

Rev 26-03-01a

Greetings, this is March the 1st, 2026. We continue our study in the book of Revelation. We are in chapter 12.

We are looking at the first of the seven main cast members that are introduced here in this interregnum between the sixth and seventh trumpets and the woes that they introduce the final three. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and we'll begin. Father, we are so grateful for another opportunity to spend time together to be nourished and built up and encouraged and granted peace that passes understanding as we spend time in your word and receiving the supernatural comfort and strengthening that comes from your Holy Spirit.

We thank you for the Lord Jesus who through his ministry through his work of sacrifice through his ongoing acts of intercession and representation on our behalf has given us the privilege of direct approach to you under his high priesthood and our own opportunity to sanctify ourselves to wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb to have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. We thank you for that cleansing purification. We thank you for the escape from the power of sin and the power of the tempter the father of lies the one we see depicted in these scriptures before us this morning.

We pray the God the Holy Spirit will bless this portion of your word to our hearts. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

Let's take a look at our passage here. We've already seen that there is a sandwich effect here because there is a great sign that appears in heaven at the beginning of chapter 12 a great sign appears in heaven. There are seven signs that are named in the book of Revelation and this is the only one that is labeled great you would expect this because it is a representation of Israel.

Is this national Israel? Is it ethnic Israel? Is it spiritual Israel? What exactly is being talked about here? Well, the description tells us a woman clothed with the sun with the moon under her feet and on her head a garland of 12 stars. This is clearly and unmistakably an allusion to the dream that Joseph communicates back in Genesis chapter 37 and to understand the symbolism here. We need to take a quick look.

So turn back with me to Genesis chapter 37 Genesis 37 all 12 of Jacob's sons are now on the earth. They are of years. Most of them are adult men by this time and Jacob dwells in the land where his father was a stranger in the land of Canaan.

That's how chapter 37 begins. Then it gives his history 37 2 of Genesis. This is the history of Jacob Joseph 17 years old feeding the flock with his brothers.

The lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah his father's wives. Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father. Notice it.

These are the concubine sons. You can go back and check the list. These are not the sons of Leah who include Reuben Simeon Levi and Judah.

They are the concubine sons. Of course, the sons of Rachel are Joseph and Benjamin all 12 of them on the scene. But the ones that get in trouble here are the concubine sons sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah.

Notice it says his father's wives. They are not called concubines. They're not called the servants of his wives.

They have equal standing and there's equal opportunity. Whatever tribe you were from in Israel, you had an equal opportunity to be someone of faith and obedience and receive the covenant promises. Application of that is it doesn't matter where we think we appear in the church, what body part we might be within the body of Christ.

Greater glory is often given to the communication gift holders those who are evangelists or pastors and teachers and many of the rest of us are well under the radar. We don't know that our spiritual gifting even has a name and so we think well, we're not exactly stepchildren, but we're not prominent. Our lives are just something that are our own business and don't really matter to the body.

Every tribe in Israel had the opportunity to contribute. You will find that there are prophets. There are prominent individuals from many other tribes besides Judah or Benjamin that are of great service in the plan of God.

We are the same way. Don't let background or experience or lack of prominence or recognition fool us into thinking that what we think and do and say doesn't really matter in terms of God's plan for the overall body. All of us are equally responsible to be faithful and obedient.

These guys get in trouble and Joseph rats them out. He's the tattletale and why would he do this? Is he a petty guy that likes to see his older brothers get in trouble? This is an assignment that his father has given him and he is accountable to provide these reports. Not unlike David traveling back and forth under Jesse's instructions to see how his brothers fare to bring them provisions and so on and if you return from taking provisions and the father says what's going on you don't lie on behalf of people who aren't doing their job and this causes division in the family.

A second point of application from Genesis 37 to be faithful and obedient to our father in heaven can sometimes cause disruption of relationship in the family whether it's our physical family whether it's our spiritual family, but the Lord Jesus how many times it seems like lately I quoted almost every Bible class. I have not come to bring peace the Lord Jesus said but a sword and it will divide families in obedience to our heavenly father to represent the Lord Jesus and to continue to fulfill the faithfulness and obedience that he reflected what happened when the Lord Jesus came was he the great unifier did the country and the nation and the people of

Israel come together under the ministry of the Lord Jesus and they were all one there was a sharp split there were those who loved him and appreciated him and recognized who he was believed in him and claimed him as their Savior and moved into the church age and transcended the old covenant and entered into the new and there were others that were diametrically opposite and in many cases they were from the same household do not let family fealty or some sense of earthly relationship loyalty interfere with obedience to the father Joseph was faithful to do the job that his father Jacob gave him and it cost him the goodwill of these brothers. So he brought a bad report of them to his father now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children because he was the son of his old age and he made him a tunic of many colors, but when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers.

They hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. It is likely that Benjamin isn't in view here, even though he has been born because he is a child there was a hiatus. After the Leah Bilhah and Zilpah sons and as you recall Joseph is the 11th son to be born and then there is the 12th.

This is important for the interpretation of our passage oddly enough, you wouldn't think that the birth order and birth events so many years prior figure into our study of Revelation 12, but they do so you will notice that Jacob Israel loves Joseph more than all his children because he was the son of his old age. He finally gets Rachel Rachel after a long period of barrenness finally becomes pregnant and has Joseph. She will get pregnant again and have a second son Benjamin, but where is Rachel at this point? This is important because look at what happens.

Joseph has a dream. His brothers saw their father loved him more than all his brothers verse 4. They hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. This is how you know, there's a problem people can't speak peaceably.

So Joseph had a dream and he told it to his brothers and they hated him even more. He said to them, please hear this dream, which I have dreamed you cannot help but think of John chapter 6 and other episodes in the life of the Lord Jesus where when he begins to explain the father's plan and purpose that is being fulfilled in him his brothers hate him hate him hate is corrosive. It is divisive.

It is poisonous. It is lethal. And if we find it in ourselves, we've got to track down the source and by God's grace.

Pull up that root of bitterness that Springs up and causes this kind of thing. They hate him even more. So he said to them, please hear this dream, which I have dreamed this by the way, what is the source of this dream? Are these the ambitions the subconscious aspirations of Joseph coming to the surface in his dreams? Where did this dream come from? This is a prophetic dream given to Joseph by God.

So when Joseph tells his brothers the dream they have a choice. They can shoot the messenger which they are almost literally going to do or if they are sensitive if they are seeking. Is there

any word from the Lord? What is the revelation of God's plan and purpose at whatever cost to myself whatever my expectations might have been here the word of the Lord this dream is the word of the Lord Joseph is the only guy that communicated because he's the only one who saw it.

I suppose God could have given the dream to Jacob. I don't think they would have received it any better had it been given to his father than to Joseph himself, but Joseph prefigures the Lord Jesus in many ways and this is one of them. He has the word of God.

It is a heavenly revelation. It comes in a dream and they hate him for it. They hate the word.

They hate the import of the message. We were binding sheaves in the field. My sheaf arose stood upright your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf.

His brother said him shall you indeed reign over us or shall you indeed have Dominion over us? So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Then he dreams still another dream and told it to his brothers because it's a word from the Lord. That's why he is in the family.

That's why he was given the dream. It's not just for his own benefit. He told it to his brothers and said look.

I have dreamed another dream this time. Here's where we intersect with our passage the sun the moon and the 11 stars bowed down to me now. It's not sheaves bowing to a sheaf.

This is Joseph himself the sun the moon and 11 stars. You wonder how circular objects can be seen to bow you get the idea that that maybe they were personified in some way just as the woman in Revelation 12 is clothed with the sun and has the moon beneath her feet. What I want to understand is wouldn't it be enough to say this great sign is a woman with a garland of 12 stars on her head.

Would that not sufficiently identify her? Why are the sun and the moon there? And if you want a hair raising experience read Adam Clark's commentary on this section of the Revelation. I appreciate Adam Clark for a lot of things. He was a Methodist.

I've got an 1834 published edition of his commentary that Anne Criswell gave me. It's it's a very treasured possession of mine for that reason and I refer to it from time to time. He often has great insights and he lived.

200 years ago, but when you get to this part of Revelation, it is almost impossible to read because all he does is connect it back to heathen mythology and Talmudic speculations and tie it back to Tiamat and dragon myths and that the editor that put Revelation together drew on these and reformulated them and his source material is all earlier things because he's he and this is what modern Revelation commentators have done enough about that. That's not what's going on. What is going on with the sun and the moon and the stars the Bible will interpret

itself.

How many times have we seen it compare Scripture with Scripture? The Bible is its own best commentary. That's why we're in Genesis 37. So notice the sun and the moon and 11 stars bowed down to me.

So he told it to his father and his brothers this time. It is a little bit different audience. It doesn't say that he told the sheaf dream to his father, but he tells the sun moon and stars dream to his father and his brothers now.

He gets a response from his father Jacob. His father rebuked him and said to him, 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. Remember when Mary is told by Gabriel, you're going to have a son and she pondered these things in her heart.

Jacob is different than the brothers. And he keeps this. He remembers it.

But here's my point. I think Jacob goofed. It's bold of me to say you can draw your own conclusion.

I think Jacob in his misunderstanding notice. He's rebuking Joseph for communicating the word of the Lord. This dream is the word of the Lord.

They don't have Torah. They haven't been to Sinai. Don't have the Commandments don't have the Sinai Covenant.

Don't have the prophets. There's no scripture. So when God is going to speak to his people, he uses this type of transmission protocol.

This is the word of the Lord and like the brothers Joseph's own father rebukes him. We want to be careful if we hear parts of the word of God that are painful or off-putting or make us uncomfortable. If our toes get stepped on if it seems to point to some error on our part, don't be a Bilhah Zilpah son.

Don't be Jacob himself. You know, Jacob makes mistakes. We've seen this.

We saw Abraham make mistakes. We saw Isaac make mistakes. You go to Abimelech.

You go to Pharaoh and you tell half-truths because your wife is your half-sister and get in trouble. These men are not perfect, but we want to learn from their mistakes. Here's the point.

Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you? Let me ask you a question. What is the problem with Jacob's interpretation of this dream? What chapter are we in? This is Genesis chapter 37. Turn back a page to Genesis chapter 35.

Genesis chapter 35, two chapters back, beginning at verse 16. Actually, you can begin in verse 9. 35, 9 of Genesis. God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan Aram and blessed him.

God said to him, your name is Jacob. Your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name. So he called his name Israel.

God said to him, I am God Almighty, be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I give to you and to your descendants after you.

I give this land. Then God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured a drink offering on it and he poured oil on it.

And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel. Bethel. Verse 16, then they journeyed from Bethel and when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, to Bethlehem, Bethlehem Ephratha, Rachel labored in childbirth and she had hard labor, came to pass when she was in hard labor.

The midwife said to her, do not fear. You will have this son also. And so it was as her soul was departing for she died that she called his name Ben-Oni, the son of my pain.

On is pain, E is my, Oni my pain, Ben is son, son of my pain, but his father called him Ben-Yamin, son of my right hand. So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, that is Bethlehem. Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Adar. Remember the tower of Adar? Talked about that at Christmas time. This is the, this is where they prepared the lambs and the sheep that were used for sacrifice many centuries later in Jerusalem.

And it happened when Israel dwelt in that land that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine. Israel heard about it. That's chapter 35.

So when we are in chapter 37, where is Rachel? How can Rachel be represented by the moon? Yet Jacob apparently thinks he's the son, Rachel's the moon and the 11 stars are the brothers. Right? Where's Leah, where's Bilhah, where's Zilpah? There's 11 stars. Rachel is not the mother of, but one of them that's bowing down to Joseph, Joseph being the other son.

I think because Jacob is reacting and there is a lesson in this for us. If we allow our emotions to cloud our vision, our judgment, our perception, when we are taking in the word of God and attempting to understand it and apply it, if we're not objective, if we are not humble, humility is the opposite of arrogance. Humility is teachability.

Humility is essential. We have to let the word of God penetrate. Jacob is not in that mode and he

misinterprets this vision.

Specifically, the 11 stars are pretty hard to misunderstand. That's very clearly Joseph's 11 brothers. How do we know this? The sheaf dream was given so that we know what 11 things bowing represent.

Joseph and his brothers are in the field. Joseph's sheaf stands up. The brothers sheaves bow down.

So 11 things bowing down to Joseph are that which belongs to Joseph. That's the brothers, right? But there was no precedent for the sun and the moon. So what's going on there? Jacob says, well, do you think I am going to bow down to you and your mother? Do you think your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you? Rachel can't bow down.

She's gone. She's dead. Let's you and I figure out who are the sun and the moon.

Do you remember the context immediately preceding Rachel's death? I am the God of your fathers, Abraham and Isaac. If you look at Abraham and Isaac, who shines brighter in terms of covenant and reflecting the glory of God? To whom is Israel related for the centuries that follow all the way down to the time of Christ when the Pharisees tell the Lord Jesus, we have Abraham as our father. Jesus says you are of your father the devil.

They say we don't know who your father is. We have Abraham as our father. I would submit that Abraham is the sun.

Isaac is the moon. And this is the proper understanding that that the lineage think about sun moon and stars you go from bright to medium to dim. Yes, Jacob is represented in his sons.

Israel is the 12 tribes and it anticipates that you don't need a separate Jacob. You don't need the sun, the moon, a comet, and the stars. The stars are Jacob.

They are Israel. Abraham, Isaac, Israel represented by his 12 sons, Joseph and the 11. So that now as we turn back to Revelation chapter 12, I think is helpful.

A great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun with the moon under her feet. Remember in Daniel when you have the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, the great statue, head of gold, shoulders and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, feet of iron mixed with clay. So you have Babylon, which is a single entity.

That's the head. You have two arms, shoulders and arms of silver, which is the Medo-Persian Empire, right? Then you have the belly and thighs of brass. This is the future coming kingdom of Greece.

Then you have legs of iron, which represents the Roman Empire, which divided into the Eastern and the Western Empires. Then you have the feet of iron mixed with clay, which is generally

understood to be a revival of the Roman Empire, but lacking its uniformity and its strength. They will be made of fragments of what had been the Roman Empire glued together with something not as strong as the Caesars and the Senate.

So my point being when you have two of a thing, you want to look for the two things that it represents. The arms, you also have horns of a goat, you have a shoulder one higher than the other and a bear and these represent things. So why is it that she is clothed with the sun? Your clothing is your identification.

There is clothing that identifies priests in Israel. There's clothing that identifies Elijah as a prophet of God and John the Baptist in his pattern later on, camel's hair and so on. Clothing identified royalty, purple and so on.

So she is clothed with the sun and I think Abraham, the Abrahamic identification is there. She's not also clothed with the moon. She doesn't have the moon on her head.

Where is the moon? The moon is beneath her feet. How many feet does she have? Two. How many twin sons did Isaac and Rebekah have? Two.

And I think Isaac is a representation. Remember in the reiteration of the covenant that we just read in 35, kings will come from you, kings plural, nations will come from you plural, because this is a larger view that the Abraham, Isaac, Jacob trunk of the tree is going to have many branches. So and ultimately there's going to be a division in Israel.

There's going to be the northern and southern kingdoms. So I say all of that because these details are here for a reason. A garland of 12 stars would have been enough, but this woman is clothed with and however you want to understand the feet or the positioning, this goes back to the origins of the woman of the nation of Israel.

Where did the tribes come from? The stars are pinpoints of light. The moon is brighter. The sun is the brightest.

Clothed with the sun, moon under her feet. This could be a footstool. She could be standing on it, but there are three elements and when you think of Israel, you think of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

So this is what suggests itself to us. Why is this identification important? As Paul tells us in a couple of places, all Israel is not Israel, but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. This is why I think the moon represents Isaac.

All Israel is not Israel. All 12 tribes are not the 12 tribes. All Jacob is not Jacob, if you will.

In Isaac shall thy seed be called because of the covenant with Abraham. This woman isn't just ethnic Israel, not descendancy or genetic relationship. These are the faithful.

These are those who have the faith of Abraham. If you were Abraham's sons, you would heed

God the way Abraham did. You would reflect the faith of Abraham.

Isaac isn't as strong in the faith as his father Abraham. He's a paler reflection, but he is faithful. But Abraham, I think, then Isaac, and then Jacob represented by his stars.

And so the woman, in the same way, women are used in Scripture to represent religion. So Israel is described as a woman in travail, just as here in passages like Isaiah 54 verse 5. Isaiah 66 verse 7. I'll read you the first of these. Isaiah 54 verse 5. Your maker is your husband.

The Lord of hosts is his name. Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. He called the God of the whole earth.

He is called the God of the whole earth. For the Lord has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused, says your God. So then you go to Isaiah 66 verse 7. And it goes on from there.

That's very interesting to read that context. But Jeremiah chapter 3 verse 6 and following. Just a few pages forward from the end of Isaiah.

After all this, I said return to me in verse 7. She did not return. Her treacherous sister Judah saw it. I said that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I put her away and given her a certificate of divorce.

Her treacherous sister Judah did not fear but went and played the harlot also. You can go on and read this but picturing Israel as the wife of God in this prophetic passage is the precedent that we have. You can put with this Micah chapter 4 verse 10.

Why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in your midst as your counselor perished? For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Be in pain and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city.

You shall dwell in the field and to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered. There the Lord will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.

And of course Babylon is put for all of the subsequent oppression and lack of independence, lack of a monarchy that begins with the destruction of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar and extends all the way down to the time of Christ and his birth. So in Micah, our last passage here, Micah 5 verses 2 and 3. You Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me the one to be ruler in Israel. This sort of closes the circle with our Genesis 35 and 37 back reference.

Bethlehem Ephrathah, least among the thousands of Judah, out of you shall come forth to me the one to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting. Therefore he shall give them up until the time that she who is in labor has given birth, that the remnant of his brethren shall return to the children of Israel. He shall stand and feed his flock in the

strength of the Lord and the majesty of the name of the Lord is God and they shall abide for now.

He shall be great to the ends of the earth and this one shall bring peace. This prophetic background plays into the story that unfolds in the heavens that we see here. So in conclusion, this is the prophetic communication that goes all the way back to the days of Jacob.

It's so interesting to read between chapter 35 and 37. You have the death of Isaac and the death of Rachel. Then you have Joseph with his brothers and the division his brothers and those tribes never amount to much those concubine tribes and it is emblematic.

It's not hereditary and they can't help it but it is emblematic that they begin with hatred of Joseph before he ever has the dreams and the dreams just make it worse. Just who he is in his father's estimation is enough to put them off and when he begins communicating the word of the Lord, they hate him even more. If we stand for the truth, there are those who will not like it and they will hate us because they are harboring great animus and hostility toward God himself and what the word of God communicates.

They don't like morality. They don't like truth that reveals structure and authority and submission and humility. Everyone wants to do what is right in his own eyes.

If you stand for the truth, you can expect opposition from people even within your own circle of fellowship among fellow believers, even amongst our own family. This will happen. It is as old as Genesis.

I will put enmity between thee and the woman, God told Eve, thy seed and her seed. When we come back from the break, we're going to see the seed of this woman that John sees in the sky who is crying out in pain to give birth. Why wasn't it an easy thing? Why do women travail in childbirth? It goes back to the curse.

And there is an element of the curse that is present even when the child is born and she is crying out and in pain to be delivered because there is a great need. God allows pain and suffering for a reason and it is a reminder of how much we need God and we need the salvation that comes through Christ. We need the daily grace.

We need the provision. We need the strength and the comfort that comes from God's word and God's spirit and our life even when it is bringing forth something as great as the Messiah can be characterized by pain and that which causes us to cry out. But she's crying out to the Lord because she represents the faithful down through the generations of Israel.

Well much more to see in this as we move forward into the next chapter, which we'll see when we come back from the break. Thank you.