who are coming against the people of God. They'll be swallowed up.

But, Satan doesn't stop! Watch verse 17 and we're done...

Revelation 12:17

¹⁷ Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Satan can't get at the nation of Israel, hidden and protected...so, he goes after the rest of her **offspring**...that would be other believers...Gentiles...those who don't have the Mark of the Beast...666...those who are keeping the commandments of God and holding on to Jesus. Satan will go after them too...just like he's going after us today.

Satan is a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour...but, we're stronger! Greater is He that's in us than he that's in the world. We are protected under the shadow of the wings of our GREAT God. We are more than conquerors through Christ! And through Jesus we can draw near to God and resist the Devil and he will flee! We are safe in Jesus! Blessed be the name of the Lord!