

Rev 26-03-01b

We resume our study now. We're in Revelation chapter 12, and we're looking at this image, and I love a good sandwich. My favorite in the scripture may be Jairus's daughter, where Jairus comes to the Lord Jesus, Lord come, my daughter is in great distress, come and heal her, and Jesus is on the way, and that is the introduction.

Then you have, in the middle of this, the woman with the issue of blood, and if you haven't thought about that or reviewed it lately, we've got the study there in the miracle series, but that is a sandwich miracle, because you start with Jairus, woman with the issue of blood, then you come back to Jairus, and those two things are inextricably interwoven, and it's a beautiful, beautiful thing. Same thing here. This is a sandwich vision.

It's a vision, and what's in the middle is not almost even visionary. There's a little center content of reality, but we've seen this woman who cries with a loud voice here. She is ready to give birth, and verse two, she cries out in labor and in pain to give birth, and another sign appeared in heaven.

Another sign. Why doesn't it just say, and I saw, but both the woman as a great sign and the dragon as another sign, why are they labeled as signs? Because these are representations that go across centuries, that go back. The woman, in some ways, harks all the way back to Eve, because we're going to find out before we finish that this woman has seed.

If you look at the 15th verse of our chapter, the serpent spews water out of his mouth, caused her to be carried away by the flood. The earth helps her, and so in verse 17, the last verse in this chapter 12, the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring. The word offspring there in Greek is sperma, seed, the woman's seed, the seed of the woman, and this goes all the way back to Genesis chapter three.

I will put enmity, O serpent slash dragon, between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed. And these actions of the dragon that we're going to see are not just the dragon flailing around, it's, are those who are in service to him, represent him, and are agencies and minions in his behalf. But we're back here in verse two, she's with child, she cries out in labor and in pain to give birth, and another sign, a great fiery red dragon.

The word red is interestingly only used twice in the revelation, and this is one of them. Why is he a red dragon? He's not described as a red dragon anywhere else, but you remember the red horse that comes forth, and this is representative of blood, of danger, of murder, lethality, and as not only a liar from the beginning, a liar and the father of lies, but we're told elsewhere in scripture that Satan, when he is defeated by the Lord Jesus, it is described in terms of the Lord Jesus conquering him who had the power of death. And there is a latitude, it was not given to him when he was dealing with Job.

God had a purpose for Job's life being extended and having double blessing at the end, offering

sacrifice on behalf of his three friends, but not the fourth. But in other circumstances, Satan has been given as the ruler of this world, the power of death. And his policy and his evil and his sin are the ways of death, the darkness, which represents death in so many ways.

So he is a red dragon, and he's fiery, seven heads, 10 horns, seven diadems on his heads. We'll review this when we get to the beast from the sea that is similarly configured, but there, 10 is a number of completeness in national terms. God sends Joshua and the Israelites into the land to defeat 10 nations greater and mightier than they are.

And is there an actual literal 10 nations? How do you count nations? Many of these are more like city-states or fiefdoms and something more along the medieval model, where they're not nations with borders and armies and walls and so on. They're more areas with a leader and they will have an armed force, but they're more of the medieval model where you've got a guy and he's got knights in his service and he'll defend his castle and his serfs and so on. But 10 here, this is the earthly power.

He controls nations. He's the God of this world. He showed that to the Lord Jesus during the temptations.

And the seven heads and 10 horns, seven diadems on his heads, this has been depicted in graphic terms and it's really a wild looking thing. A two-headed animal has a hard enough time operating. They occasionally through genetic malfunction will have a two-headed animal.

But to have seven, this is not in terms of control of the body so much as a representation of how many delegated authorities there are. And there are some of these that are too insignificant to have a head and a crown of their own. We'll see more about this when we cover the beast out of the sea.

But the depiction here, John isn't interested in an explanation. This is a description and he will refer back to this when we see the earthly beast known popularly as the Antichrist, the first beast. He is going to so picture this dragon and in the same way that we should resemble the Lord Jesus, we should recover and bear the image of God in its fullness and its holiness.

We should be a reflection. We should be sons of our father in heaven, so to speak. The beast from the sea is going to be of his father, the devil.

And so this depiction here is going to inform what happens later on with the first beast. Seven diadems on his head. And this also, in contrast to the woman, she's a woman.

She has a garland of stars. She doesn't have a crown. She doesn't have heads with teeth and a means of self-defense.

She is a woman about to give birth. And there is an element of defenselessness, not exactly helplessness, but when you're about to give birth, you can't really fight a battle with a dragon, especially one with seven heads. So the contrast here is stark.

And one would expect that any one of these seven heads could bite the woman and end her life before she gives birth to the child. But miraculously, even though his tail draws a third of the stars of heaven and throws them to the earth, and he stands before the woman who is ready to give birth to devour her child as soon as it was born. Why doesn't he devour the woman? He stands ready to devour the child.

And so something is preventing the destruction of the woman. And God preserved faithful Israel. There was always a remnant, except there had been left to us a remnant.

We would have been cut off, the prophets say. But God ensured that Israel always survived through the 7,000 that didn't bow the knee to Baal, those that endured the captivity and came back to the land and continued faithfulness and obedience when they were largely invisible and off the radar. And so despite Satan's best efforts, he is not able to destroy the woman.

So he figures, I'll get the child. If her child is destroyed, that ends her usefulness. She is here to give birth to the child.

That's her value and that's her purpose. Can't kill the woman, kill the child, you've accomplished the same effect. So she bears the male child.

She bore a male child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. This goes all the way back to Psalm 2.9. If you've got a good cross-reference Bible, I'm sure that's already there. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron.

Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Psalm 2.9. You remember the letter in Revelation 2 to the church at Thyatira and the promise to the overcomers. He shall rule them with a rod of iron as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers even as I received of my father.

Revelation 2.27. We'll see in Revelation 19 when the Lord Jesus appears in verses 15 and 16. Revelation 19, 15 and 16, out of his mouth goes a sharp sword. Remember the mouth.

Sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. What issues forth from the mouth? We're going to see this before we're done with this dragon. What comes forth from the mouth? Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword that with it he should smite the nations.

It is going to be his word, his command, his communicated policies and promises, both for good and for judgment. Will smite the nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron.

He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. Those who try to say God is passive and if he allows evil to run its course, the evil punishes itself, are flying in the face of countless scriptures. The Lord Jesus Christ is treading the winepress in chapter 19.

He did not tread the winepress when he came the first time. He came as the suffering servant. When he returns, it will be as the conquering king.

And he treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written. Once again, garment, vesture, identity, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

So, her child is caught up to God and to his throne. And again, as we saw last time, this is a great amount of compression, obviously. This vision spans all the way from Abraham through the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is within a few days, the end of the age of Israel.

It's, I always picture the two cuckoo clocks with the little pendulums that are a stick with an oak leaf on the bottom, usually these German Black Forest clocks. And the pendulum that you can slide up and down to adjust it, how well it keeps time is usually a leaf. And you just reach up and stop the pendulum on the Israel clock.

And it stops at 69 weeks after the going forth of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. God just stops that clock and it's still got seven years to run. And he starts the pendulum for a clock that nobody saw.

It's around the corner on a different wall. And this is the church clock, which is ticking as we speak. But you can already see God walking back around, getting ready to give that pendulum a tap and start the final seven years of the age of Israel.

But it is on hold. And from a prophetic perspective, the interregnum, the gap is not visible. You think about this in human life.

This is my view, as you know, of how our life works. We live when we pass away. The pendulum on our personal clock stops at the rapture, the resurrection with the return of the Lord Jesus to receive us to himself in the air.

Our personal clock just gets a tap and we pick up right where we left off. We don't float in space. We're not peering over the railing to see what's happening down on earth.

Absent from the body, face to face with the Lord, because that's the next second on our clock. Matches all of Scripture perfectly. It explains why the death of believers is often described as those who sleep in Jesus.

I fall asleep. When I wake up, I don't know how much time has passed. I have no experience unless I woke up in the interim, as maybe Elijah and Moses and Samuel have done.

Remember, Saul goes to Endor. Samuel, why have you brought me up? I was having a great nap. Moses and Elijah, Mount of Transfiguration.

Generally speaking, absent from the body, face to face with the Lord. Old Testament saints, seven years after we meet Jesus in the air, they will be raised and we'll see that as we go forward. So the vision here is that the Mormon is preserved and this ought to be a great comfort to us.

The designs of this seven-headed, ten-horned beast with seven diadem crowns. You get the idea he's got access to seven national armies, seven different domains of authority. And the fullness of those domains is not sufficient to give him the power to do away with the woman, nor can he devour the child when it is born.

Because this child, obviously the Lord Jesus, ruled the nations with a rod of iron. The child is caught up to God and his throne. God only needs one throne to completely dominate and suppress the dragon with his seven heads and ten horns and his seven crowns.

He can be as red and fiery as he wants. He cannot thwart the plan and purpose of God, which is obviously for this woman to continue to exist and for her child to live to take the rod of iron and rule. The child is not doing so yet, but as he is taken up.

Then the woman, verse 6, fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God. Very important. Underline it.

Put a star beside it. The woman has a place. There is a place that belongs to the woman, is associated with her.

There is a woman and now that she has given birth to the child, the child has left and is at the throne of God. She is assigned a place by God. Don't miss prepared by God, a place prepared by God.

Where is that place right now? Where is national Israel? Where is faithful Israel? They are in a place, all of those that have lived and died across these last 2,000 years are inaccessible to the dragon. They are secure and they are safe. And this woman cannot be touched.

The dragon can no longer even see her. The child has gone to heaven. The woman is in a place prepared for her by God.

And it is of a specific duration. Remember prophecy as pattern. The duration of the church age is something known only to God.

The Lord Jesus himself doesn't know when the Father is going to issue the command for him to return for us and seven years later for Israel. The two are tied together by a specific seven year period of time. So if you don't know the time of the day or the hour of his return to Israel, then you can't know the time of the rapture because the rapture comes first.

1,260 days. The pattern is Israel is in a place prepared by God right now. This during the 70th week will be a specific three and a half year period and another adumbration, another repetition, another echo of this pattern.

God will protect Israel again. They will have a place. During the siege of Jerusalem in times past, many of them went to Petra and you can look that up.

I'm not going to rehearse the history of it, but Petra was a refuge where many Jews fled when

Israel was under attack historically. So now we have the middle of the sandwich. The woman is in her place 1,260 days, right? Now we're not looking at the woman or the child anymore.

Her metaphorical purpose is to show God's preservation and the birth of the child and her identity goes back to the sun and the moon and the stars. Now in verse seven, war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought with the dragon and the dragon and his angels fought.

This tells you if you had any doubt that the dragon is Satan himself. He'll be explicitly named here shortly, but he has angels. So he is the leader of oppositional angels.

Goes without saying the fiery red dragon, seven heads and 10 horns. Are these earthly kingdoms? Is this a confederation of the fallen angels? That is another repetition of this pattern. We don't know.

We will know someday, but the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. Him or them, there's a textual variant there. It doesn't really matter.

He and they suffer the same fate. The lake of fire has been prepared for the devil and his angels. But notice that the hinge here, the transition is the woman under God's protection has a place prepared by God.

The dragon and his angels, there is no longer a place found for them in heaven, meaning they had a place before and they are now being forcibly removed by Michael and his angels. And there is no place for them any longer. This particular event is in the tribulation period.

Satan currently has a place. He can go attend the heavenly conclaves if you will. He can go to the council as he did in the first two chapters of Job.

He can go to heaven and make a case. He can go to heaven and accuse the brethren. He is the lawyer for the prosecution and he charges the people of God.

He brings them up and demands that the judge find them guilty and curse and judge them the way he himself has been found guilty and has been cursed and judged. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old called the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world. He was cast to the earth.

He is cast out at the beginning of the verse. That's where he came from. This is *exerkomai*, you come out.

He comes out of heaven. He is cast out of heaven, *ekbalo*, if you want the actual verb, cast out. And he is cast down to the earth.

Where did he leave? Where does he end up? There's no place for where he left, no place for him. So now he is on the earth. He's cast to the earth and his angels are cast out with him.

Interesting that apparently there are some fallen angels who also have access to the heavenly realms at present, but there is going to be a war that is going to expel Satan and his angels from heaven. And that expulsion is future. The fact that they can't reside there all the time is a previous judgment, but there is still a place to which they evidently can occasionally return.

But at this point, they are going to be cast out and there is no place found. The devil and his angels are cast out of heaven. The war took place in heaven.

Very fascinating. Speculate on Michael and his angels. What kind of warfare is this? Do angels have swords? What is the nature of the conflict? It's in a realm beyond our comprehension.

So it is given to us in human warfare terms with which we are familiar. So then I heard in verse 10, I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, we don't know who this voice is. The speculation comes from what this voice says as to its identity.

Now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come for the accuser of our brethren who accused them before our God day and night has been cast down. A loud voice saying in heaven, I lean toward it. It's a speculation.

We don't have to know or God would have given John the means to tell us exactly who the voice is. I personally think this is one of the 24 elders who says this because he uses the term our brethren. Angels don't have brethren.

There's no angel that says there's my brother angel. So our brethren, who is it that is accused before the throne? We know that this is a function of Satan. And this is why the Lord Jesus lives to make intercession for us during this period.

And he accuses them before our God day and night. I think this is a church age function. The nation was the issue largely in the Old Testament day.

I think that we as individuals, Satan roams seeking whom he may devour. Notice this is something he takes in with his mouth. And I think he goes and then spews accusation before the throne.

So he who accuses our brethren, accused them before our God day and night, he has been cast down. And I think this accusation extends after the rapture when the church and the body of Christ and the Holy Spirit that imbues and dwells them leaves and that which restrains is taken out of the way. Now you have the 144,000 servants of God.

You have others who we're going to see shortly that are those who have the testimony of the Lord Jesus, who have faith and belief in him, are on the earth and they are being accused or they were, but now the accuser is cast out and all future cases of his are thrown out of court. He no longer has standing to bring accusation before the court of heaven. Why? Salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come.

There's another sort of timeless element. The kingdom isn't going to actually come until Revelation 20, but we already saw at the sounding of the trumpet when the seventh angel sounds in verse 15 of the last chapter, loud voices in heaven, plural saying the kingdom of this world has become that of our Lord and of his Christ. He shall reign forever and ever.

And of course that seems to precede certainly in the narrative what we're looking at in chapter 12. And yet there is only one time when the kingdom comes. There is one time when the Lord sits on the throne of his glory and all the nations are under his iron rod rule.

So we are moving back and forth because this is a heavenly perspective and you can go to each end of the time that is in a bottle, so to speak. So this is clearly something that takes place in the seventh year, 70th week of Daniel, and it is the harbinger of the last half. So the accuser of our brethren who accused them before our God day and night has been cast down, and they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony.

This is how I know that it is not Old Testament saints that are in view. It is believers in the church age and tribulational saints who are aware of and avail themselves of the blood of the lamb, which was not shed until the Lord Jesus came and is the lamb as it had been slain by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony. The word here is important, martyreo, the word of their testimony.

And they did not love their lives to the death. This can be both metaphorical and actual. Are we willing to prioritize the word and the will of God to be faithful and obedient whatever direction it takes our life? We may think, well, this is going to cost me my job.

This may cost me my relationship. This is going to cost me dearly. Up to the point of, and believe me, there are believers being martyred for their faith on a daily basis in the continent of Africa as we speak.

I can only imagine the identity of the upwards of 32,000 people who have been killed in recent months in Iran. Think about it. We grieve over how many people died on 9-11.

The Israelis grieved over the ones that were killed on October 7th. 32,000 people, and the estimates go in excess of 40,000 if they could be counted by their own government, the government that has just within the last 30 hours or so been annihilated. Although it's one of those things where you chop the head of the flatworm and it just turns into two, we'll see what arises in the vacuum.

But 32,000 to 40,000 or more people slain, how many of those do you think were believers who rightfully opposed the oppression and the injustice and the abuse perpetrated by an evil government? There are believers all around the world who are losing their lives because they are standing up for their faith. We typically have a much smaller threat. We'll see as events unfold how much closer those kinds of consequences come to our own doorstep.

But in the meantime, can we not live for Christ? Paul says, to live is great and to die is gain. They

did not love their lives to the death. Nothing caused them to decide that their life is the priority and preserving it at the expense of faithfulness and obedience.

Therefore, rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea. Remember again the angel that had the open scroll for John in the last chapter? One foot on the sea, one foot on the land, and one hand in heaven.

The scroll, the little scroll, has come from heaven. So what does he say here? Rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them. That's us.

That's the body of Christ. That's the church. That's the 24 elders and the white-robed throng.

Rejoice, you who dwell in heaven. You had been accused. You were persecuted in your earthly life by the dragon, and he has been cast out and cast down.

He's no longer accusing. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea, those who have not yet received heavenly deliverance and a heavenly inheritance. The devil has come down to you having great wrath because he knows that he has only a short time.

That's how we know that this happens in the 70th week. This is not a historical review, although it is a reflection of an earlier casting out. Read Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, how thou art cast down from heaven.

And it's hard for us being marbles that roll through the garden hose of time and see it only in sequence to realize that in the dimensions in which God dwells, time is not a constraint. So now that was in the middle, war in heaven, the casting out of Satan, rejoicing in heaven, and woe to those who are on the earth because he's only got a short time left. Things are rapidly drawing to a conclusion.

Now here's the other piece of bread of the sandwich. Remember Jairus, then the woman with the issue, and then you return to Jairus. Notice in verse 13, now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the child.

He was trying to eat the child. She was given a place. He was taken to heaven.

He goes to heaven and engages in war with Michael and the unfallen angels. He loses that war, which I think we will see at close hand because we will be in heaven also. But notice we do not participate in that war.

Michael and his angels fight against the dragon and his angels. The dragon and his angels lose. They are cast out.

They come back to the earth. The dragon is angry, and he returns to look for the woman. He wants to take out his wrath on she who represents the people of God.

So he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child, but the woman was given two

wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the place. There are two wings, and it may be that there is a combination of offense and defense. There is both the protection from a physical attack and provision that is made.

This is some sort of twofold provision. That's why there are two wings that take her to safety and preserve her there. It is some sort of, I wouldn't say double-edged sword, but there is some twofold aspect to this.

Two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the wilderness to her place. This is why I had you make a note back in the first part of the sandwich when there's a place prepared by God in verse 6. Her place referred to here in verse 14 is the one that was given in verse 6. Fly into the wilderness to her place where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time. Same period of time as the first piece of bread in the sandwich, 1260 days, three and a half years.

Last thing we'll say this morning is two wings of a great eagle flies to the wilderness to her place. This is a place prepared by God. She is nourished.

So she is delivered because the dragon persecutes. The persecution stops and nourishment is provided. These may be the two wings of the eagle right there in the context.

So from the presence, notice the dragon has morphed into a serpent from the presence of the serpent. We're not seeing as many heads. We're not seeing as many crowns or as many horns.

Now it is the presence of the serpent. And again, you cannot help but go back to Genesis chapter three, enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman.

This is issuing from the mouth. This is propaganda. And that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.

Remember, prophecy is pattern. Anti-Semitic rhetoric has existed since before the time of Christ. And certainly during the church age.

And in some quarters, the quote, unquote, church has sponsored and encouraged and perpetrated anti-Semitism. It's heinous. It's grotesque.

More about that a bit later in our study. But the earth helped the woman and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood, which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. Something absorbs the propaganda because this is the last half.

I think the destruction that we have seen in earlier descriptions under the seals and the sounding of the angels with the trumpets. I think the internet, I think communication technology as he is trying to swamp the earth with twisted, abusive, anti-Semitic, if you will, coverage, encouraging people to go forth and try to hunt down their neighbors who are Jews or whatever. The earth swallows this up.

The earth is under judgment as we've seen. And these phases I think are going to mitigate, limit, and almost neutralize the effort to flood the airwaves, if you will, with the hateful rhetoric that would cause them to be destroyed by their neighbors and so on. The earth helped the woman.

The earth opens his mouth, swallows up the flood. The dragon spewed out of his mouth. Two times we're told it comes out of his mouth.

The dragon was enraged with the woman. So he went to make war with the rest of her seed. Offspring is sperma, seed.

Why? They keep the commandments of God and they have the testimony of Jesus. Christ is not there. I've got a half an hour on the testimony of Jesus.

This is a fascinating thing. The testimony is one thing. This is the martyria.

We get the word martyr. What is the testimony? John is on the Isle of Patmos for the testimony. We're going to trace this notion of testimony and see what it means to bear witness, to bear testimony, or to have testimony.

Which is it here? We'll see next time. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the confidence we have that in whatever age, at whatever time, in whatever circumstance, your grace, your faithfulness, and your divine, sovereign, omnipotent protection shields us, shelters us, covers us in the cleft of the rock with your hand, and we need have no fear.

We can proceed with confidence. We can exercise our faith. We can enjoy the privileges, the blessings, and the opportunities that come to us through Christ.

And in whatever state we find ourselves, therewith we can be content. We know that we should fear not. We should be not dismayed.

You are our God. You strengthen us, you help us, you uphold us with the right hand of your righteousness. We pray that we can lay hold of that righteousness by faith.

We can be qualified to receive these preserving and providing promises in our own lives as we haste the day when the Lord Jesus appears in the air. We hear the shout, the voice of the archangel, and your own trumpet calling us to the sky, to the presence of the Lord Jesus, and into the very throne room that you now occupy. We thank you for that promise, and we pray that we can be ready for its fulfillment.

In Jesus' name, amen.