

OBSERVATION STUDY SERIES

REVELATION

THE DRAGON WARS
AGAINST
THE WOMAN'S SEED

12:15-17

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Revelation 12:15-17

The Dragon Wars Against the Woman's Seed

Ever had a mad dragon (one who was “flooding at the mouth”) chase you? In times of trouble, the only real assurance we can have is that God is in control... During the Great Tribulation, the Jews who flee to the wilderness will know that their God is most certainly in control... They will know that they are safe as long as they stay in their place of refuge...

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

The serpent is the great red dragon from Revelation 12:3. In verse 9, we were told that the great red dragon is the serpent of old, the one who is called the devil and Satan. No matter what he is called in Revelation, we can know he is the same person.

He is thrown down to earth from heaven (along with his angels) after being defeated by Michael and his angels. Satan is enraged and goes after the woman. Think for a moment. Where will he go (on earth) to find the woman (the Jews)? He will go to the place where God has been gathering them, the place of their homeland, the land of Israel. (Hence, the contrast in verse 17, “he went off to make war with the rest of her children” means Jews who are in other places of the world.)

The serpent goes to Israel to ruin her, but God enables her to fly off to the wilderness where He is going to nourish her for 3 1/2 years—the same period that is commonly referred to as the Great Tribulation. The Tribulation starts when Satan is thrown down to earth from heaven. He will give his power to the beast (anti-christ) and break a seven year covenant, which will begin the time of Jacob's Distress for the Jews. But all those who flee to the wilderness to the place which God prepares for the woman will be nourished there throughout the 3 1/2 years of the Great Tribulation.

The serpent will pour water out of his mouth like a river. He will pour it out after the woman so that she can be swept away. But he is in for a surprise! The earth will help the woman—it will open its mouth and drink up the river!

This will enrage the dragon so he will go off to make war with the rest of the woman's children. They are the Jews who were not able to flee to the wilderness and are

scattered around the world. These Jews, the ones who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus, are often referred to as the righteous remnant of Israel.

Matthew 24 recounts the sign of Christ's coming and the end of the age and gives us more information about the days of the Great Tribulation. Verses 15-26 refer specifically to the tribulation of those days. Those in Judea are told to flee to the mountains when they see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION standing in the holy place. (They are reminded that Daniel wrote about this and are exhorted to go back and study it for themselves. Not a bad piece of advice for any of us, don't you agree?)

The event is clear—the anti-christ will go into the temple, break the seven year covenant, and declare himself to be God. The Jews are told, “When you hear this has happened—Run! Run! Run! To the mountains! Don't stop for anything! If you are on your rooftop, don't even go back inside to get anything. If you are in the field, do not turn back to the city even to get your cloak. Just run to the mountains!

In America and other places around the world, when you think of wilderness, you most likely imagine forests. Not so in the Middle East. The word for “wilderness” is *eremos* and means desolate, waste, or uninhabited. The wilderness of Revelation 12 and the mountains of Matthew 24 are referring to the same thing. (If you have ever been to Israel you can understand this completely.)

If those who are in Judea flee as they are warned to do, God will get them to the mountainous wilderness safely. If they will run from Jerusalem, they will arrive safely in the place prepared by God to nourish them—and they will be safe for 3 1/2 years during the Great Tribulation.

I want to take a break on our mountain trek and tell you about a place I have seen. I've been to Jordan (right next to Israel) a couple of times. I've visited Petra, a place in Edom. I want to tell you about a wilderness, possibly the only wilderness of this magnitude that is close to Israel. I want to tell you about it because whenever I think about the Jews fleeing to the wilderness, this is where I picture them going... (Just to clarify—I don't know if Petra will be the wilderness which God prepares for them; no one does. But many, many solid biblical scholars believe, like I do, that it is a very, very likely possibility... I just want to tell you about it so you can imagine the possibilities for yourself.)

Petra—the Rock City—has been named one of the seven wonders of the world. It is the epitome of barrenness. It was built by the Nabateans centuries and centuries ago and it is the most amazing thing you could ever imagine. If you have ever seen the Indiana Jones movie, “Raiders of the Lost Ark” (not that I am suggesting you do), you have seen the “Treasury Building” in Petra. To access the city you must walk three quarters of a mile through a narrow gorge that is sometimes no wider than 9 feet—literally walking inside a split in a mountain. The Siq (which means “shaft”) is very, very narrow, has

sheer rock walls, and descends for approximately three quarters of a mile. When you finally reach the entrance you have significantly descended in elevation.

At the entrance you will face the elaborate facade of the Treasury Building (it's only a front—there is no real building). Nothing grows in Petra, there is no wood or other implements of civilization, but its beauty is seen in every direction. You can look through a window of a building and see hundreds of different colors in the lines of the rock. It's incredible—absolutely incredible!

Petra is a city in a bowl, surrounded by mountains—there is no other entrance, except by air. (I always think of the wings of the great eagle which will fly the woman to the place God has prepared for her.) The Siq, the only entrance by foot, is highly susceptible to flash floods. (Makes me think of Satan sending a flood from his mouth to sweep the woman away. If Satan were to send a flood of water down that gorge, it would definitely be a river!)

Whether Petra turns out to be the place where God's people will sit out the Tribulation or not, we can know that the water of Satan's flood will not reach them because the earth will actually open up and swallow all the water. He will nourish His people and they will remain safe... and dry!

Back to the text...

Once the earth opens its mouth and drinks up the river which the dragon pours out of his mouth, the dragon becomes enraged. At the earth? No. He becomes enraged with the woman! He cannot touch her in her special place so he goes off to make war with the rest of her children. He leaves the wilderness refuge (ultimately he has to leave the Middle East) and goes to the rest of the world.

Who is he looking for? For Jews. Which Jews? The ones who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. These Jews are ones who have come to believe in their Messiah. When? Amazingly, they will come to belief in their Messiah during the Great Tribulation.

Does that make them part of the church? Not if that happens *after* the Rapture. Once the Rapture happens (when the church is caught up together to be with the Lord) there will be no one else who enters the body of Christ. Will they be saved? Yes. When they come to believe in Jesus Christ, they will be saved—they just won't be part of the church, but they will be part of another group.

Remember, I told you earlier that there are many different groups who are in heaven now and there will be other groups which will join them around His throne as time continues. For example, the Old Testament saints are part of a different group than the church. Another example, the creatures around the throne in Revelation 4 are not the Old Testament saints nor the body of Christ. One more example, the nations in Matthew 25 which will be judged once the Lamb comes to take up His kingdom are neither the

Old Testament saints nor the body of Christ. There are others, but I don't want us to take our focus off the text at hand, so let's keep observing Revelation...

Never had a great red dragon chase you? Never had a flood sent after you? Maybe not, but you have had a Savior sent to your rescue... If you flee to Him as your refuge, if you believe and repent today you will become part of the church—one of the groups which will exist in the presence of the God of the universe and the presence of His Christ... safely... and eternally...