

**WAR IN HEAVEN  
REVELATION 12:1-17**

There are six characters of the Great Tribulation addressed in Chapter 12. Their identities are:

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|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Woman of child (v1)         | Israel.                         |
| 2. The dragon (v3)             | Satan                           |
| 3. The dragon (vs. 13, 15, 17) | The Antichrist indwelt by Satan |
| 4. The man child (v5)          | Christ.                         |
| 5. Michael (v7)                | Angel.                          |
| 6. Remnant seed of woman (17)  | Israel.                         |

**THE WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN.  
Revelation 12:1-6**

**THE GREAT "WONDER." (Revelation 12:1)**

Chapter 12 begins with a flash back which reveals to John the great war that has been going on since Satan rebelled against God. Satan from the beginning of the world has sought to destroy and hinder God's plans for the redemption of men. He deceived Adam and Eve, and throughout time has been opposing God. God's plan from the Fall of man was to send a Messiah a Savior who would undo the deception of Satan and the sin of Adam and Eve. (Gen. 3:15) Satan has been attempting to defeat God's plan and though the centuries there has been a war going on unseen by the eyes of man. Chapter 12 falls in time in the middle of the Tribulation. What John is shown first is the struggle of Satan to destroy Christ in the past and then his attempts to destroy those saved in the Tribulation. The devil is trying to prevent the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Millennial Kingdom. Further to John is revealed the limiting of Satan's power in the last three and a half years of the Tribulation. (See verse 6)

The word "wonder" used is the Greek word, "*semeion*" which means a "sign" or "symbol." The verse literally says that "there appeared a great 'sign' or 'symbol' in heaven." A rule of interpretation is that where symbolism is used, most of the time, Bible says it is symbolism. This is what is found here. A sign or symbol represents some important truth rather than being a "wonder" or something at which to marvel. This sign is called "great" which denotes its importance and scope. There are six other "signs" or "miracles" mentioned in Revelation.

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|----------------------|---|
| Rev. 12:3 (Sign)     | The great red dragon  |
| Rev. 13:13-14(Sign)  | The false prophet begins fire from heaven                   |
| Rev. 15:1 (Sign)     | The seven angels who dispense the bowl judgments            |
| Rev. 16:14 (Miracle) | The frog-like demons that come from the mouth of the dragon |
| Rev. 19:20 (Miracle) | The mention of the miracles of the false prophet            |

John says that the great wonder will appear “in heaven.” The word here is “*ouranos*” and refers to the sky or to the air. The picture is that John is seeing this vision appearing before him in the sky. This verse does not mean that the great wonder or woman was in heaven, the abode of God, but merely in the sky or air as observed by John.

The woman described here is clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars. She being with child is about to give birth. (Rev. 12:1-2) The question is to whom is this referring? Roman Catholics say she is "Mary" because she gave birth to Christ. However, Mary is never elevated to the status as seen in this passage. The New Testament never shows her as having a position of authority such as having the sun, moon and a crown of twelve stars portrays. Protestants teach this woman is what they term "the universal church." However, the ekklesia (church) did not give birth to Christ; it was Jesus Christ who gave birth to the institution of the local church. Some see that the twelve stars as the twelve apostles, however one must make note of all the details that are given. The correct interpretation is in the details.

First we must understand the context of this event. The Tribulation is the period of time when God is again working with the nation of Israel purifying it in preparation for the reign of Christ. The interpretation of the Book of Revelation rests on understanding this important truth. Daniel 9:24 says, “*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*” (Daniel 9:24) This reveals God’s time table for Israel. The term “seventy weeks” refers to weeks of years (units of seventy) or a time span of seventy sevens or four hundred and ninety years. The seven years of the Tribulation are the completion of Daniel’s Seventy Weeks. Presently, as stated earlier God’s prophetic clock is temporarily stopped at 483 years. This is the final week. At the end of the four hundred and ninety years God says He will “*anoint the most Holy*” which is a reference to Christ’s being anointed over the Israel’s promised kingdom and His subsequent ruling of the world from Jerusalem sitting on the throne of David. (Luke 1:32-33; cf. 2 Sam. 7:16).

One view of the phrase “*the most Holy*” is that this is a reference to the Millennial temple which will be built at the beginning of kingdom. However, it is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ that is the focus of the end of the seven year Tribulation. The kingdom will be established fifty days after the Jesus Second Coming. This statement of four hundred and ninety years therefore marks the Second Coming, not the building of the Millennial temple.

## **THE IDENTITY OF THE WOMAN.**

Some prominent commentators such as Donald Barnhouse believe that the woman is not only representative of Israel, but is symbolic of all the saints of God throughout history including Church age saints.<sup>1</sup> However, in context only Israel is in

view here. The purpose for the seven years of Tribulation is to finish the Old Testament dispensation and for God to fulfill His promises to Israel. The institution of the local church is not a part of the events of the seven year Tribulation. Once the Tribulation is completed the millennial reign, which is the promised Kingdom will begin. Revelation 4:1 to 19:1, are showing the Lord completing his program for Israel and the fulfillment of Abrahamic Covenant. Israel has never received the kingdom that God has promised. It should be clear that the woman is Israel, and at this time in the Tribulation is waiting for the day in when her promised Messiah comes and God gives her the Kingdom.

At the end of the Tribulation, when Jesus the Messiah returns, Israel will finally be delivered her from her enemies and she will find peace. The context is that this is happening during the Tribulation when Israel is in view. When David in Psalm 122:6 stated, *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee"* he was praying for the Messiah to come and the Kingdom. The phrase is somewhat misused today when people are told to pray that God will bring peace to the Jews currently. Though we would all desire that, we know that Satan will continue his attacks on God's chosen people until God stops him. Another verse that is misapplied is Psalm 118:24 that says, *"This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."* Although the Christian should rejoice always and every day, this verse too is referring to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. God's word is crystal clear, because it says there will never be real peace in Israel until her Messiah comes and sets up His Kingdom. This is the hope of Israel.

This woman in Revelation 12:1 is the Nation of Israel. Isaiah gives the strongest evidence that the woman represents Israel who gave birth to Christ.

*"Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the LORD that rendereth recompense to his enemies. Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." (Isaiah 66:5)*

In Revelation 12:5 the Man child is to rule the world with a rod of iron. This clearly is referring to the Messiah in the promised Millennial Kingdom. (See Rev. 2:27, 19:15 and Psa. 2:9) The symbolism of being Israel being *"clothed in sun and moon"* is the same as Jacob (Israel) saw in his vision in Genesis 37: 9-11. The crown on Israel's head with twelve stars is representative of the twelve tribes of Israel.

### **THE GREAT DRAGON. Revelation 12:3**

Another sign (KJV "wonder") that appears is the great red dragon. (Revelation 12:3) This second scene appears in the sky (heaven) and unfolds before John. The picture shown reveals actions of Satan and his demons that are cast out of the sky or air.

Ephesians 2:2 tells us about the realm of Satan's domain, "*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*" (Ephesians 2:2) Presently, Satan freely operates over the earth and his domain is the sky or atmosphere of the earth. But this will change as he is cast from the air on to the earth which limits his powers. He and his demons no longer have unlimited access to the earth.

This red dragon has seven heads, ten horns, and seven crowns. Clearly, this red dragon is Satan and is a reference to Revived Roman Empire which is headed by Satan through the Antichrist. (Dan. 7:7-8, 24 and Rev. 12:9) Daniel 7:24, states these ten horns are a ten nation the confederacy that the Antichrist forms and rules over. Three of these nations are the conquered kingdoms of the Antichrist, which leaves seven nations in the confederacy. (Dan.7:8, 24) The Antichrist thus has a crown for each head.

*"After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things. . . . And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings" (Dan. 7:7-8, 24)*

The fourth kingdom prophesied by Daniel is said to be liken to the beast of Daniel 2:32-35. This fourth kingdom is symbolized as being like two legs of iron. Clearly this is a reference to the Roman Empire which was divided into two parts, the Western half which ruled from Rome and the Eastern half ruled from Constantinople. Each of the legs has feet which are described as being made of iron and clay which most believe will be the Revived Roman Empire. Each foot will have five toes which mean the coming Revived Roman will be made up of five eastern and five western nations. Daniel 7:8 says the beast or Antichrist will conquer three of these nations and then rule over all ten nations which are now constitute a confederacy.

It does not violate any scripture to surmise that the nation of the Antichrist could be the United States of America. One must not be dogmatic about this, but Daniel 7:8 states "*another*" *little horn* arises and "*plucks up the three of the first ten horns.*" Most have concluded the Antichrist would be a European; however there is nothing in this passage or other scripture that states specifically that he will be from Europe. Most Americans are of European descent. Looking at the world's current situation the United States of America is the most powerful nation on the earth. If we are nearing the end times and Daniel's 70th Week, then it would seem logical to assume that somehow the USA would play a part in the end time events. In the world today only the United States has the military might and inclination to enter into a treaty with Israel to protect her from

her enemies. The United States is seen by Israel as their strong brother and protector. From the beginning of modern Israel the United States has led the world in recognizing the Jews' right to exist as a nation and occupy their ancestral lands. When the seven year Tribulation begins Russia will attack Israel, but will be defeated by the Antichrist. (See Ezekiel 38-39:11) There is no other nation in the Western hemisphere that can today defeat Russia. This is speculation, but it seems possible that "if" we are nearing the end of the Church Age, America could be the nation of the Antichrist, although it is not specifically mentioned in Scripture.

### **A THIRD PART OF HEAVEN IS CAST TO THE EARTH. (Revelation 12:4)**

There can be no mistake as to the identity of the great dragon, because the Lord states he is the "old serpent" referring to his temptation of Eve in the form of a serpent in the Garden of Eden and Fall of man. He is further called the Devil "*diabolos*" and Satan. Verse 12, uses the adjective "devil" to describe Satan. The name means to be "an accuser, slanderer" which reveals his evil character and action. The name Satan is the word "*satanas*" and is derived from the Aramaic word which means "an adversary."<sup>2</sup> Thus these names show Satan to be the God's adversary who accuses the brethren." Satan is seen in three ways opposing God:

1. As an accuser of the brethren; he opposes Christ as a priest.
2. As one who brings forth the first beast; he opposes Christ as King.
3. As bringing forth the false prophet; he opposes Christ as Prophet.

Symbolism is used to describe the actions of Satan as he is cast from heaven. The Greek word for heaven is the same word used in verse one. It is referring to the sky or air. The dragon is said to draw a third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to earth. The word "drew" means to "drag down" these stars to the earth. The question is who are these stars of heaven?

Some believe that this event refers back in time to Satan's past rebellion against God when he was first cast out of heaven with a third part of the rebellious angels. (Ezek. 28:15) Pride was found in Satan's heart and he rebelled against God. 2 Peter 2:4 states that other angels also rebelled with him and were cast down into hell and unto chains of darkness. Jude 6 says these angels left their "first estate" which means they were created in heaven to serve the Lord. Some of these angels who rebelled are now chained in darkness and waiting judgment. Accordingly, two thirds of the angels who followed Satan came to earth with him and are the demons who serve him. (Matt. 12:24, 26; 25:41, Eph. 6:11-12, Rev. 12:7, 9) The red color refers to "blood" and represents Satan's character as a murderer.

There is another more likely explanation which is that the stars are Satan's demons that are cast down to earth to possess world leaders causing them to become the servants of Satan. Now with the support of earthly leaders Satan stands waiting for the child to be born.

In God's timetable as shown in Daniel 9:24-27, and in the Old Testament there appears no break in Israel's history. But from the New Testament and history we know there is. Revelation 12 is a totally Jewish scene and what is in view is Israel about to give birth to Christ which happened in the past. However, although Israel did give birth to Christ, He was rejected and not accepted by them as their Messiah. Revelation 11:19 says that now the kingdoms of earth are the kingdoms of God. Further Israel, during the first part of the Tribulation, has been regathered and the judgments of God are purging them of unbelievers. The return of Christ is imminent and the promised Millennial Kingdom will shortly be established which will begin Christ's rule of the world from Jerusalem. With this in mind it seems possible that this could be a referring to this event happening at this point in time in the middle or towards the end of the Tribulation. Until now the birth of the Messiah has meant little to Israel, but now saved Israelis will believe and accept Him. At this time Israel will fully give birth to her Redeemer in the sense of receiving Him as their Messiah.

Revelation 12:10-12 records John hearing a loud voice in heaven declaring that salvation is come to the earth and that the "accuser" of the brethren is a reference to Satan who is cast down. Verse 12 ends saying *"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."* In the context, this statement is made in reference to Satan's being cast down to earth and states he knows he only has a short time to left. Revelation 12:13 shows Satan poised to destroy Christ in a desperate last ditch effort. This added to the other evidences shows that the events of Chapter 12 are referring to happenings during the last half of the Tribulation and are not referring to past events.

Satan is seen standing ready to destroy Christ. Some see this also as a reference to Satan's past attempts to destroy Christ in Herod's act to kill male babies in Bethlehem. (Matt. 12:16) Herod was an Ebonite, a descendant of Esau, the enemy of Jacob and children of Israel. This dragon sits waiting to devour the Child as it is born.

If we accept that this is chronologically an event happening in the midst of the Tribulation it would mean that Satan orders a third part of his demons to earth in a special attempt to defeat God's plans. Further, as the end of the Tribulation nears Satan stands poised to defend himself and to destroy Christ on His return. There is no reason to not accept that Revelation 12:1-6 are events happening in the last half of the Tribulation.

### **THE MAN CHILD CHRIST. Revelation 12:5-6.**

The woman brings forth man child. (Revelation 12:5) The passage says that He is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. Some say this is the universal church; however the word for "man" is "*arsen*" which is masculine. If this was a reference to the institution of the church, it would be feminine which clearly proves it is a reference to Christ Jesus Himself. Further, the institution of the church is never presented in Scripture as ruling. This false interpretation comes for those who distort God's plan for the "*ekklesia*" (English Bibles translated "church"). Psalm 2:9, which refers to the Messiah, says: *"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."* The

"catching up" refers to the ascension of Christ. (Acts 1:9-11) The word is *"har pazo,"* meaning "to seize." This is the same word used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 for being "caught up" in the rapture of the Body of Christ.

The woman flees to wilderness. (Revelation 12:6) Israel has been greatly persecuted throughout history, but this is referring to the persecution within the last half of the Tribulation. God has a remnant of faithful Jews in Israel who refused to worship the Antichrist and receive the mark of the beast. God protects these faithful believers as the Antichrist now in full control in Jerusalem seeks to destroy all those who refuse to worship him. As in the persecutions of the First Century Jewish believers, these Jewish believers in the Tribulation are forced to flee into the wilderness to save their lives. (See Acts 11:19)

### **SATAN CAST OUT OF HEAVEN. WAR IN HEAVEN - THE FIRST PHRASE - Revelation 12:7-9**

There will be a war in heaven at the middle of the Seven Year Tribulation. In Daniel 10:13 God tells us of a confrontation between the Devil (called the prince of the kingdom of Persia) and Michael the archangel. He was trying to stop Michael from revealing specifics of the events of the end times. In Revelation 12, in the midst of the Tribulation, once again Michael and the angels fight against Satan and his demons. The battle ends with Satan and his angels being cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:8).

John Walvoord has this to say:

"The concept that there is a spiritual warfare in the very presence of God in heaven has been resisted by some expositors, preferring to regard this as begin fought in the atmospheric or the starry heaven rather than in the very presence of God. The event here prophesied was predicted by Daniel the prophet in Daniel 12:1, where it is recorded that Michael the angel will *'stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of the people'*. This event marks the beginning of the great tribulation defined in Daniel 12:1. It is undoubtedly the same event as in Revelation 12."<sup>3</sup>

Jamieson, Fausset, Brown commentary makes this observation:

"There are four gradations in the ever deeper downfall of Satan: (1) He is deprived of his heavenly excellency, though having still access to heaven as man's accuser, up to Christ's first coming. As heaven was not fully yet opened to man (John 3:13), so it was not yet shut against Satan and his demons. The Old Testament dispensation could not overcome him. (2) From Christ, down to the millennium, he is judicially cast out of heaven as the accuser of the elect, and shortly before the millennium loses his power against Israel, and has sentence of expulsion fully executed on him and his by

Michael. His rage on earth is consequently the greater, his power being concentrated on it, especially towards the end, when "he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:12). (3) He is bound during the millennium (Rev. 20:1-3). (4) After having been loosed for a while, he is cast for ever into the lake of fire."<sup>4</sup>

## **THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE COMING DAY OF SATAN'S WRATH AND THE VICTORY OF THE SAINTS. Revelation 12:10-12**

Satan is cast down to the earth and no longer is an accuser of the brethren. In Job we are told that Satan went to and fro across the earth evidentially accusing the Old Testament saints before the Lord. (See Job 1:6f) The Lord pointed out His servant Job as an example of one who believed and was an upright man. This passage shows us that Satan knows how we live our lives and accuses us before the Lord. It should cause us to seriously consider how we live for Him.

*"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Rev. 12:10).*

God says now salvation is come, strength and power as Satan the accuser is no longer allowed to make accusations against God children. The saints of God are said to have overcome Satan. (Rev. 12:11) How? They will overcome by the blood of Lamb, their testimony, and self-sacrifice. These who will overcome and able saved are those who refused to compromise or the word of God or recant their belief in Jesus Christ. These saints will stand undaunted even when they know it will lead to their deaths.

It is most unpopular today to stand upon the whole truth of the Word of God. It is almost as unpopular to teach that professing Christians should be totally dedicated to the Lord Jesus Christ. Today apathy toward godly living is popular and being uncommitted to the work of the Lord is the trend. Many give God's truth lip service, but it is without works. (See James 2:10) These Tribulation saints would not let the threat of death keep them from having a good public testimony and serving the Lord. Today many need only the flimsiest of excuses to keep them from being unfaithful to the Lord. We should wonder how many would stand true to Christ in a day of persecution. Today many are kept from church by the temptation of a day some recreational activity, or a headache, or just plain indifference. These types of church members surely do not appear to be "overcomers" and should stand ashamed in light of the testimony of these saints of God.

Today Satan rules and receives glory from all who are not saved. Every man misses the mark and falls short of what God would have him be. Satan deceives people into thinking that good works will save them, yet no man is righteous and without sin. (Rom. 3:10f) Modern "enlightened" preachers and churches oppose the idea of Christ's blood sacrifice for sin and preach a watered down Gospel. They try to sanitize Christ's suffering and death and make it less horrible. Yet, payment for sin is totally in view in salvation and it is the reason for Christ's sacrifice. The Bible repeatedly states that the



only way men can be saved is by belief in Jesus Christ and His shed blood for sin. Jesus stated in reference to the cup when He instituting the Lord's Supper, "*For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*" (Matthew 26:28) Salvation is being saved from something and that something is sin. It's not just a ticket or free pass to heaven. It cost the Lord Jesus Christ unimaginable suffering to pay the penalty for our sins. Salvation brings discernment (1 Cor. 11:29) a realization of what Christ did in suffering for us. This discernment certainly is not being passive to sin with its destructive consequences, doom, judgment and eventual death.

These believers, during the Tribulation, will overcome Satan by blood of Jesus Christ and word of their testimony. Their lives matched God's word. (2 Cor. 5:17) Their walk will match their talk. Many a person thinks they are deceiving those around them and that people are not aware of their hypocrisy. Yet those around them know the truth. In reality the phrase, "I can't hear what you say, your actions speak too loud" is totally true. Jesus said to the hypocrites of His day, "*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*" (Luke 4:16) Lost people and disobedient Christians glorify Satan and they do not overcome him. (1 John 3:8-12) The worldly Christians are the ones that Satan is pointing out to the Lord and making accusations about their sincerity and comment. When a person does not live for the Lord they honor Satan and thus dishonor the Lord. Would it not be wonderful the saints of God would overcome the world and hear the Savior say, "*Well, done my good and faithful servant?*" I think so.

These Tribulation believers loved the Lord even unto death. (Rev. 12:11) Nothing is more precious than life to man. Here is the evidence of the power to gospel to change a man. Sadly, the power of God to live a godly life is just as readily available to Christians today, but few are interested in that degree of commitment and honor to the Lord. The faithful believer loves Christ and will stand unshaken before Satan's attacks. These live totally for the Lord with no hypocrisy. What a man really loves is seen in what he is willing to sacrifice or die for. These believers were good stewards of the life God had given them. They gave their all to Him even their very lives. Jesus said of those who are persecuted for their faith and devotion to Him, "*Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*" (Matthew 5:12)

### **SATAN'S WRATH: Revelation 12:12**

The declaration of verse 12 is reason for great rejoicing. Finally, after the eons of Satan's destructive reign on earth is coming to a close. Soon the pain, suffering, heartache, death and every evil imaginable the Devil has caused will come to an end. It is to be a time of rejoicing for the angels in heaven who did not rebel with Satan and stood true and faithful to the Lord, to see his power about to end. Those on earth who have been preyed on by Satan and his demons can too rejoice in knowing soon the people of earth who have believed will be delivered and enter God's peace.

The devil at this point in the Tribulation knows his time is short. His nature is not to repent and he tries to do as much evil as he can in the short time he has left. The Devil

is the author of the "eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you will die" attitude. At this moment in history the Bible says "*Woe unto the people on earth.*" Satan's servants now reap his wrath and the just reward for following him and rejected the Lord Jesus. They have chosen the world and its pleasures and have rejected the grace and blessings of God. Their love of sin has doomed them and now they reap the just reward for their rebellion. How hopeless it is to serve the maniac Satan!

## **THE WAR IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH - THE SECOND PHASE - Revelation 12:13-17**

Satan is now cast out and denied access to heaven and comes to earth and begins to vent his wrath on those still living and especially believers. (See Job 1) This attack is aimed primarily at Israel and anti-Semitism will be on a rampage. Satan cannot kill Israel's Seed, the Lord Jesus, so now he seeks to try and destroy the believing seed of Israel who worship the Christ. God, however, protests Israel from Satan's destruction. In Exodus 19:2, God led Israel out of Egypt "*on eagle's wings.*" In the wilderness God protected and cared for her as a mother eagle would her brood. (Deut. 32:11-12) Isaiah says God would return a remnant from the Babylonian captivity "*on the wings of eagles.*" (Isa. 40:31) God again uses the symbolism of the protection of an eagle to describe His keeping them from destruction. Some try to put "the church" in this verse, but the verse plainly says that Israel was given two wings of an eagle that she might escape into the wilderness for three and a half years and be nourished and preserved. The institution of the church is not in view here. This is a prophecy of Satan attacking God's chosen people and seeking to destroy them which if successful would do away with Christ's millennial reign and the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.

The reference to Satan casting "*out of his mouth a flood after the woman*" can be understood better after reading Psalm 124, in which the Jews will sing in the Tribulation. (Also see Isa. 59:19) The fleeing Jews whose blindness toward their Messiah has been removed will find safety in the area of Edom, Moab, and Ammon. Jesus in Matthew 24:16 instructs the Jews to flee unto the mountains. The mountains of Palestine abound in caves, a safe retreat for those pursued. Petra to the south east could be a haven for the desperate Jews. They will remain there for the last half of the great tribulation. The imagery Satan casting water out of his mouth in pursuing Israel is beyond our understanding. Clearly it is symbolic of some force or method Satan will use in seeking to destroy those fleeing into the mountains.

At the beginning of Tribulation God will regather the Jews from the four corners of the earth in a mass migration back to their homeland. Today the Jews in Israel are proclaiming that this is the time of *Aliyah* meaning "ascent" in Hebrew, referring to immigration back to their home land. Jews have been returning from all over the world since the first *Aliyah* in 1882. (See Isa. 27:12, 43:5-7; Jer.12:15, 24:6; Ezek. 20:42, 28:25-26, 37:1f; Mic. 4:6; Zeph. 3:20; Zech. 10:10)

God during this period will save a great many Jews. Paul said "*For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own*

*conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes"* (Romans 11:25-28).<sup>5</sup> The saving of 144,000 Jews and their subsequent preaching the Gospel, fulfills this prophecy. Further, during the Tribulation the testimony of the two witnesses will be used of God to draw the Jews to Jesus the Messiah and many will be saved. These Jews are protected by God from Satan and will go into the Millennium in their natural bodies and make up "saved Israel." Paul wrote "*Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.*" (Romans 9:27-28) At the same time there will be other Jews who openly reject Jesus Christ and they will be destroyed by the events of the Tribulation and Israel will be purged of unbelievers at Christ's Second Coming.

What the "flood" is of Revelation 12:15 is not stated, but it is of such magnitude that it could destroy the Jews who are fleeing from it. Verse 16 says the earth helped the remnant of believing Israel and the earth opens up and swallows the flood that Satan sends. This could be referring to a literal flood of water or of a "flood" of soldiers pursuing these fleeing Jews to destroy them. In either case this is a supernatural act of God in protecting these saved Israelis.

Two wars are now going on at this point in time in the Tribulation. One war is being waged by God against Satan, the Antichrist, and the unbelieving world. The other war is by Satan who is attacking the Jews who have received the Jesus and their Messiah and Savior. Satan is "wroth" meaning he is exasperated and extremely angry. In spite of all his efforts many Jews at this time are accepting Jesus as their Messiah. God is actively protecting the fleeing remnant and Satan is powerless to stop them.

It is important that we note that these saved Jews are said to "keep the commandments of God." Throughout God's word true believers are said to be the ones who keep God's commandments. To believe in God means to know that He is our Almighty God and Creator. The redeemed of the Lord know Him and His truth from their hearts. True conversion is not passive, but is a life changing event. Belief in God means to believe His word and to live by it. God's people are always known by the lives and obedience to their Savior. Sadly, the opposite is also true.

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<sup>1</sup> Lehman Strauss, *The Book of Revelation*, Loizeaux:New Jersey, 1964, p229.

<sup>2</sup> Vines, p547.

<sup>3</sup> John F. Walvoord, *the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, pg 191-191.

<sup>4</sup> Jamieson, Fausset, Brown, *Commentary on the Bible*, SwordSearcher Ver. 5,3.1.3, 2008.

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<sup>5</sup> See the following references that speak of Israel's cleansing and regeneration from sin. (Isa. 1:27, 4:3-4; Jer. 23:6, 24:7, 31:33-34; Ezek. 11:19, 36:25-26; Joel 2:32; Mic. 7:18-19; Zep. 3:12-13; Zech. 13:1, 13:9).