

Revelation 11 & 12 – Chapter Study

INTRO

We're back to your usual study format of going verse by verse thru the Bible on Wednesday nights, then taking a closer look at just a few verses in that same passage in Sunday.

Wednesdays is survey; Sundays, more in-depth.

Since we covered vs. 1-14 Sunday, we'll pick it up there at v. 14 tonight.

We're halfway thru Rev. & about halfway thru the Tribulation.

Chs. 10 & 11 are another pause in the visions of Judgment John had.

Chapter 11

¹⁴ The 2nd woe is past. Behold, the 3rd woe is coming quickly.

This 2nd woe was the 6th trumpet which saw back in 9:13.

Remember that the judgments John sees in Rev. are captured under 3 sets of 7 emblems.

Seals – Trumpets – Bowls

First are the breaking of 7 seals on the Title Deed to Earth.

As each seal is broken, another judgment comes.

There's a pause btwn the 6th & 7th seal while John is shown what's going on in the spiritual realm.

Then the 7th seal is broken & that becomes 7 trumpets.

The first 4 trumpets are blown, each announcing another round of judgment.

Then, **before** the 5th is blown, an angel says, "Woe, woe, woe to the Earth-dweller because of the trumpets that are about to sound."

Then, **after** the 5th trumpet sounds, John says, "One woe is past. Two more are coming."

The 6th Trumpet sounds, another judgment comes, then we get this chapter & a half pause.

The 7th & last trumpet is about to sound, so John reminds us here in v. 14

¹⁴ The 2nd woe is past. Behold, the 3rd woe is coming quickly.

¹⁵ Then the 7th angel sounded: & there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord & of His Christ, & He shall reign forever & ever!"

The word "loud" describing the voices John heard is *mega*.

These voices he hears are all the groups we've already read about so far.

It's the living creatures, the elders, the angels, the Tribulation saints & vast company of the the redeemed no one could number.

They celebrate that the dominion of Earth has finally returned to Man, to THE Man = Jesus!

¹⁶ & the 24 elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces & worshiped God, ¹⁷saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is & who was & who is to come, Because You have taken Your great power & reigned. ¹⁸ The nations were angry, & Your wrath has come, & the time of the dead, that they should be judged, & that You should reward Your servants the prophets & the saints, & those who fear Your name, small & great, & should destroy those who destroy the earth."

The elders lift up a song of inauguration.

The reign of God over creation, which has always existed in a mysterious & hidden way, will now become manifestly evident for all creation to see.

The emergence of God's manifest reign is what makes the nations so angry; they **don't want** Him to rule over them.

They're in rebellion & are upset they'll no longer have their way.

But man's anger is impotent & ineffectual compared to God's indignation at the evil man has perpetrated on His creation.

The elders celebrate that the time has finally come when both evil & will be answered w/perfect justice.

Evil will be punished while Good will be rewarded.

¹⁹ Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, & the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. [Stop]

Catch this: The 7th trumpet blows. Loud voices announce the Kingdom.

The elders make a formal announcement of God's coming judgment.

Then the doors of heaven are opened & John sees the heavenly ark of the covenant.
Now, think about it: What was the ark *like*?

Israel originally had no human king because God was their King.

What does a King sit on? A throne

Where did God **manifest His presence** in ancient Israel? On top of the ark.

The ark was a picture of God's throne.

What led Israel into battle as they made their way from Egypt to the Promised Land?

The ark, the throne of God.

It's this imagery Lucas & Spielberg used in their 1st Indiana Jones movie.

They cast the ark of the covenant as a kind of super-**War Wagon**.

But it was simply **the symbol of God's** presence & power & rule.

What John sees here is the doors of the heavenly temple opened as God comes forth to make war w/the earth-dwellers & claim what belongs to Him.

& there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, & great [mega] hail.

God marshals all of nature against rebel man.

Hail can do massive damage.

There are cases of hail the size of softballs.

Chapter 12

Students of the Bible have debated how to interpret ch12 for yrs.

The issue is **where** to place the events of this chapter in an End Times scenario.

As we've seen in previous studies, right now God's redemptive focus is on the Church.

We works thru believers & the Gospel.

But God made some promises to Israel & the Jewish people that have yet to be fulfilled.

Since God always keeps His promise, that means He must shift His redemptive focus BACK to Israel.

But since He's also promised to never leave nor forsake believers, that means He has to remove us; which is what the **Rapture** is all about.

In Dan. 9, God declared that He'd set aside 490 years in which He'd complete His promises to the Jews & their nation.

He set the beginning & end points.

483 of those years have already happened, to the very day.

Then the clock stopped. That leaves 7 years.

& that 7 years are the last 7 before Jesus comes again.

It's called the Tribulation & it's the time God shifts His redemptive focus back to Israel.

What's interesting is that the devil knows his fate is tied to the Jews & Israel.

It was through Abraham's & Isaac's descendants the Messiah-Savior would come who'd defeat Him.

So he's **ever labored** to wipe them out. They are his *bane*.

The world has always known racism & prejudice.

But **anti-Semitism** is in a league all its own when it comes to hate.

It's a **mystery** that's troubled many historians & sociologists.

There no **rational** explanation for why Jews have faced such consistent hatred throughout their history.

The root of anti-semitism is satanic.

It's inspired by the devil because he knows his fate is tied to them & their nation.

So he's tried to wipe them out in an attempt to short-circuit God's plan.

See—If the Jews can be eradicated, God's Word **fails**.

That means the end He's planned **isn't sure**.

So maybe, just maybe, Satan's bid at rebellion & usurping God's throne has a chance for success.

Now, of course, we know this is absurd!

But the devil has bought this lie & continues to resist God's will.

It's why Satan is such a good liar; he's bought his own propaganda.

His arrogance is so big he's convinced his destiny is to sit in the highest place as the Almighty.

There's just one thing standing in his way; Israel.

Ch. 12 is John's vision of the consummation of the age-old conflict btwn Israel & the devil.

He's given this vision because now that we're at the mid-point of the Tribulation, things will accelerate to

their climax in the Return of Christ.

2 important junctions are made in God's dealings

1) w/Israel &

2) His treatment of the devil.

While what John sees here speaks of the future, it **begins** w/an image rooted in the past.

¹ Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed w/the sun, w/the moon under her feet, & on her head a garland of twelve stars.

John speaks of 7 "signs" in Rev. This is the 1st.

The word refers to a supernatural **pointer** of something yet to come.

This first sign is called a "**great**" sign & it's again that word **mega**.

It's used 75 times in Rev., far more than any other book the Bible.

John wants us to understand these visions he had weren't cloudy & confusing dreams.

His **senses** were **overwhelmed** by what he encountered.

John sees a woman clothed in the radiant light of the sun.

Her platform was the moon & woven into her hair was a garland, a ribbon, strung w/12 stars.

Okay, so who is this supposed to be?

It's Israel; the Jewish people.

First Women are consistently used as symbols of **religious systems** in Rev.

- 2:20 = *Jezebel* is a religious system of false teaching.
- 17:2 = The *Great Harlot* is a false religion
- 19:7-8 = The *Bride* is the Church

Second The sun, moon, & 12 stars refers to Joseph's dream in Gen. 37:9-11

There his father Jacob was the sun, his mother Rachel, the moon, & the 12 stars were his brothers, the patriarchs of the tribes of Israel.

Third The prophets regularly referred to Israel *as a woman*. (Isa 54:1-6, Jer 3:20, Eze 16:8-14, & Hosea 2:19-20).

Fourth Isaiah said Israel's *glory* was like that of the sun. (Isa 60:1-3)

² Then being w/child, she cried out in labor & in pain to give birth.

V5 makes it clear this child is Jesus.

The pain the woman cried out in refers to the travail of Israel under the Roman yoke.

The Jews cried out to God for deliverance, very much as they had when in bondage in Egypt.

There was a great sense of expectation among Jews of the 1st C. that the Messiah was about to come.

But they were looking for a military & political Savior, not the Lamb of God who came to save them from sin & death.

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: . . .

This word "**another**" means **different**.

The woman of vs. 1 & 2 represents Israel thru whom the Messiah came.

She's clothed w/glory.

What John sees now also a sign but it speaks of **horrific evil**.

behold, a great, fiery red dragon having 7 heads & 10 horns, & 7 diadems on his heads.

V9 says this dragon is Satan.

John describes him as **fiery red**.

In ch6, fiery red was the color of the 2nd horse that brings mayhem, murder, & war.

Red is symbolic of blood; of death & destruction.

It a fitting color for the devil because as Jesus said, he's a murderer & comes only to kill & destroy.

The dragon is a creature that permeates nearly all ancient cultures.

And *mythologically*, it has a remarkably similar reputation among different peoples.

Dragons are cast as sly, cunning, & intelligent creatures whose aim is to steal, kill & destroy.

Dragons are regarded as the *epitome of evil*.

If not resisted, they entangle people in accomplishing **their own destruction**.

And they do it by lying.

That's why people are warned never to LISTEN to a dragon lest you fall under its spell.

This consistent & pervasive presence of dragons across cultures all over the world has moved some to conclude **the dragon is the serpent** satan possessed in Eden to seduce Adam & Eve.

John sees this dragon w/7 crowned heads & ten horns.

Linking this with Rev. 13:1 & Dan. 7:7-8, 24 we conclude this is satan in the person of the Antichrist who reigns over **a renewal** of the Roman Empire, **as foretold in Dan 9**.

Don't get tripped up by the confusing image of 7 heads, 7 crowns & 10 horns.

Remember, the key to Rev is the OT.

John's description of this dragon was a kind of teaching short-hand.

It moved his original readers to think of Daniel's prophecy; ch7.

Daniel saw this monstrous beast with 10 horns.

A little horn popped up in the midst of the 10.

But when it popped up, it dislodged 3 of the previous 10.

Horns represent *earthly powers; nations*.

The 10 horns are 10 nations.

A ruler comes on the scene who takes control of the 10, but only after getting rid of 3 that oppose him; leaving 7.

That's the idea here. John wants us to understand that this dragon is that beast Daniel spoke of.

Isa 14 & Eze 28 reveal Satan as standing **behind** the throne of earthly kingdoms.

During the Trib, he'll come out from the shadows to **actually** rule in the person of the antichrist.

⁴ His tail drew a 3rd of the stars of heaven & threw them to the earth.

Once again we see **stars** as an idiom for **angels**.

In v9 the dragon, revealed as the devil, is spoken of *w/his angels*.

John speaks here of Lucifer's fall & those angels under his influence who joined him in his abortive rebellion against God.

They lost their position among the heavenly host & were cast out, to become the **demons**; Satan's agents to continue the war w/God by attacking us.

... & the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.

Satan knew the crucial part of God's plan to liberate Earth was to invade Earth in the Person of the Messiah.

Abraham was the man God picked to be the one thru whom a nation would come which would prepare the stage for the Messiah.

Satan watched the development of God's plan & sought to thwart it at **every** opportunity.

- He filled Cain w/envy & hatred for Abel & moved him to kill him, hopefully putting an end to the promise of a Deliverer.
- He polluted the human race w/such evil & violence it led to the flood. Only 8 were deemed worthy to escape.
- Satan tempted Abraham to forgo God's plan by having a kid w/Hagar & then allowing his wife Sarah to enter the harem of 2 pagan kings.
- He motivated Esau to kill Jacob, the son of the Promise.
- Satan gave Pharaoh the idea of killing the Hebrew boys.
- The devil stirred up King Saul to kill David, thru whose descendants the Messiah was promised.
- He inspired Haman to kill all of the Jews in the Persian Empire. That plan almost succeeded!
- In 2 Chr. 21-22, the devil almost pulled it off & ended the Messianic line when the descendants of David were reduced down to 1 little boy – **Joash**, who had to be kept in hiding for 6 years!
- After Jesus was born, Herod sent troops to kill all the toddlers in Bethlehem.
- In Luke 4, the people of Nazareth tried to throw Jesus off a cliff.
- In Matt 4, the devil tried to kill him by convincing him to throw **himself** off the pinnacle of the temple.
- Then, at the Cross, the devil thought he'd accomplished his objective. But his rejoicing was short for the Cross proved to be the lodestone, the catalyst that began the unraveling of his plans.
- Unsuccessful in his bid to kill Jesus, the devil's reverted to his prior strategy of trying to wipe out Israel, for he knows they're crucial to God's plans.

- If there's no Israel, then God's plans can't go forward.
 - So we have the destruction of the nation in 70 AD at the hands of the Romans.
 - There's the renewal of that destruction in the Diaspora of mid 2nd C.
 - There's the brutal treatment of the Jews in all the places they have wandered – general anti-semitism.
 - The Inquisition, Hitler's Final Solution & the pogroms in Russia were all just further attempts by the devil wipe out the Jews.

Today, the knee-jerk hatred of Jews & Israel by Islamists like ISIS & Al Qaeda, is nothing less than the age-old tactic of the devil to enforce his domination of Planet Earth & forestall the emergence of the Kingdom of God. Yet despite all of the devil's hatred & clever strategies, God's plan goes forward.

⁵ She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations w/a rod of iron. & her Child was caught up to God & His throne.

This is an obvious reference to Jesus.

Psalm 2:9 & Rev. 19:15 tell us He will rule the nations w/a rod of iron.

The "she" here is the woman of vs1&2 Israel.

Jesus was a Jew & born of the nation of Israel.

Despite the devil's attempt to kill Him, Jesus was victorious & ascended into heaven.

But what happens to the woman?

⁶ Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there 1,260 days.

V5 refers to the birth, life, death, resurrection & ascension of Christ.

All that took place 2000 years ago. // V6 is **yet future**.

The 1,260 days of v6 is 3½ yrs; the last half of the Trib.

We saw the 1st half in ch11 & the career of the 2 witnesses.

When their 1,260 days end, the last 1,260 commence.

Their witness for Christ leads to a remnant of Jews coming to faith in Christ.

That remnant is in view here.

This is **believing Israel** which at the mid-point of the Trib, realizes the antichrist is **NOT** their Savior Jesus is!

The message of the 2 witnesses will accomplish its God-intended purpose & they will come to faith in Christ.

Rejecting the antichrist as an imposter, they'll flee his wrath.

This remnant of believing Jews finds a refuge in the wilderness.

It's been prepared by God.

They'll remain safe there for the duration of the Trib.

Because of Isa 16, many Bible students believe this refuge is the ancient Nabataean fortress city of Petra in Jordan, in the ancient land of *Moab*.

Petra is an interesting location as a fulfillment of this prophecy because access to it is limited to a 12 ft wide canyon.

It's 2000 years old buildings still stand because they're carved into the stone of the hills.

If would make an excellent refuge against attack.

V6 says God has prepared a place for this Jewish remnant.

That word "*prepared*" is the same Jesus used in John 14 when He said He was going to **prepare** a place for us.

If God could provide Israel with manna & water for 40 yrs in the wilderness, He can supply His people w/for only 3½.

John now has a vision of **why** Israel will have to flee to her refuge in the wilderness.

⁷ And war broke out in heaven: Michael & his angels fought w/the dragon; & the dragon & his angels fought, ⁸ but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. ⁹ So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil & Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, & his angels were cast out w/him.

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, & strength, & the kingdom of our God, & the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day & night, has been cast down. ¹¹ And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb & by the word of their testimony, & they did not love their lives to the death. ¹² Therefore rejoice, heavens, & you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth & the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

This is our text on Sunday, so we'll give just a quick summary now.

As God prepares to bring His Kingdom & rule to Earth, He first purges heaven.

Step One Boot satan out of heaven

Step Two Evict him from Earth.

The noose tightens round the devil's neck.

And he, realizing his time's running out, tries to do as much damage as he can in the time he has left.

Heaven is ecstatic now that the devil & his minions have been purged.

The many ages that have gone by as the devil has managed to hold sway over Earth & Humanity are coming to an end.

All the faithfulness of God's people over thousands of years is about to be thoroughly vindicated.

A great reversal is about to take place in which Evil will be forever put down and righteousness will shine out gloriously over all creation.

Vs. 7-12 are a parenthetical vision John was given to help explain what's going on in v6, which he returns to now

...

¹³ Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male *Child*. ¹⁴ But the woman was given 2 wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time & times & half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

This amplifies what John reports in v6.

The “time & times & half a time,” of v14 is 3½ yrs; the 1,260 days of v6.

In Israel's trip to her wilderness refuge she's ***given the wings of an eagle***.

Her escape is ***swift & sure***.

In Exo 19:4, God says during the Exodus He gave the Jews “eagle's wings” & brought them out w/a mighty hand.

Just as Israel's departure from Egypt was miraculous, so will this end times flight into the wilderness be.

¹⁵ So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. ¹⁶ But the earth helped the woman, & the earth opened its mouth & swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.

This Jewish remnant that flees is one step ahead of the antichrist.

Whatever he sends after them won't work.

Even the Earth itself will rise up to defend this remnant of God's people.

Isaiah 59:19 says

“When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.”

Jesus said something in Matt 24 that's quite provocative in light of what we find here.

¹⁵“Therefore when you see the ‘***abomination of desolation***,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand), ¹⁶“then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁸And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. ¹⁹But woe to those who are pregnant & to those who are nursing babies in those days! ²⁰And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²²And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. ²³“Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here *is* the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe *it*. ²⁴For false christs & false prophets will rise & show great signs & wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵See, I have told you beforehand. These words will be well understood during the Tribulation.

They'll be the msg of the 2 witnesses who oppose the antichrist in his bid to be dictator of the world. When Satan is banished from heaven, he comes to Earth & possesses the antichrist.

He then marches into the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, enters the Holy place & declares himself God, demanding everyone worship him & submit to his plan for world domination.

THAT's the abomination that brings desolation.

But the 2 witnesses have urged the Jews to watch for this & realize when they see it, it's proof the antichrist is a liar, **not** their Savior.

So, when it happens, it's the trigger to get out of town & head for the hills – literally!

If you're in Jerusalem, which is located on the highest ridge of that area, the only direction to go to find hills to hide in is SE, toward the Dead Sea, & East of it, ancient Moab, modern Jordan, where Petra is.

Petra is in the hills, literally carved into the hillsides & cliffs.

I believe that this event of the abomination of desolation proves so powerful a testimony to the Jewish people that there's a *mass conversion* of virtually the entire nation in fulfillment of God's promise to reveal Himself to them & bring them to faith.

In Romans 11 we read this -

²⁵For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "*The Deliverer will come out of Zion, & He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*"

The ministry of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists we read about in ch7 along w/the 2 witnesses will well prepare things for this mass conversion among their countrymen.

So, when the antichrist declares himself God, the Jews will see it as a great betrayal, put their faith in Christ, & jam out of town toward the Eastern wilderness.

When the antichrist emerges from the temple, he finds Jerusalem a virtually ghost town & is told the Jews have fled in a mass modern Exodus.

Coming as it does **right after** he's just claimed to be God and worthy of worship, he takes their rejection hard & determines to punish them by wiping them out.

But whatever forces he throws at them are repelled & he suffers great losses because God defends them.

Psalm 124 is prophetic as it speaks of what John describes ...

¹ "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side," Let Israel now say.— ² "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us," ³ Then they would have swallowed us alive, when their wrath was kindled against us; ⁴ then the waters would have overwhelmed us, the stream would have gone over our soul; ⁵ then the swollen waters would have gone over our soul." ⁶ Blessed *be* the Lord, Who has not given us *as* prey to their teeth. ⁷ Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; The snare is broken, & we have escaped. ⁸ Our help *is* in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven & earth.

Satan will realize it's pointless attacking the remnant in their refuge, so he turns his wrath on the next best target

¹⁷ And the dragon was enraged w/the woman, & he went to make war w/the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God & have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

They're believers; **Tribulation saints.**

This **isn't** the **Jewish remnant**, because they're safe in their hideout, being supernaturally protected by God.

These are people, Gentiles, who've come to faith during the Tribulation.

CONCLUSION

In v12, when the devil is cast out of heaven, he knows he has a short time.

Why doesn't he just give up? Because he's *utterly depraved*. He's *insane*.

From the moment of Lucifer's fall to this God keeps undoing & turning around the devil's schemes so they bring glory to God.

So why doesn't he get a clue & give up?

Because he has bought his own deceit.

He thinks he's ultimately going to defeat God & occupy His throne.

Yeah, and I'm going to be the 2015 NBA Player of the Year.