

before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. 5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast *it* into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, *ye heavens*, and *ye that dwell in them*. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

While the difference between 4 verses and 11 verses might not seem that much when just glancing at the numbers, the difference is clear when the full text is included. Chapter 12:7-17 is a narration, focusing on a particular sub-story within the book. Chapter 8:2-5 reads more like a short list of events. And this is precisely why one is categorized as a *Long Series* and the other as a *Short Series*. The difference between the flow of a narration and the brevity of a list-like format is what distinguishes a *Long Series* from a *Short Series*.

Commonalities Establishing Connection

In Section 0.01 we discussed verses 1-6 of Revelation 12, referring to them as a backstory, describing the experiences of characters and circumstances *before* the narration begins. On this note, we stated that verses 1-6 of Revelation 12 were similar to Genesis 2:4-6, which likewise provide a backstory, setting the stage for the events of the narration in Genesis 2:7-25.

Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve

stars: 2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days.

To be specific, the imagery of the sun, moon, and stars and giving birth to a male child who would rule the nations identifies the woman in verses 1-6 as the nation of Israel who inherited the declaration God made in Genesis 3 regarding the seed of the woman who would conquer the servant. The child born to rule the nations and is caught up to God's throne is the Messiah, Jesus Christ. And the dragon is identified by his past activities as well. He is the one who tried to destroy the man child before the child's ascent into heaven and the throne of God. However, this backstory further informs us that the woman who gives birth will be the same woman who is given a place of safety in the wilderness, which will be described *during* the narrative, *after* the backstory is set.

And with the backstory and its identifying description of the key players complete, the narrative of chapter 12 begins in verse 7.

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. 13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The narrative begins with war in heaven. This war involves the dragon who attempted to destroy the Messiah before he was caught up to the throne of God in heaven. In verse 9, he is identified further as “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan” in order to connect him with all the other Old Testament and New Testament stories and narratives concerning the serpent, the Devil, and Satan.

The purpose of the war is to expel him and the angels who side with him from heaven. Thus, their status as the spiritual rulers in heavenly places, described by Paul in Ephesians 2:2, 6:12, comes to an end. The reason that they are removed from their former positions is that they are about to be replaced by the saints of God, who will rule with Jesus Christ (Daniel 7:18, 22, 27, 2 Timothy 2:12, Revelation 20:6). Once this is accomplished and, having no place in heaven any more, they find themselves on earth, in one final season to thwart the plans of God and the coming harvest. Thus, here in chapter 12 we find a very plain, literal description of the same events described figuratively during the seven trumpets in chapter 8:6-9:21, where we also find a depiction of the fall of the satanic kingdom. And this is why the two passages are considered *Parallel Descriptions* of each other.

Verse 11 likewise connects the casting down of the satanic angels to earth with the rise of persecution (even death), which in turn connects this passage to the prayers of the saints in chapter 6:9-11, during the fifth seal, where we find such persecution is about to begin. And in this manner, chapter 12 also connects to the seven trumpets in chapter 8-9. In particular, it connects to the third trumpet, which figuratively describes the casting down of an angel who turns the fountains of waters bitter. We related this to the Old Testament protocols for testing a woman’s fidelity wherein she was given bitter water to drink and if a woman was unfaithful, the water would be bitter within her. But if she was faithful, she it would not.

Such imagery also corresponded to Paul’s description of the falling away or “great divorce” in 2 Thessalonians 2, where Paul states that God would send a great delusion to test who really loves the truth and that this would come in the form of Satan working lying signs and wonders to deceive. And finally, this connects to Jesus’ own descriptions of the last days where many men’s love of God would grow cold and they would betray and kill their brothers (Matthew 24:9-12), which also correlates to the bitter waters in the third trumpet causing many men to die (Revelation 8:11).

Finally, we see in verses 13-17 that although the dragon’s initial persecution is focused on those who are given a place of refuge from him in the wilderness, he is forced to then go to those who are not protected in that place of safety. We should note that in both verses 6 and 14, the Greek word for “place” is rendered in the singular. Therefore the language of the passage as well as the lack of protection for those who are not present in that location seems to indicate that there is only one place where protection is offered. Those who are not present at that locality are subject to the persecution, while those present in that place are protected.

Those who are not present in the place of safety are identified as “the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandment of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Textual details indicate that those who are protected in the wilderness are people who are in the land of Israel when these events begin.

First, the gospels record Jesus’ teaching on the final years before his return. The gospels also record Jesus’ reference to the abomination of desolation. From Daniel we know that this event takes place half way through the final seven years (Daniel 9:27, 12:11). Just after he references this important event half way through the final seven years, Jesus tells those who are in Judaea to flee to the mountains.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) 16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Mark 13:14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. 21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

We can see then that these passages refer to people who are in the land of Judah when the abomination of desolation takes place. It is these people who will flee to the mountains in anticipation of coming persecution (Matt. 24:21, Mark 13:19). The geographic specification of those who are in Jerusalem and Judaea indicates that this group is very likely to at least be predominately comprised of Jewish people. Given that Jesus is quoting Daniel, it is also relevant to point out that Daniel 12 which references the abomination in verse 11) mentions a time of great trouble and the deliverance of Daniel’s people. The time of trouble relates to the great tribulation that Jesus speaks about (Matthew 24:21). And the designation of Daniel’s people would work well with Jesus’ reference to those who are in Judaea. Here it is also worth noting that the need for Christians living in Israel to be protected (while there is seemingly no mention of similar protection for Christians living elsewhere) may simply reflect that persecution is greatest or focused in the Middle East, which could theoretically be the main region where the mark of the beast is implemented. Certainly, Jesus himself relates their need to flee to the abomination itself, which is clearly located in a very specific geographic place.

The second indication that the people protected in the wilderness are predominately Jewish comes from the identification of the woman in Revelation 12 which uses the imagery of the sun, moon, and stars used from Genesis 37:9-10. Moreover, both Daniel 12:1 and Revelation 12:7 mention the involvement and actions of the angel Michael. These observations confirm that these passages are

discussing related events and groups. In all cases, we are talking about a people group who is in Israel at the time of the abomination of desolation who go to a place where they are protected during a time of tribulation.

However, even though the gospel and Revelation indicate that we are talking about a predominately Jewish group that is present in Israel when the abomination occurs, it is not necessary to conclude that Gentiles will be excluded from protection in the wilderness. In 1 Corinthians and Galatians, Paul presents the idea of children being begotten through the gospel as it was delivered through Jewish apostles like himself.

1 Corinthians 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, **yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.**

Galatians 4:19 **My little children, of whom I travail in birth** again until Christ be formed in you.

Paul's reference to himself figuratively "giving birth" to the Galatians in Galatians 4:19 is also interesting because in the rest of chapter 4, Paul expands on this concept of "giving birth." Verses 22-31 are often thought of as an allegory of "the two Jerusalems," an earthly Jerusalem and a heavenly Jerusalem. However, it is more accurately an allegory of Hagar and Sara, with Hagar and Sara allegorically representing theological concepts, as verses 22-24 plainly assert.

Galatians 4:22 For it is written, that **Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.** 23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* **by promise.** 24 **Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.**

As verse 24 states, Hagar, Abraham's concubine, represents the covenant of the Law of Moses. And since Hagar, in part, represents a covenant, Sara does also. Sara represents the covenant of promise and faith in that promise. Sara represents the covenant of promise and faith because it was when Abraham believed God's promise to grant him a son through Sara that God credited him as righteous, without the Law of Moses (Genesis 15:3-6, Romans 4:3, 18-22).

However, Hagar and Sara don't represent only the covenants. Paul goes on to explain further in verse 25.

Galatians 4:25 For **this Agar** is mount Sinai in Arabia, and **answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.** 26 But **Jerusalem which is above** is free, which **is the mother of us all.** 27 For it is written, Rejoice, *thou* barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. 28 **Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.** 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him *that was born* after the

Spirit, even so *it is* now. 30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out **the bondwoman and her son:** for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

In verses 25-26, Paul equates Hagar with the Jerusalem which now is and Sara with Jerusalem that is in heaven above. It is important to remember that Hagar and Sara are the allegorical elements here, not the two cities. However, in what sense does Hagar represent the earthly Jerusalem of Paul's day? Hagar represents the Jerusalem of Paul's day in the sense that she is in bondage, particularly bondage to the Law of Moses.

But does Paul mean that the city itself is in bondage to the Law of Moses? No, Paul is referring collectively to the Jews living in the city who are in bondage to the Law of Moses. Thus, although there were many believing Jews in Jerusalem who were free in Christ, the majority of the Jews living in Jerusalem at that time rejected Christ and maintained that the Law of Moses was necessary and had not been replaced by any new covenant. Referring to them by the name of the city is a way to refer to them collectively. Consequently, Paul is using the phrase "Jerusalem which now is" as a collective term to refer *to the Jews* living in Jerusalem during his time who rejected Christ. These Jews he equates with Ishmael, who will not receive the promised inheritance.

In contrast, in Galatians 4:28, Paul speaks of himself as well as his audience as *children*, and in fact, children who will indeed receive the inheritance as Isaac does. So, if Paul and his audience are children, then who is their mother? Verse 26 answers this by saying that the "Jerusalem which is above is...the mother of us all."

But, we must keep in mind that Paul is paralleling the earthly Jerusalem of his day to the Jerusalem in heaven. And since the earthly Jerusalem of that day is actually a collective designation for the Jews living there, we must also assume that the heavenly Jerusalem is a collective designation, not for the city itself, but for the departed, faithful Jews living in heaven with God. Thus, when Paul says that the "Jerusalem which is above is...the mother of us all," he directly corroborates the fact that the "mother" in Revelation 12 refers to the saints of Israel from the Old Testament period, who through their faithful preservation of God's word "give birth" to the (Jewish and Gentile) Christians in a way that is very similar to how Paul himself, in verse 19, "gives birth" to the Galatians by preaching to them. In this way, the "mother" that Paul speaks of in Galatians is a Jewish "mother." It is the covenant people of Israel. She is comprised of descendants of Abraham. More particularly, it is the saintly Jews of the Old Testament period. According to Paul, this "Jewish mother" has many children which are identified as those who though faith in Christ become heirs of the promise. (See also Galatians 3:16-29.) Throughout this letter, Paul is clear that this Jewish "mother" has children from among the Jews as well as the Gentiles. As Paul states in Ephesians 2:11-19, through faith Jews and Gentiles together are part of the commonwealth of Israel and the covenants of promise.

So, Revelation 12:7-17 is speaking of those who through faith in Christ are participants in God's covenant with Israel ("the woman") and made part of God's covenant people (Israel) and who are in Judaea when the abomination occurs midway through the final seven years before Jesus' return. Because these are persons who live during the end-times and because through faith in Christ Gentiles are considered participants in the covenant and commonwealth of Israel and "children" right alongside Jews, we have no means to exclude Gentiles from the group that is going to be protected in the wilderness. However, we can say that because this group is comprised of persons who are in Israel when the abomination occurs they are likely to be mostly Jewish. Though again, we have no reason to suspect that Gentile believers who are in Judea at that time would be excluded from protection in the wilderness. After all Jesus doesn't specifically refer to "Jews" but instead refers to "those who are in Judea." Moreover, it can be presumed that his instructions pertain primarily to his disciples. In other words, Jesus instructions are applied based on geography and Christian belief. Likewise, Galatians 4 includes both Gentile and Jewish believers among the "children" of the woman. The determining qualification for protection then seems to be presence of Christian believers in Judea at the time of the abomination, not ethnicity. Though presumably most who are present at this time will be Jewish.

Accordingly, Revelation 12:17's reference to "rest of the woman's seed" refers to those who are not in Judaea and those who do not flee to the place of protection in the wilderness. Therefore, inasmuch as Jesus' instructions for fleeing to safety don't pertain to those living outside Israel, we can assume that this group ("the rest of the woman's seed") will predominately be comprised of Gentiles who are in Christ, but who are simply not in Israel when the abomination and subsequent exodus to the wilderness occurs. However, because Jewish people live all over the world today and because some Jewish people today do believe in Christ, we cannot rule out the possibility that some of "the rest of the woman's seed" who are not protected may include Jewish people who are in Christ but who are not present in Israel when the abomination occurs. But, as noted earlier, the lack of protection outside Israel might simply relate to a lack of such intense persecution outside Israel (or perhaps the greater Middle East region where the antichrist seems particularly focused according to Daniel 11-12).

However, we should also note that the phrase "rest of the woman's seed" could very well also pertain to those Jews living in Judah who, for whatever reason, either choose not to flee or cannot flee. Jesus' instructions imply that some people living in Judah will not flee and we can again assume based on the geography that this will predominantly be a Jewish group. Moreover, the very next chapter of Revelation, chapter 13:10, is translated in NIV (New International Version) as stating, "If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed." This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people." Such language recalls the exiles of Jews earlier in history when Jerusalem and Judah were invaded and the reference to God's people enduring suggests both death and exile are dispensed by the antichrist on those who choose to remain in Jerusalem and

Judah, which presumably would predominantly be Jewish. The book of Zechariah 14:1-5 certainly attests that there will be Jewish people who remain in Judah and Jerusalem under siege by enemy forces leading up to Christ's return. Some will be kept in the city and others taken into exile according to Zechariah.

It is also important to note that those who go to the wilderness must be people who live during the end-times. For, long-dead persons, such as Old Testament saints, are not in need of protection from Satan cast to the earth. Nor would they be on earth to go to a wilderness.

In summary, as noted previously in Galatians 4 and Revelation 12:1-6, the woman is used to depict the covenant people of Israel. This is a reference to Old Testament Jewish saints, to those who came before Christ was born. According to Paul's use of the metaphor, those who subsequently come to faith in Christ through the apostles' preaching are children, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. In Revelation 12, the concept of the woman as representative of God's covenant people Israel is related to an end-times setting after the gospel has been preached to all nations in the early New Testament period. Because Revelation 12:12-17 refers to people living in the end times, this allows that the children of the woman are Gentiles as well as Jews. This inclusion of Gentiles into the Jewish covenant people is similar to the metaphor of the bride of Christ. The Old Testament at times depicted Israel's covenant relationship with God through the metaphor of marriage. Sometimes they were unfaithful to this covenant by disobeying God's commands and worshipping other gods. This concept of God's covenant people being a bride is continued into the New Testament where it is used to refer to those who through faith in Christ are made part of God's covenant with Israel. Again, Gentiles are spoken of as part of this group, part of God's covenant people Israel, as part of the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:23-32, 2 Corinthians 11:2, Revelation 19:7-8).

In addition, this fact that Revelation 12's "the remnant of her seed" includes large numbers of Gentile Christians is also evidenced by chapter 7. Here in chapter 12:17, we can clearly see that it is this "remnant of her seed" that receives the persecution from Satan, which chapter 13 will describe in more detail. Likewise, the first half of chapter 7, including verses 1-8 describes the sealing and protection of a particular group of 144,000 Jews. But, in contrast to the Jews, the second half of chapter 7, particularly verses 9 and 14, describe a great multitude, which has "come out of great tribulation" and is comprised of "all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." Though "all nations, kindreds, peoples, and tongues" clearly includes Gentile nations, we must note that the category here is "all nations." Since Israel is also a nation and a people and since Jewish people live all over the world, it is possible to conclude that those who come out of great tribulation in chapter 7 are mostly Gentiles, but may also include Jews who live in and are part of these various nations. So, both chapter 7 and chapter 12:17 indicate the protection of mostly (but not necessarily or exclusively) Jewish people in the wilderness and the testing of mostly (but not exclusively) Gentiles by persecution in this last days' tribulation.

Thus, while there is protection for those who are faithful and watchful (and in Israel at the time of the abomination), others will be subject to some degree of testing to see who will prove to be unfaithful, turn as bitter waters, and divorce God when Satan is cast down and works wonders to delude those who “received not the love of the truth” (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Paul makes allusion to this very scenario in 2 Corinthians 11 when he describes the Corinthian church as a “chaste virgin” “espoused” to Christ, who might be deceived by the serpent, who can make himself appear as an angel of light and by the preaching of a false gospel and an alternate Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: **for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.** 3 But I fear, lest by any means, **as the serpent beguiled Eve** through his subtilty, **so your minds should be corrupted** from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 **For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus,** whom we have not preached, **or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel,** which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*... 14 And no marvel; for **Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.**

Now that we have identified those who go to the wilderness for protection, we can proceed with one last element identified referentially by Revelation 12:7-17. For this purpose, we look again at the closing verses of the chapter.

Revelation 12:13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*. 14 And to **the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time,** from the face of the serpent. 15 And **the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman,** that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 **And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood** which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

As we have stated above, the final outcome of this narration is that Satan is unable to hurt those in Israel who flee to the wilderness and so he is forced to go after the rest of those persons who hold the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus. But in this passage there are two peculiar phrases that depict much more specific events than the casual reader might notice. Both these phrases pertain to the movement of those who are in Israel (and part of God’s covenant with Israel) into the wilderness for protection.

The first statement comes in verse 14, where the woman is said to be “given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness.” The second statement comes in verses 15-16, where Satan is said to unleash water as a flood after the woman but the earth opens up and swallows the flood, helping the

woman. It is the removal of this flood water that signifies the end of the danger toward those who flee from Israel at this time and forces Satan to turn his attention to persecuting those in Israel who did not flee and those outside the land of Israel, which he is permitted to do.

Both of these statements provide further information concerning the pivotal role of the two witnesses in the sealing of the 144,000 and the protection of a predominately Jewish group in the wilderness. The first phrase, concerning God's people being carried on eagle's wings to the wilderness is a direct reference to Israel being led out into the wilderness under Moses and Aaron. In Exodus 19:3-4, we see that this exact imagery of "an eagle's wings" is employed concerning their escape to the wilderness.

Exodus 19:1 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, **and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness;** and there Israel camped before the mount. 3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; 4 **Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.**

The specific inclusion of such peculiar imagery concerning "eagle's wings" and Israel going to the wilderness under Moses and Aaron in Revelation 12 directly indicates that this future evacuation to the wilderness will be under the two men known as the two witnesses.

Furthermore, questions arise as to how it is that all Israel will be saved, as Paul testifies in Romans 11.

Romans 11:25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 **And so all Israel shall be saved:** as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: 27 For this *is* my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

Even though "saved" in Romans 11 refers not to conversion but to the actual deliverance from the enemies of God brought by the coming Messiah (Luke 1:67-77), the question still remains as to why "all Israel" as opposed to "part" is qualified for such deliverance. Will all end-times Jews enter into and thus inherit the Messiah's kingdom regardless of whether or not they've accepted Jesus? Or, if accepting Jesus remains a prerequisite for entering and inheriting his kingdom, how will it be the case that the whole of the nation of Israel will suddenly at that time be willing to believe? Will God cause them to have a change of heart, as Calvinists conceive of conversion?

No, the answer is much simpler and it is spelled out by the second of these two peculiar statements from Revelation 12.

Revelation 12:15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. **16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood** which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Verses 15-16 state that Satan will cast water out of his mouth to harm those in Israel who are escaping to the wilderness but the earth will swallow it up to help them. This is another reference to a specific event involving Moses and Aaron as the Israelites were coming out of Egypt into the wilderness. During our examination of the third trumpet, we established Satan's connection in turning some of the waters bitter and the result being the death of many men. Here we see a portion of that at work in terms of the waters unleashed to harm Israel.

In the Old Testament, as Moses and Aaron were leading the people out of Egypt into the wilderness, they were opposed by certain leading men among the Israelites, who managed to win over to their side quite a large portion of the people of Israel. The leader of this group was named Korah. This incident is recorded in Numbers 16.

First, notice that Korah and those with him were Levites, and thus were rightfully among the leadership of Israel, specifically among the priesthood, the religious authorities. And notice that they were accompanied by 250 princes and great men of Israel.

Numbers 16:1 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: 2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

Second, notice that the specific complaint of Korah and these particular leaders of Israel is that Moses and Aaron are wrong to elevate themselves above the people of Israel and instead that the entire congregation is equally holy. And, of course, by this statement, these leading men were trying to ensure recognition that they themselves had comparable authority to Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 16:3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, *Ye take* too much upon you, seeing **all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?**

Third, notice Moses' response in verse 4, where he states that God will make a distinction concerning who God accepts and, thus, what the proper delineation of authority was. Notice also the use of the censers in this process of distinction. We have mentioned this passage already, as well as the relevance that censers have to

God making such a distinction, when we covered the meaning of the censer of fire in Revelation 8:2-5.

Numbers 16:4 And when Moses heard *it*, he fell upon his face: 5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, **Even to morrow the LORD will shew who are his, and who is holy;** and will cause *him* to come near unto him: even *him* whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him. 6 This do; **Take you censers, Korah, and all his company;** 7 **And put fire therein,** and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and **it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose,** he *shall be* holy: *ye take* too much upon you, ye sons of Levi... 17 And **take every man his censer, and put incense in them,** and bring ye before the LORD every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers; **thou also, and Aaron, each of you his censer.**

Fourth, notice from verses 12-14 that these men oppose Moses and Aaron leading the people out into the wilderness.

Numbers 16:12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: **which said,** We will not come up: 13 **Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?** 14 Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

Fifth, and perhaps most importantly, notice the sign that is given to demonstrate that Moses has been sent by God rather than doing these things “of his own mind.” The sign is that the earth will open up and swallow those men, including Korah, who opposed Moses and Aaron.

Numbers 16:28 And Moses said, **Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works;** for *I have* not *done* them of mine own mind. 29 If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; *then* the LORD hath not sent me. 30 But **if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up,** with all that *appertain* unto them, **and they go down quick into the pit;** then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD. 31 **And it came to pass,** as he had made an end of speaking all these words, **that the ground clave asunder that was under them:** 32 **And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up,** and their houses, and all the men that *appertained* unto Korah, and all *their* goods. 33 They, and all that *appertained* to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation. 34 And all Israel that *were* round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, **Lest the earth swallow us up also.**

Sixth, notice that the people of Israel who side with Korah and oppose Moses and Aaron’s actions are also destroyed.

Numbers 16:41 But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD. 42 And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared...46 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun...49 Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah.

Revelation 12:15-16's use of the imagery of the earth opening and swallowing the opposition to God's people in the wilderness is identical to this incident with Moses and Aaron from Numbers. The inclusion of such a peculiar reference is clearly meant to invoke a parallel in which God's covenanted people (Israel) is again led into the wilderness by two men and the ungodly among them are purged when they oppose those two men, accusing them of elevating themselves above the people and of acting by their own minds and opinions.

Lastly, the involvement of the two witnesses in leading the God's people out into the wilderness is also demonstrated in chapter 11, where the two witnesses are described in more detail and plain language.

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

By stating that the two witnesses are killed where the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, this verse clearly identifies that Jerusalem will be the location of their deaths. However, by applying the figurative titles, "Sodom" and "Egypt" to Jerusalem, this passage is invoking two famous instances where God sent *a pair* of messengers to lead his people out of a location. The first, of course, is Egypt, which we have already discussed. The second, Sodom, is where God foreshadowed the two witnesses by sending two angels to get Lot and his family out before God destroyed the city. Of course, Lot's wife, who looked back, was purged during the escape, just as was the case with Korah and his associates. Consequently, the very use of the titles "Sodom" and "Egypt" in conjunction to the two witnesses' ministry to Israel demonstrates that part of their ministry involves leading the Israelites out into the wilderness.

Thus, Revelation 12 also explains just how it is that all Israel will accept Jesus and will subsequently be delivered at his return, entering into his kingdom. All Israel will be saved, not because they are delivered regardless of whether or not they accept Jesus and not because God causes all of them to accept in some Calvinistic fashion, but because while they are in the wilderness, God will purge them of all those who oppose God and disbelieve. This will occur when the bitter waters among the congregation, stirred up by Satan, are swallowed up by the earth, just as was Korah and the leaders and people with him.

So, here in chapter 12 we find additional specific details concerning the ministry of the two witnesses prior to the period of their prophesying for 3 1/2 years. They will lead people in Israel out into the wilderness. There they will be confronted and opposed by some of the congregation who will then be swallowed by the earth, like Korah, thus demonstrating that the two witnesses are indeed from God, ending the debate, and leaving Satan no opportunity among this group which is predominately comprised of Israelites. And so, he turns to persecute and try those who are not protected in the wilderness.

The issuance of protection for those who are in Israel and the subjection to tribulation of those who are not in Israel (or who do not flee Israel) is also easily explainable. Throughout the New Testament both Jesus and the apostles instruct Christians to be watchful (Matthew 24:42-43, 25:13, Mark 13:33-37, Luke 21:36, 1 Cor. 16:13, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thess. 5:6, 1 Peter 4:7, Rev. 3:3). The implication of all these statements is that Christians who live in the end times Christians and who are not watchful will be subject to difficulties that those who are watchful will not be subject to. Watchfulness is closely associated with attentiveness to Christ's teaching. Those who are watchful and attentive to Christ's teaching are in not so much in need of being tried. But those who are not watchful or attentive to Christ's teaching will be subject to trial and testing to purify them. Those who do not endure, but succumb to temptation and deception will be excluded from the kingdom. But there isn't really a need to try those who have faithfully kept Christ's teachings and remain watchful for his coming kingdom.

This explanation is also supported by the fact that God required his people to be present in Jerusalem during the three major holy festivals each year (Exodus 23:17, Deuteronomy 16:16). If the feast days commanded in the Law of Moses have eschatological significance, then this may imply God's expectation for his people to be present in Jerusalem during relevant end times' events such as the building of the Temple. If this is the case, then those who are not attentive to this instruction would perhaps be subjected to discipline or trial for not heeding God's directions. (Or, put another way, they simply miss out on God's merciful attempts to provide a way out of the persecution.)

Further support for this explanation comes from the concept of "being sealed" which we have already discussed. In the New Testament this concept of "being sealed" can relate to the idea of being approved or accepted by God. Earlier we mentioned the Greek word "dokimos" which New Testament authors used to refer to those who taught or received authentic teaching. We should also note that the related verb "dokimazo" (1381) means "to test, examine, prove, scrutinize, to see whether a thing is genuine or not, to approve." It is used to refer to precious metals. In his epistle, Peter uses this Greek verb "dokimazo" to refer to the trial of faith that the persecuted first century church was undergoing.

1 Peter 1:6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though **now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations (3986: "trial, proving")**: **7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth,**

though it be tried (1381) with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul speaks similarly of the need to test the faith that some have taught or received.

1 Corinthians 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? **6** I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. **7** So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. **8** Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. **9** For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. **10** According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. **11** For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. **12** Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; **13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try (1381) every man's work of what sort it is.**

And Revelation as well discusses the need for Christians to be purified using the concepts of purified metals and white robes (raiment).

Revelation 3:18 **I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried (4448) in the fire**, that thou mayest be rich; and **white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed**, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

The word "tried" in verse 18 is translated from the Greek verb "puroo" (4448). When applied to metals as it is here it refers to testing the metal to purge it of the dross.

4448 πύρωω **puroo** poo-ro'-o
 from 4442; TDNT-6:948,975; v
 AV-burn 3, fiery 1, be on fire 1, try 1; 6
 1) to burn with fire, to set on fire, kindle
 1a) to be on fire, to burn
 1a1) to be incensed, indignant
 1b) make to glow
 1b1) full of fire, fiery, ignited
 1b1a) of darts filled with inflammable substances and set on fire
 1b2) **melted by fire and purged of dross**

Dross is an impure element that is present in metals. It can be removed by fire, or more specifically, by being heated to a high temperature, melted, and then removing the dross.

Dross - Dross is a mass of solid impurities floating on a molten metal or dispersed in the metal, such as in wrought iron...Dross can also be skimmed off. - wikipedia.org

The concept of robes that have been washed white is associated with those who come out of great tribulation in Revelation 7:9-14.

Revelation 7:14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, **These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.**

These observations give us good reason to conclude that those who are not protected in the wilderness, but go through the tribulation may be in need of some purification related to their not having properly heeded Christ's instructions and teaching. Perhaps, using the related metaphor of metals and coinage, their faith has incorporated some impure elements or elements of lesser quality and is in need of being removed by fire. Perhaps like modern American coins, the faith of these end-times Christians is not made of the same precious metal as their predecessors and needs to be rebuilt of better quality materials. Those who are protected can in some sense be seen as those who have either received a correct form of Christian teaching or kept their faith pure as attested to by their watchfulness or perhaps who have already been tried and purified and are in no need of further refinement. This concept of deliverance from trial for those who remain faithful to Jesus' teaching is stated in Revelation 3:10.

Revelation 3:10 **Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them** that dwell upon the earth.

However, there are few points worth emphasizing at the end of this section of comments. First, it should also be noted that even the Old and New Testament prophets and the apostles themselves, undeniably faithful men of mature faith, also suffered much persecution and trials in their day. So, faithfulness and vigilance do not necessarily or automatically result in exemption from persecution or trials. Nor should we in all cases assume that having to endure persecution or trials is a punishment from God or a sign of infidelity. Otherwise, we might condemn the prophets and apostles. Second, as we have mentioned earlier, the fact that the Bible does not mention any such protection or provision for Christians living outside of Israel might also have another explanation. Rather than viewing them as subject to persecution because they did not travel to Israel to escape into the wilderness, it may simply be the case that persecution is the greatest, more intense, or more focused in the Middle East, which could theoretically be the main region where the mark of the beast is implemented and where the abomination takes place. Consequently, Christians living in other areas (whether Jewish or Gentile) may simply not be in such strong need of supernatural protection.

The Reason for the Segment

All of the imagery in this chapter helps to spell out in plain language events that are described figuratively elsewhere in Revelation. In addition, it both identifies figures and describes their connection to one another through particular events. The figures include Israel, Jesus the Messiah, Michael and his angels who cast Satan and his angels out of heaven, and the two witnesses. The connections highlighted by this section include the connection between the two witnesses and the exodus departure into the wilderness as well as the connection between Satan being cast down in chapter 12 with the figurative depiction of the same events during the trumpets in chapters 8-9.

Likewise, chapter 12's relationship to chapter 13 is very similar to chapter 8's relationship to chapter 9. In the first four trumpets, contained in chapters 8:6-13, we find the fall of Satan and his angelic armies figuratively described along with its effects upon mankind. In particular, under the third trumpet we find the fall of Satan himself depicted in terms of a star falling from heaven. And in chapter 9:1, this same star releases another angelic king from the abyss along with his armies and the subsequent effects upon mankind. In chapter 12, we find the fall of Satan and his armies described in plain language as well as the persecution, which follows among mankind. And just like the fallen star is responsible in chapter 9 for the release of the angelic king from the abyss, in chapter 13 we find the recently fallen Satan responsible for the emergence of the antichrist and his empire. Chapter 17, along with passage from John's Gospel and epistles, will later confirm that the angelic king from the pit, referred to for the first time in Revelation 11:7 as "the beast," is the spirit who possesses the human antichrist.

Additional Relevant Comments

Before closing this section, it should be noted that the specific mention of Michael and his angels performing the work of casting out Satan and his angels from heaven is related, through Daniel 10:13, 21, Daniel 12:1, to 2 Thessalonians 2:5-6 where Paul describes Michael and his army as the "restrainer" even though he does not identify him by name. As we can see in these precedents, it is Michael who withstands and holds back the coming of Satan and, at the proper time, will cease withholding and instead cast him down. A comparison of these passages along with 1 John 4 indicates a model in which no antichrist figure could arise because the chief adversarial angel is prevented from initiating the events that lay the ground work for and lead up to the antichrist's arrival. As we have seen already during our examination of the trumpets and will continue to see, particularly in our next section covering Revelation 13, the activities of the chief adversary are an integral part of bringing about the rise of the antichrist, and not just in a general sense.

Status of the 8 Conceptual Threads

As is our habit, we will now take a few paragraphs to review the 8 overarching conceptual threads found in the book of Revelation. Those 8 threads were as follows.

1. The angel's appearing to John for the transmission of the Revelation to God's servants
2. The transmission of the Revelation from the Father to Jesus
3. The ministry of the 2 witnesses (including the Temple's building) and plagues
4. God's covenant people, Israel: purging & protection; the 144,000; building the Temple
5. The fall of the Satanic Kingdom and the subsequent falling away in the Church
6. The rise of the last empire and the antichrist; tribulation and the persecution of saints
7. The battle of Armageddon and the return of Christ
8. Millennial reign of Christ and the final judgment

As noted before, our initial four sections, including a *Long Series* in chapter 1:1-6:17, 8:1, an *Expansion* in chapter 10:1-11:13, a *Parallel Description* in chapter 7, and a *Short Series* in chapter 8:2-5, provided some important skeletal structure for the chronological relationship of certain key events as well as some detail concerning roughly 3 1/2 of these eight conceptual threads. Specifically, previous sections have provided somewhat longer descriptions concerning numbers 1, 2, 6, and somewhat shorter references to events surrounding numbers 3, 4, and 7.

Likewise, the second *Long Series*, found in Revelation 8:6-9:21, began to provide detailed descriptions concerning numbers 5 and 6. However, only the lead up to number 6 has really been covered, even in the second *Long Series*. Part B of the Expansion in chapters 10:1-11:13 provided substantial details concerning number 3 as well as some connections between the two witnesses, the trumpets, the fall of the satanic kingdom, the coming of the antichrist, the bowls of wrath, the resurrection and rapture, and by extension the return of the Lord. And the previous section covering chapter 11:14-19, which described the seventh and last trumpet, simply provided further affirmation of the previous connections without specifically providing much expanded details concerning one of the 8 conceptual threads.

This current section examining chapter 12:7-17 provides additional details concerning numbers 3, 4, and 5 and provides the set-up for chapter 13, which will add a great deal of detail concerning number 6. At this point, these 8 conceptual threads are filling in quite well, including their connection to each other. As we have seen, this is due to the overlapping nature of the many *Parallel Descriptions*, which we have examined so far through chapter 12. At the close of the previous section, we noted that there was still room for remaining to provide details concerning numbers 4 and 8. However, with the passing references to the two witnesses found in chapter 12, the commentary concerning conceptual thread number 4 is largely concluded. Unlike other threads, conceptual thread number 4 does not have a longer block focusing specifically on it somewhere in Revelation as other threads do. Instead, our understanding of it is cumulative as we assemble

the various references to it contained in other *Parallel Descriptions*. And the last of those individual references is found here in chapter 12.

However, this still leaves room for any additional connections that might be made between these 8 conceptual threads, as well as perhaps some more in depth focus on threads number 6, 7, and 8 as we continue forward through the rest of Revelation.

Section 2.08 – Long Series: Chapter 13:1-14:5

The Antichrist, His Rise, His Empire, Persecution of the Saints, and Conclusion

As we arrive at Revelation 13, we begin by noting that our commentaries on this chapter will be the first of several abridged, or summary, examinations that will be included in this study. The reason behind providing a mere summary discussion of chapter 13 is that, along with chapters 17 and 18, it is the subject of a much more in-depth analysis within our “Prophetic Symbols” series. Due to the attention and analysis provided in that series, it is only necessary to list, rather than assess, the elements and connections found in the *Parallel Descriptions*, which comprise these three chapters.

As we stated in our previous section, the opening verses of chapter 13 act as a bridge connecting back to verses 7-17 of chapter 12. Specifically, we see that just as chapter 12:17 mentions the dragon making war on the remnant of the woman’s seed, chapter 13:1-7 mentions the dragon giving his authority to someone who will make war with the saints of all kindreds, tongues, and nations. As we noted, this is similar to how verse 1 of chapter 9 connects the release of Abaddon, the angelic king from the abyss, to the falling of the star called wormwood, which is a depiction of the chief adversarial angel, Satan.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and **went to make war with the remnant of her seed**, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. **13:1** And I stood upon the sand of the sea, **and saw a beast rise up out of the sea**, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. **2** And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: **and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority...7** **And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.**

Thus, both chapters 8-9 as well as chapters 12-13 depict the fall of the satanic angels who are still in heaven and their subsequent release of their fallen colleagues from the pit as soon as they arrive on earth. The relationship between Abaddon and Wormwood (both of which are titles, not names) is further discussed in our four-part series, titled, “Angels in the End Times.” And so, we will not include much additional commentary on that relationship here, except to

note that what chapters 8-9 present figuratively with a focus on one set of connections and imagery, chapters 12-13 do with a combination of plain and figurative descriptions and a focus on another set of connections and imagery.

Specifically, Revelation 12 includes details of Michael and his angels casting Satan and his angels out of heaven, details not included elsewhere in Revelation, including chapters 8-9. And Revelation 13 provides details using the imagery of various beasts to connect the rise of the antichrist's empire to the previous empires mentioned in Daniel, which include Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. In addition, while including these four empires, Daniel 2 also mentions a fifth empire to follow Rome represented in Daniel 2 by the presence of the clay. This empire of clay, which lacks further description in Daniel, finally obtains its description in Revelation 13's discussion of the second, or two-horned, beast, which speaks as a dragon. As we establish in our "Prophetic Symbols" series, this is the empire of the false prophet, who is represented by horns, which as a matter of precedent conveys the concept of a government based upon two cooperative ethnic groups, exemplified in Daniel by the Medes and the Persians. Thus, the false prophet must be understood as a political leader, rather than just a religious figure.

Also discussed in our "Prophetic Symbols" study is the fact that the term "beast" is a collective term used to refer to the human antichrist, the angel Abaddon who arises from the pit to possess him, and the empire over which they rule, just as the beasts of Daniel 7 refer both to kings and their kingdoms.

Daniel 7:17 These great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings, which shall arise out of the earth... 23 **Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom** upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

In addition, chapter 13:5 identifies the timeframe of 3 1/2 years (42 months) for the rise of this empire, which must necessarily be the final 3 1/2 years before the return of Lord, due to the fact that the antichrist comes to his end at the hands of the returning Jesus Christ. Moreover, chapter 13 provides a detailed description of the orchestration of persecution against the saints in this final 3 1/2 years, which is something Revelation has not yet described in detail. Consequently, this relates directly to the promise made to the martyrs under the fifth seal in Revelation 6:9-11, where they are told to wait just a little while for their number to be completed. Likewise, in terms of its discussion of the antichrist's making war against the saints, chapter 12:17-13:18 also relates to the timeframe for the two witnesses' prophesying for 3 1/2 years as well as to their deaths at the hands of the Abaddon-possessed antichrist, who makes war against them and finally kills them just 3 1/2 days before the return of Jesus Christ (Revelation 11:7, 11).

Of course, there are two central details in the orchestration of this war against the saints. The first is the performing of false miracles by the false prophet through the power of the cast-down chief adversary in Revelation 13:11-14, as spoken of by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-11. The second is the utilization of economic

control to compel acceptance of the antichrist, the ungodly empire system, and therefore, the divorcement from and denunciation of the Lord Jesus Christ by some of his followers. This is the function of the famous mark of the beast, which of course, mimics or parodies the seal of God placed on the elect (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:13, Ephesians 4:30, Revelation 7:3-8).

Concerning Revelation 13, we should also comment on the language surrounding the “image of the beast.”

Revelation 13:11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; **saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak,** and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

It should be noted that although the antichrist himself will sit in the temple of God as an abomination, which is indicated directly by the words of Jesus, Paul, and Isaiah, whom Paul is quoting (Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, 2 Thessalonians 2:4, Isaiah 14:12-14), these remarks concerning an “image of the beast” in Revelation 13 do *not* describe a statue or other physical representation of the antichrist, whether placed in the temple or otherwise. Instead, what is worshipped is the man, the antichrist himself, who Paul states will enter the Temple proclaiming himself god (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Verses 14-15 should be understood to indicate that, working with the false prophet, the chief adversary is able to convince the people that dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast. It is *them*, not him, who *makes* the image. And more specifically, what they make is an image of, or for, the beast. At this point, we should take some time to discuss the precedent regarding this language of “making an image.”

As we can clearly see, here in Revelation 13, the false prophet has the people make “something” in the image of the beast. Then, the false prophet gives “life” to this image. (The actual Greek word translated as “life” here is spirit or pneuma, not zoe.) This parallels God making Adam in His own image and giving him the “breath” (which is the same Hebrew word for “spirit”) of life. Adam thus becomes alive, a living soul.

Likewise, Jesus is referred to as the second Adam, the Word incarnate. Like Adam, His Father is God. Adam was made in God’s image. And Christ is the image of God. Through faith in Jesus we are created anew, in Christ’s image,

even as through faith in Christ we are given the Spirit of life and made alive with Him, living in fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

The use of this language paralleling God breathing of the spirit or breath of life into Adam as well as God putting his Holy Spirit into Christians at the rebirth making them into the “image” of Christ and renewing them in the image of God, indicates that something similar is taking place at the direction of Satan and orchestrated through the false prophet. The people are being told to put forward an image, *a man*, and onto that man or into that man Satan will put a spirit, the angel Abaddon. This is a more detailed explanation of Revelation 13:5, which states that the beast out of the pit will be given a mouth to speak. This, in turn, is reflected in verse 15’s statement that “that the image of the beast should...speak.” The mouth is the human antichrist, who perhaps like Barabbas in the Gospels, is chosen by the people at the false prophet’s request, as indicated by the phrase, “and he spake as a dragon...saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast.”

Thus, similar to Adam, from the clay, or people, of the earth, an image is made into which is put the spirit of the false god, and that spirit is Abaddon. And by receiving the spirit of Abaddon, the human antichrist acquires the title “the son of perdition,” which in the Greek word means “son of apoleia” (Strong’s No. 684), which reflects the connection to Abaddon, whose Greek name is the related word “Apolluon” (Strong’s No. 623). Both “apoleia” and “Apolluon” are directly derived from “apollumi” (Strong’s No. 622), which simply means, “to destroy.” Consequently, these related Greek terms reflect not only the antichrist’s mission of persecution but also Abaddon’s position as ruler of the “place of destruction,” the bottomless pit, which is also known as “perdition” (Strong’s 684) in Revelation 17:8, 11.

Moreover, this title “son of perdition” is applied only to one other person, Judas Iscariot (John 17:12), which makes sense since this same angelic adversary is the one who possessed Judas during the betrayal of Jesus Christ. Since both Judas and the antichrist are possessed by the same angelic adversary, who is the ruler over the bottomless pit, they both receive the title, “son of perdition.” For more information concerning the relationship and timeframe of Judas’ possession to Abaddon as the angelic ruler over the Roman empire during the time of Jesus’ first advent, please visit the articles pertaining to Revelation 17 in our “Prophetic Symbols” series.

Lastly, we should note that this entire process in which Satan and the false prophet “anoint” the human antichrist (perhaps put forward or chosen by the people) resulting in that man’s receiving the spirit Abaddon, allegedly making him a “christ,” not only parallels the protocols of a prophet anointing God’s king, as seen in Samuel and David and John the Baptist and Jesus, but in its incorporation of a different man as a “new christ” it also perfectly parallels the Gnostic concept of the “christ” as a separate spirit being who unites himself to a man for a time.

We could go on to discuss Christians being sealed in the forehead by the Holy Spirit and Satan's attempted parallel with the mark of the beast and how that results in a clear delineation of who are the sons of God and who are the sons of the devil, but since the essential points have been covered and the fact that this section is intended to be a summary commentary, we will now move forward to the opening verses of chapter 14.

As some might have noticed from the title of this section, we have grouped the first five verses of chapter 14 with chapter 13. Keeping in mind that the scriptures were written without the separations of chapter and verses and given the content of those first five verses, we believe that it is accurate to consider Revelation 14:1-5 as the tail end of the *Series* in chapter 13, rather than as the beginning of a new *Series*. There are three reasons for this.

First, as we have noted, the close of chapter 12 sets the stage for chapter 13, leaving off with saints in Israel who are safely kept from Satan and Satan going to persecute those who are not protected in the wilderness. Chapter 13 proceeds to describe the rise of that persecution. Chapters 7-9 discuss the sealing of 144,000 Jews and God's prohibiting satanic forces from harming those who are sealed. Thus, it is only natural that after the ensuing persecution is described in these chapters concluding with chapter 13, the accounts would end with a statement of the final status of the 144,000 Jews after the persecution is over. And, verses 1-5 of chapter 14 serve just that purpose, informing us that after the persecution is over, the 144,000 have indeed been protected and made it through to fellowship with the Lord just as chapter 7 indicated.

Second, the description of the persecution in chapter 13 employs such all-inclusive phrases as "causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast," and "he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads." Thus, it is only natural for this *Series* to conclude with a contrasting assurance that *not all* have been deceived. To be sure, that was the goal, but the opening verses of chapter 14, which end the passage, reassure us that the 144,000 have endured faithfully and also discuss the going forth of true teaching to the nations alongside of this deception that had been spread by the False Prophet and the devil. This going forth of the gospel is undoubtedly responsible for the large group of people that come out of great tribulation having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7).

Third, a side-by-side comparison of chapter 13:16 to chapter 14:1 clearly reveals that the two verses were intended to relate directly to each other within the same narrative *Series*, rather than arbitrarily occurring in two separate passages.

Revelation 13:16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, **to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:**

Revelation 14:1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, **having his Father's name written in their foreheads.**

The contrast is clear. One group has received the mark of the beast in their foreheads and the intention of the false prophet is to compel all men to do so. But there is another group, which has not submitted, and who instead arrive with the name of God the Father on their foreheads. The fact that this parallel mention of a seal on the "forehead" in chapter 14:1 comes just 3 verses after the mention of the mark on the forehead in chapter 13:16 clearly demonstrates that the two statements are part of the same passage and segment.

The last note that might be made concerning these 144,000 pertains to the statement in chapter 14:4 that they are "they are virgins" and that they were "not defiled with women." While this statement could perhaps be taken literally, indicating perhaps that they are unmarried, male Jews, it is also likely, based upon New Testament precedent and the elements involved in chapter 13, that this imagery is intended to reflect their faithfulness and the fact that they were not deceived, rather than their gender and marital status.

We recall from earlier that the imagery of Wormwood turning water bitter during the third trumpet in Revelation 8:10-11 is a reference both to the Old Testament protocols in Numbers 5:11-31 for testing a woman's faithfulness and to Paul's descriptions in 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 concerning Satan working deception to delude the saints who don't really love the truth. This working of lying signs, mentioned in 2 Thessalonians, is clearly part of the content of Revelation 13 where we find the false prophet speaking by Satan and working lying miracles to deceive in verses 11-14.

With this as the backdrop to the mention of the "virgins" in Revelation 14, Paul's comments in 2 Corinthians 11 become relevant where he speaks of Christians enduring as "chaste virgins" rather than following Satan, appearing as an angel of enlightenment, and putting forward another Christ and another Gospel.

2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: **for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.** 3 But I fear, lest by any means, **as the serpent beguiled Eve** through his subtilty, **so your minds should be corrupted** from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 **For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus,** whom we have not preached, **or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel,** which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with *him*... 14 And no marvel; for **Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.**

Notice not only that Paul clearly describes Christians as "chaste virgins" in verse 12, but that he contrasts remaining chaste to being deceived by the serpent as Eve was. Thus, Revelation 14:4's statement that the 144,000 were "were not defiled with women" could mean that these saints were not deceived with Eve, rather than referring to intercourse with women in general. This is partially supported by

the fact that the word for “women” in chapter 14:4 is the Greek word “gune” (Strong’s No. 1135), which is the general word used for either women plural or a woman singular in the New Testament.

1135 gune

probably from the base of 1096; TDNT-1:776,134; n f

AV-women 129, wife 92; 221

1) **a woman** of any age, whether a virgin, or married, or a widow

2) **a wife**

2a) of a betrothed woman

Even if John is referring to women plural, rather than to the woman Eve specifically, this figurative interpretation would still be valid given Paul’s extension of Eve’s propensity for deception to women in general in 2 Timothy 2:11-14, where Paul uses this same Greek word, “gune,” to refer to Eve, who was deceived.

2Timothy 2:13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. **14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman (1135) being deceived was in the transgression.**

If women in general do follow such trends, then it would not be surprised to find these 144,000 Jews contrasted here in Revelation 14:4 to that general female trend in the rest of the population.

And there is another possibility. It may very well be the case that the 144,000 are all unmarried males, but that they represent *only a portion* of the Jews who enter into the millennial kingdom of the Lord. In fact, it is possible that the 144,000 are simply the *priestly portion* of the nation, a concept which is supported by chapter 14:4’s description of them as “following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth” and as “the firstfruits” relating back to the Levites who were to be holy unto the Lord in place of the firstborn males of all Israel when they were counted in Numbers 3:22, 28, 34, 40, 43.

It must also be acknowledged that the Jews in the wilderness and particularly the 144,000 will not necessarily be part of the mortal Jewish nation that procreates during the millennium. The survival of mortal Jews who procreate is described in such passages as Zechariah 12:8-14, Zechariah 14:1-9, Isaiah 65:15-23, and Romans 11:25-31. In particular, Zechariah 12 teaches that there will be some Jews who do not accept Jesus until the day of Armageddon and Isaiah 65 clearly refers to Jewish people during the millennium who could still potentially die. However, the 144,000 will be sealed prior to the tribulation (Revelation 7:1-3), which indicates that they will be born again, in which case, there seems little reason to doubt that they will be gathered and immortalized with the rest of the believers at the post-tribulation rapture. If the Jews in the wilderness are partially or completely comprised of the 144,000 and if the Jews in the wilderness are converted under the tutelage of the two witnesses then this would likely apply to the Jews in the wilderness as well. However, mortal Jews who survive to populate a mortal Jewish nation during the millennium could easily come from the poor

who do not take the mark of the beast, from children under the age of accountability who are too young for the mark or the rapture, or from general, unbelieving Jewish tribulation survivors who remained in populated areas under persecution and were saved in the final days of the tribulation.

Before we move on to the next section, we should briefly refer to our article series, "Prophetic Symbols," specifically Parts 1-3 of the subsection on Revelation 13. One important element of chapter 13, which we have not yet taken the time to mention in this study, is the fact that the false prophet is not only a religious figure, but a political figure, a ruler of an actual geographic kingdom.

This subject is addressed particularly in Part 3 of those articles, which includes a comparative analysis of this two-horned beast in Revelation 13:11 to the two-horned beast of the Medo-Persian empire described in Daniel 8:20. Furthermore, in that entire article series, including the sections covering Daniel 2, 7, and 8, we establish that a "horn" in prophetic imagery generally denotes a kingdom. From the precedent of this symbol, we learn that this kingship is always over an actual geographic kingdom, not merely an ideological or religious system. Thus, the application of that symbol to the false prophet likewise designates him as a political ruler over a geographic area. We will not recover that analysis here but we do recommend reading that article series in order to review the support for this interpretation.

This concludes our analysis of Revelation 13:1-14:5, a *Parallel Description* which is intended to provide further details concerning the persecution that ensues once Israel is protected in the wilderness, the rise of the antichrist's empire which puts forth the persecution, and the contrasting final status of faithful Israel who, despite the pressure to receive the mark of the beast on the forehead, retain the seal of God in their foreheads instead and arrive at the end in fellowship with the Lord.

Concerning the status of our 8 conceptual threads, we note that Revelation 13 provides a lot of detail in plain language concerning thread number 6, the rise of the last empire and the antichrist. Thus, although we will continue to see more detail concerning some of the other threads, it would seem that only threads numbers 7 and 8 are left still lacking some fuller description. So, we continue to look for more information about threads 7 and 8 as well as any further details or connections for the other threads as we proceed to examine the remaining *Parallel Descriptions* for this main, overlapping timeframe in the book of Revelation.