

CONCERNING THE WAY

July 27, 2009

LESSON 67: THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST



Chapter 11 – The Two Witnesses

John was told at the end of chapter ten to continue to prophesy about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings. So in the upcoming chapters we get much more information about what is coming.

Revelation 11:1-2 Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. (2) "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.

The court was most likely the court of the Gentiles. This was the area around the temple that Gentiles could come into to worship and to speak to a priest, etc. This is obviously a restored temple in Jerusalem, not some spiritual temple. Measuring it means something was about to happen to the temple, just as we measure something we're about to work on. Something is going to take place here that is going to have an international impact. Leaving out the court of the Gentiles could mean that only the Holy Place and Holy of Holies will be built, which would possibly enable them to build the temple without disturbing the existing Islamic Dome of the Rock or the al Aqsa mosque.

So when the antichrist confirms a contract with the Jews for seven years (Daniel 9:27), we can assume that he will allow the Jews to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem. There has to be a temple existing before the midpoint of the Tribulation because the antichrist enters it, desecrates it, and declares himself to be god (the Abomination of Desolation) (2 Thessalonians 2:2-4, Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15-22). And after that, for the last half of the Tribulation (42 months), Gentiles will apparently be in control of Jerusalem and the temple. Jesus said the same thing when talking about the midpoint of the Tribulation in Luke 21:

Luke 21:24 and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

So we learn from these verses that the "times of the Gentiles are not completed until Jesus returns at the end of the Tribulation.

Even though Israel captured Jerusalem in 1967, they allowed the Muslims to retain control over the Temple Mount. So the Jews still do not have full control over Jerusalem; it is still being trampled underfoot by Gentiles. The strange decision to let the Muslims keep the Temple Mount may have been a move of God because the Times of the Gentiles had not yet been fulfilled.

So verses 1-2 describe the Tribulation temple that the Orthodox Jews in Israel are right now prepared to build. The furniture and the utensils have been made, the musical instruments have been made, the priests have been selected and trained, the priest's clothing has been prepared, the cornerstone has been made, and money has been collected for the construction. The priests are even practicing sacrificing animals! Everything that can be made ready in advance is ready. All they are waiting for is for the political situation on the Temple Mount to change so that they can build. And who do you think will make that happen?

Orthodox Jewish leaders believe that only the Messiah can rebuild the temple. If the antichrist clears the way for them to build, it's possible they may accept him or the False Prophet as their Messiah (John 5:43)! But the temple must be built sometime between now and the midpoint of the Tribulation. In today's Middle East climate it seems impossible that the Muslims would allow the Jews to build a temple on the Temple Mount for any reason. So, either the antichrist will appease the Muslims somehow, or Israel will kick the Muslims off the Temple Mount sometime in the future. (maybe a Psalms 83 or Ezekiel 38-39 scenario?)

Of course, the worshippers at this temple will not be worshipping Jesus. They want to reestablish the system of sacrificial worship under the Mosaic Law again. This system is no longer effective. Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice, replacing the old system of animal sacrifice for sin, which never permanently took away the sins of the people (Hebrews 10:1-4).

"... almost universally the commentators have tried to force the church into the picture that is painted here when, of course, the church is not in view at all. "The temple is here figuratively used of the faithful portion of the church of Christ." The command is given to John "to measure the temple of God" in order to call his attention to "the size of the church of God." The "altar" is again, in the mind of one commentator, "the church." The "outer court" signifies "a part of the church of Christ." The "Holy City," according to these expositors is "always in the Apocalypse the title of the church." The "two witnesses" represent "the elect church of God," says one, "and the witness which she bears concerning God, especially in the Old and New Testaments." "The twelve hundred and sixty days" constitutes the period "during which the church although trodden under foot, will not cease to prophesy." Concerning the war of the beast against them we are told, "The whole vision is symbolical, and the intention is to convey the idea that the church, in her witness for God, will experience opposition from the power of Satan" and so on and on and on. . . . "What wonder, when such diverse expressions are forced to mean the same thing, if there be endless confusion. Literalism may not solve every perplexity, but it does not lead into any such inexplicable obscurity as this." Donald Barnhouse

Revelation 11:3-4 "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth." (4) These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth.

In the Old Testament Mosaic Law required two witnesses to validate matters pertaining to Jewish religion. God will send two witnesses to prophesy and validate the world's sin and blasphemy against God. They will appear sometime during the first half of the Tribulation, most likely at the beginning. We don't know who these witnesses will be, but most people believe one of them will be Elijah:

Malachi 4:5 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD."

Elijah was a man who never experienced death; he was taken directly to heaven (2 Kings 2:11). And, he was one of the two men that Jesus talked to in his transfiguration in Matthew 17:2-3. The other one was Moses, who is also speculated as being one of the two witnesses here. Moses and Elijah are huge in Jewish history. Even today many Jews think of Moses representing the Law portion of the scriptures, and Elijah representing the prophets. Other names mentioned are Enoch (who also never died), John the Baptist, and the apostles James, Peter, John, and Paul. It could be two people entirely unknown, who knows? God evidently didn't think it was important to tell us.

These two will wear sackcloth, which Old Testament prophets wore when they were dealing with people who were deeply involved in sin. It was also worn for periods of mourning, so it could represent the Jews of that time grieving over their sins and their relationship with God.

The olive trees represent ones who have been anointed by God, empowered by His Holy Spirit. The two

witnesses will be lampstands because they will give light to a dark world. This shows the mercy and grace of God will still be present during the Tribulation, as He will go to great lengths to convince people to repent and turn to Him.

This fits right in with God's promises to restore Israel (Romans 10:1, 14-15, 19; 11:11, 15, 23, 25-26). Of course, all who have trusted Christ as their Saviour and the Holy angels are witnesses in a sense because we all share in the testimony of Jesus. But I've never seen any believer empowered to do this:

Revelation 11:5 *And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.*

This may be just figurative language to describe how they will defend themselves, possibly just by speaking (like Hosea 6:5, and Jeremiah 5:14). On the other hand, it may be literal fire coming from their mouths or coming down from heaven. I would lean toward a literal interpretation here, because there's no indication in the text that it's figurative, and because this is a period of time when even false prophets will be performing all kinds of signs and wonders and there will be demonic manifestations going on. I believe the two witnesses must display the power of God in such a way that there will be no doubt that they are sent from Him. Whether the flamethrowing mouths are literal or not, they will be invincible – nothing will be able to harm them. And people will try, because they will not like their message.

“(The two witnesses) will tell men to their faces about their human wickedness; they will stab hearts with warnings of future judgments, even worse than the past. The hatred this pair arouses will be intense.”
David Jeremiah

Revelation 11:6 *These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.*

They will have incredible power, similar to Moses in his confrontation with Pharaoh in Egypt (Exodus 4:9; 7:17-21). This is why some think one of these witnesses is Moses. It says “all plagues”, so we can assume that similar plagues will be used here that came upon Egypt, and possibly others.

It is also why many think that the prophet Elijah will be the other witness, because he had similar power over the weather (1 Kings 17:1). Both Jesus and the apostle James tells us that when Elijah prayed the sky was shut against rain for three years and six months, the exact amount of time of the two witnesses (Luke 4:25, James 5:17).

Revelation 11:7 *When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.*

When their work is done, God will remove His protection from them and “the beast” will be able to kill them. Revelation talks about two beasts (the antichrist and the False Prophet), coming up in chapter 13 next week. This is the antichrist, and the fact that he comes up out of the abyss tells us, in the opinion of many scholars, that this must happen after the antichrist has been attacked and received a “mortal wound” (Revelation 13:3) and then been healed by the False Prophet. We'll go into that in detail in the next lesson.

This name “the Beast” contrasts the Antichrist from the true Christ as “the Lamb;” and it is a significant fact that by far the great majority of passages where the Lord Jesus is so designated are also found here in the Apocalypse. The “Lamb” is the Saviour of sinners; the “Beast” is the persecutor and slayer of the saints. The “Lamb” calls attention to the gentleness of Christ; the “Beast” tells of the ferocity of the Antichrist. . . Under the Law lambs were ceremonially clean and used in sacrifice, but beasts were unclean and unfit for

sacrifices.

This beast was not mentioned before, yet he is introduced as “the beast,” because he had already been described by Daniel (Daniel 7:3, 11), and he is fully so in the subsequent part of the Apocalypse, namely, Revelation 13:1; 17:8. Thus, John at once appropriates the Old Testament prophecies; and also, viewing his whole subject at a glance, mentions as familiar things (though not yet so to the reader) objects to be described hereafter by himself. It is a proof of the unity that pervades all Scripture. Arthur Pink

That this incident will happen after his resurrection from the dead is clear from the statement, the beast that comes up from the abyss, and he will come back from the Abyss by means of his resurrection by Satan. Along with his resurrection, the act of killing the Two Witnesses will provide another reason why mankind will worship him. All previous attempts to kill the Two Witnesses fail. Arnold Fructenbaum

Immediately upon his resurrection, he kills . . . the Two Witnesses. Consequently, their 1,260 days must just overlap into his 42 months. They must have witnessed, therefore, for nearly 1,260 days during his mortal stage, before his assassination. Bullinger

The antichrist will hate the two witnesses because of the message, because of the many people that presumably will turn to Christ because of their message, and because he won't be able to harm them for three and a half years, until this point.

I realized as I studied this that it is the same with all believers. God is sovereign over our lives, and we will not die until we have finished the tasks He has given us to do (John 21:18-23; Acts 20:24; 2 Timothy 4:7).

Revelation 11:8 **And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.**

Not being buried was the ultimate insult to a Jew. The antichrist and the earth-dwellers will purposefully leave their bodies there as an act of dishonor to them, and as a memorial to the power of the antichrist.

The “great city” has to be Jerusalem, because it clearly says where their Lord was crucified. The association with the names Sodom and Egypt with the city of Jerusalem here in verse 8 shows that the city will have become very sinful at this time. There have been other times in the past that Jerusalem was considered to be this sinful, as the name Sodom is used for it in other places in the Bible (Isaiah 1:9-10, 3:8-9, Ezekiel 16:46,49, Jeremiah 23:14). The most prevalent sin Sodom was known for was homosexuality (Genesis 19:4-5). It is a fact that homosexuality is growing in Jerusalem, and is becoming more and more accepted in Israel. Egypt represents the sin of idolatry. The word “mystically” here literally means “spiritually”. So the two witnesses will be killed, and no one will bother to bury them.

This shows how ridiculous it is to interpret all of Revelation symbolically or allegorically. There are symbols in Revelation but they represent real events, people, and places. Jerusalem here is not literally Sodom or Egypt, but are used in a symbolic way to describe how evil Jerusalem will have become in that day.

Revelation 11:9-10 **Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. (10) And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.**

Peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations speak of a global community, not just a city. Just 70 years ago no one could understand how the whole world would be able to see these bodies lying there. Now we not only

have television news, but there will be people with personal video cameras and cell phones who will be able to take video and pictures and send them around the world via the internet.

The unbelievers of the world will have parties when this happens, they will be happy that they don't have these people constantly preaching at them and sending plagues on them. So they will join a long line of God's servants who were hated by those to whom they were sent. The earth-dwellers will be convinced that their god, the antichrist, has triumphed over the god of these two witnesses, and they will exchange gifts. It will be like an Anti-Christmas (which it's getting to be more and more anyway).

Revelation 11:11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.

This will be an amazing scene to watch on TV or the internet! The world will see these bodies that have been lying there for days suddenly stand up on their feet. It will seem impossible but also impossible to deny. It will be so incredible that many will probably think that the video was faked. The major TV networks will probably try to cover it up. Many will be afraid at what they're seeing, though. Hopefully, many will be convinced that they're on the wrong side. The celebration of the superiority and victory of the antichrist will be blown away instantly and turn to great fear. This will be a witness to the world to the power of God, which is probably why he allows the witnesses to be killed in the first place.

Revelation 11:12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.

Their ascent will be a lot like the ascent of Jesus after His resurrection (Acts 1:9), and of the Church at the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:17). This will be the two witnesses' greatest testimony of all, as their enemies watch.

Revelation 11:13 And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

When the two witnesses stand up, the partying will stop and people will start freaking out. Then the witnesses will rise to heaven, and as people will be staring at the sky, the ground will start shaking. A tenth of the buildings in Jerusalem will collapse and seven thousand people will be killed. And here we see that it will have an effect on the survivors. They will realize that the God of heaven is real and give Him credit, and many will come to believe in Him. This may be the main event that begins to turn the hearts of many Jews to repentance and belief in Christ, since it happens in Jerusalem. Earthquakes also happened when Jesus died and when He rose from the dead (Matthew 27:51-52, 28:2). There will be a greater earthquake that causes much more damage to come in chapter 16.

Revelation 11:14 The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

This is apparently considered the completion of the 6th trumpet judgment, there is one more to go. Most believe that the end of this woe, and the end of the ministry of the Two Witnesses, coincides with the end of the first half of the Tribulation. The seventh angel now blows his trumpet at the midpoint of this seven year period.

Revelation 11:15 Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

This same thought is expressed in Daniel 7:13-14,27 and Psalm 2:7-9. God is given glory for what is about to happen. Heaven is making a declaration that God is taking over the earth! The kingdom of the world is the kingdom of antichrist, mentioned in Daniel 7:23. But the Messianic Kingdom will replace this kingdom, and it will never be destroyed (Daniel 7:14). And this is not some spiritual kingdom, but a real, earthly kingdom.

Those who believe in a Rapture midway through the Tribulation believe that this 7th trumpet is the “last trump” associated with the Rapture in 1 Corinthians 15:52.

This cannot be what is meant by the last trump [1Cor. 15:52]; at the time that 1 Corinthians was written, John had not written Revelation. The Corinthians would not have had any knowledge of the seven trumpets. The only knowledge they would have of trumpets are those spoken of in the Old Testament, especially those of the Feast of Trumpets. The last trump refers to the Feast of Trumpets and the Jewish practice of blowing trumpets at this feast each year. During the ceremony there are a series of short trumpet sounds concluding with one long trumpet blast which is called the tekiah gedolah, the great trumpet blast. This is what Paul means by the last trump .Arnold Fructenbaum

This seventh trumpet is the last of this series of seven, but not the last absolutely, and is not to be confused with the “last trump” of 1Cor. 15:52. Chronologically, the trumpet of Mtt. 24:31 must follow this seventh trumpet of Revelation, for it occurs after the Tribulation, at the open manifestation of Christ’s Second Advent (Mtt. 24:30), which in the book of Revelation is recorded in Rev. 19:11-16, which is after the time expressed here. In the book of Revelation the seventh trumpet is never called “last” (Rev. 1:11, 17; 2:8, 19; 15:1. 21:9; 22:13).

Smith, The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge

The seventh trumpet covers an extended period of time, thus distinguishing it from the instantaneous (“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” event of the “last trumpet.” Instead of calling for the moment of the Rapture of the church, as the “last trumpet” does, the seventh trumpet calls for prolonged waves of judgment on the ungodly. It does not parallel the trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52, but does parallel the trumpet of Joel 2:1-2: “Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming; surely it is near, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness.” John MacArthur

Revelation 11:16-18 **And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, (17) saying, "We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign. (18) "And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."**

This is an anticipatory statement. The elders are giving God praise for beginning to reign, but at this point there are still 3 ½ years of judgment on earth left before Christ comes to physically establish His kingdom. In one respect, there is no time in heaven, and so the reign of God is already an established fact – it is a done deal.

Notice the end of verse 18. We are responsible to take care of the earth. But this is speaking of the earth being destroyed by sin. Here is God’s assessment of modern environmentalism—which claims to radically care for the earth while denying the Creator behind the creation and creatures. Isaiah 24, which is about the Tribulation, expands on this in verses 1-6:

Isaiah 24:1-6 Behold, the LORD lays the earth waste, devastates it, distorts its surface and scatters its inhabitants. (2) And the people will be like the priest, the servant like his master, the maid like her mistress, the buyer like the seller, the lender like the borrower, the creditor like the debtor. (3) The earth will be completely laid waste and completely despoiled, for the LORD has spoken this word. (4) The earth mourns and withers, the world fades and withers, the exalted of the people of the earth fade away. (5) The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant. (6) Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.

Man has destroyed the earth by corrupting it, instead of using it for God's glory; he uses it to satisfy his own greed and lust.

Revelation 11:19 And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

The chapter started with the earthly Tribulation temple, now we see the heavenly temple, and the heavenly version of the Ark of the Covenant.

Chapter 12 – The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

In this chapter John takes us on a little historical journey and bounces from the past to the future, so we have to carefully look at each verse. We see an overview of the great spiritual struggle between good and evil that started when Satan first rebelled against God.

Revelation 12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

The fact that it says this was a sign that appeared in heaven tells us that what John sees is symbolic or figurative of the reality being expressed. It is not a literal woman standing on the moon! Here we have another case of very illustrative language describing a real literal event in the past ("A picture is worth a thousand words."). The woman is NOT the Church. Some teachers want to insert the Church into every passage of the Bible. This has nothing to do with the Church. The Church did not give birth to Christ; it was the other way around! And the woman is the mother of the child, not the bride of the child. The Catholic church will tell you that the woman is Mary, and in a narrow sense that's true, because Mary was the mother of the Messiah. But in the larger sense it is not a specific woman, but the nation of Israel. This takes us back to the Old Testament to one of the dreams of Joseph:

Genesis 37:9-11 Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." (10) He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" (11) His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

So here we see the same picture, the stars are the tribes of Israel. Joseph's father Jacob had no trouble interpreting these symbols. He saw that Joseph dreamed of his eleven brothers, his father, and his mother. Jacob and his twelve sons were the beginning of the nation of Israel. And, the persecution of the woman

lines up with the persecution of Israel in history.

Revelation 12:2 and she was with child; and she *cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

The woman's painful pregnancy is a picture of the state of Israel before Jesus the Messiah was born. They were a captive nation to the Roman Empire. It is also symbolic of the curse on women brought about by the sin of Eve. So this picture takes us back all the way to the garden (Genesis 3:13-16) and the incident between Eve and the serpent (Satan) that had such a devastating impact on all of creation. In spite of her sin, Eve received the first promise that a redeemer would come by the seed of a woman.

And notice that there is no mention of a father in this sign. This is very strange considering how important that is to a Jewish genealogy. That would seem to be a strong support for the virgin birth.

Revelation 12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.

We know for sure that the dragon is Satan, because the text tells us so later on. We'll discuss the meaning of the ten heads and seven heads in chapter 17.

Five names are given to Satan, all describing his person and his work. In the great dragon, his fierceness and ferociousness is seen. The old serpent points back to the Garden of Eden . . . In the word devil [diabolos], Satan is viewed as the accuser of all of God's children. Satan means adversary and in this he is seen as the opponent to God's program. As the deceiver, he is pointed out as the great master counterfeiter who attempts to deceive the elect and non-elect alike. Arnold Fructenbaum

Revelation 12:4 And his tail *swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

The sweeping away of a third of the stars of heaven is probably referring to what happened when Satan originally fell. The third of the stars of heaven are the angels that followed him in his rebellion. Since there is an innumerable host of angels, one-third is still a countless number. There are vast numbers of fallen angels that Satan has at his disposal. This says that the fallen angels were thrown to earth, which would lead us to believe that they were barred from heaven unless called there from then on. Satan, however, has apparently still had limited access to heaven, as we'll see.

This is highly symbolic, but that doesn't mean we can't take it as real. That's where amillennialists make their mistake. John is giving us here snapshots of history, and the picture is that Satan tried to destroy Christ. Remember how King Herod tried to kill the baby Jesus by having all the babies in Bethlehem killed? That's the kind of thing this is speaking of.

Revelation 12:5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.

So this confirms that this child is Jesus Christ, and this is speaking of His ascension to heaven after His resurrection (Acts 1:9-11). He has been seated at the right hand of the Father ever since, and will remain there until He comes back to the earth to rule from the throne of David (Daniel 7:13-14, 21-22, 26-27; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 3:21). Notice how Jesus will rule the nations, with a "rod of iron". At the beginning of His reign at His coming it will be necessary to violently deal with the sin and rebellion, as we'll see later in the book. As the Millennial kingdom goes on and the believing survivors of the Tribulation

marry and have children, some will reject Christ as their King, and will rebel. Jesus will deal firmly with any sin during this time. But this rebellion will grow until Satan is released at the end of the thousand years and leads these rebels in one last attack on Jerusalem and the throne of Christ, which God will immediately put down and do away with Satan forever (Revelation 20:7-10).

Revelation 12:6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she *had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Remember that God sees the beginning and the end, the past and the future. This event has never happened before in history. The Jews fled at the sack of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, but there was no supernatural intervention to protect them in a specific place for a specific time. We went from something that had already happened on earth in verse 5 to something that will take place in the future in this verse. Between these two verses is the whole history of Christianity.

“Here we are faced with one of the characteristics of prophetic passages: events which appear side-by-side in the text can often be separated by long ages. This occurs because the prophetic vision has two characteristics which we need to be aware of. First, the prophets were only shown important highlights of the final development (1Pe. 1:10-11). Second, the full range of history was often collapsed in their view, much as when looking through a telescope. Somewhat as a picture lacks the dimension of depth, the prophecy often lacks the dimension of time: events appear together on the screen of prophecy which in their fulfillment may be widely separated in time.” Alva J. McClain and Tony Garland

This verse tells us indirectly when Israel will have to flee. Jesus tells us about this event in Matthew 24:15-22. It is the Abomination of Desolation that takes place midway through the seven year Tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:2-4, Daniel 9:27). Antichrist, who plays nice with the Jews in the first half of the Tribulation, guaranteeing them peace, allowing them to build their temple, etc., turns against them in the second half. He desecrates the temple and then pursues the Jews as they flee (as Jesus warned them to do in Matthew 24). God has prepared a place where they can run to, where He will take care of a remnant for the last three and a half years of the Tribulation (1,260 days). I believe this occurs just after the Two Witnesses ascend to heaven. This will enrage the antichrist and he will enter the temple just as these verses prophesy.

Some think that the place will be Petra, east of Jerusalem across the Jordan River in present day Jordan. It is a very well protected abandoned city cut into the rocks of the mountains centuries ago. It has only one entrance and many caves, so many people could hide in there for a long time. This is just speculation, but could there be some scriptural support for this? Some think so. Here is a passage that could be speaking about this place:

Isaiah 16:3-4 "Give us advice, make a decision; Cast your shadow like night at high noon; Hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive. (4) "Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you; Be a hiding place to them from the destroyer."

Petra is in what used to be the land of Moab. The context is a time of intense persecution and destruction which is followed by the reign of Messiah on the throne of David—the Millennial Kingdom. Also read Isaiah 26:20-21. Daniel tells us that the antichrist will conquer everywhere he goes, with these exceptions:

Daniel 11:41 "He will also enter the Beautiful Land, and many countries will fall; but these will be rescued out of his hand: Edom, Moab and the foremost of the sons of Ammon.

Those countries are present day Jordan, where Petra is located. Isaiah 63:1-4 and Habakkuk 3:3 are 2nd coming passages that speak of God coming from this area.

Petra is located in a basin within Mount Seir, and is totally surrounded by mountains and cliffs. The only way in and out of the city is through a narrow passageway that extends for about a mile and can only be negotiated by foot or by horseback. This makes the city easy to defend, and its surrounding high cliffs give added meaning and confirmation to Isaiah 33:16 . . . The name Bozrah means "sheepfold." An ancient sheepfold had a narrow entrance so that the shepherd could count his sheep. Once inside the fold, the sheep had more room to move around. Petra is shaped like a giant sheepfold, with its narrow passage opening up to a spacious circle surrounded by cliffs. Arnold Fructenbaum

Is this the place prepared by God to protect Israel? Only time will tell.

Revelation 12:7-9 **And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, (8) and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. (9) And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.**

"With what weapons and tactics this heavenly warfare will be waged is beyond our understanding. Angels cannot be injured or slain with earthly weapons, and such physical forces as we know about are not able to move spiritual beings. But these beings do operate in a physical universe, so there must exist powerful physico-spiritual energies of which we yet can have only vague intimations, . . . It is with such energies and powers that this heavenly battle will be waged." Henry Morris

"The elect angels of God are able to defeat the most mighty of the fallen angels, including Satan (Rev. 20:2). Christ does not even condescend to participate in the conflict, for like all the angels, Satan is a creature, albeit a powerful one. Many people have the completely cockeyed view that the Bible concerns a battle between Satan and Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth, because Satan himself is a creature of Christ's creating (Col. 1:16). The gap between Creator and creature is inestimable. Christ could merely blink and Satan and all evil would instantly and permanently be vanquished. Yet he withholds their doom for His purposes, only a tiny corner of which He reveals to us—much of it in this book. For Christ, as God, to stoop to battle directly with the devil would be providing Satan with a great compliment. Hence, he is dealt with by Michael or other angelic powers, who are themselves creatures. Tony Garland

Verse 9 confirms that the dragon is Satan. Some believe what John describes here will happen at this point in the Tribulation, halfway through. Others believe John is backing up again giving us a flashback of what happened thousands of years ago, which resulted in Satan being cast to the earth. They usually give the following statement by Jesus in Luke 10 as a reason. Here Jesus has sent out 70 disciples to the surrounding area to spread the message of the Kingdom.

Luke 10:18 **The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." (18) And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. (19) "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.**

This would make us think that Satan's fall from heaven happened sometime in the past. I'm not sure this is a good proof text however, because it looks to me like Jesus may have been speaking rhetorically here. It's obvious that even though Satan may have lost the war in heaven sometime in eternity past, he still had

some access to heaven (Job 1) until this point in time in chapter 12. Satan cannot come before the Lord in worship or fellowship since he originally rebelled but he apparently still has limited access to God where he accuses believers of wrongdoing. He accused Job in Job 1:11 and 2:5, and Joshua the high priest in Zechariah 3:1. He asked permission to accuse and sift Peter, but Jesus said that He had intervened and prayed that he would be spared and that his faith would not fail (Luke 22:31-32). Even though Satan accuses, Jesus is our Advocate or Defense Attorney (1 John 2:1). Like with Job, God may allow Satan to test us and persecute us, as a lesson to build up our trust in God. But we can rest in the knowledge that:

1 Peter 5:10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

Satan can accuse us all he wants, but Jesus defends us and He will have the last word!

Revelation 12:10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.

Satan can accuse the brethren because the brethren sin (1 John 1:8). This verse makes me believe that Satan won't actually be thrown out of heaven permanently until this point in the Tribulation, because He has been accusing the brethren before God day and night for thousands of years. That is ended forever here and he is confined to the earth.

Revelation 12:11 "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.

Now we see that the brethren spoken of in verse ten are most likely the Tribulation saints, since it speaks here of the blood of the Lamb, which is what the 144,000 witnesses are preaching about during the Tribulation, and they are faced with martyrdom. Satan's accusations will be meaningless because these people, like us today, will overcome because of the blood of the Lamb.

Revelation 12:12 "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

We are at the midpoint of the Tribulation, here in chapter 12. John is writing this directly to those people who will be living in this time. At the time of this casting down, where he seems to be barred from Heaven completely and confined to the earth, Satan will have only three and a half years left, and he will know it. We know this, and so does he, from verse 14 coming up, and from Daniel 7:25 and 12:7. He knows that Revelation 20:1-2 says he will be bound at the end of the Tribulation when Christ comes back. So he will do all the damage he can in the time he has left. He will make the earth a bloodbath and slaughter millions of Tribulation saints and Jews. And, in his self-delusion I suspect he still thinks he has a chance to defeat Christ at the battle of Armageddon and thereby defeat God's prophetic word. But he has no chance.

Revelation 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.

This is antichrist, filled with Satan, pursuing the Jewish people. Jesus told the Jews to flee when this time

came in Matthew 24:15-22. Satan has always been at war with the Jewish people throughout history, but this will be war like never before. At first He tried to wipe out the Jews to keep the Messiah from coming. When Jesus came to earth, Satan tried to destroy Him and eventually did, thinking that would defeat God's plans. That turned out to be his big mistake. Instead of defeating God at the crucifixion, Satan was defeated when Jesus rose from the dead.

Since then he has continued to make war on the Jews out of hatred, and because he knows scripture. He knows of all the prophecies of Israel being restored, and eventually being saved. He thinks that if he can prove God wrong, if he can make him out to be a liar in ANY way, then he will have won. He thinks if he can destroy the Jews he can keep Christ from coming back and establishing his kingdom. So he has continued to try to destroy the Jews, in order to keep God from fulfilling His promises. In the 2nd half of the Tribulation, through the antichrist, Satan will try to commit another holocaust, to finish the job that Hitler and Stalin and others failed to finish.

Revelation 12:14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she *was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

We can only assume that this "great eagle" is some kind of supernatural transportation of the remnant of Israel to the place in the wilderness that God has prepared for their protection. Or, maybe it's just a fleet of airplanes! Actually, this phrase has been used before:

Exodus 19:4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself.

Here God was reminding Moses how He brought the Israelites out of Egypt. So, like He did then, He will supernaturally intervene to help them escape the antichrist. Whether that means He will move them more quickly, part the Dead Sea, or hide them from antichrist's armies, we just don't know.

And like God took care of Israel in the desert after their escape from Egypt, He will take care of this Jewish remnant. He will provide food (maybe even manna again?) and water and, like in Exodus, not allow their clothing to wear out. He will sustain them in this special place He has prepared for them for 3 ½ years.

Revelation 12:15-17 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. (16) But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. (17) So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Satan is portrayed to as a sea monster in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 29:3, 32:2-3, Psalms 74:13), so some believe he will use water to try to drown this escaping remnant of Israel. Others think it's just a figurative way of describing the overwhelming armies of the antichrist Satan will use against them. But God will use some kind of natural means, probably another great earthquake that will split the ground and swallow the armies that are pursuing them, something like what happened in Numbers 16:33.

Once Satan realizes God is protecting this group of Jews, he will go after the other believing Jews around the world who have not made it to this place of safety.