***Petra

RV155-02***

Please open your Bibles once more to Revelation 11:19 through Revelation 12:6. This segment is entitled "Tribulation Personalities," and this is the 11th increment on that subject.

The apostle John, as you remember, has been given a vision of the prominent personalities of the future tribulation world in action. Therefore, John sees the nation of Israel as one of those personalities, and it is made up of its Jewish citizens. He also sees this nation in suffering – the suffering brought about by the attacks of anti-Semitism. John sees the personality of Satan as the power which is controlling the gentile nations of the world, and has been doing it since the Garden of Eden. John sees the personalities of the demon angels who are associated with Satan in his warfare against God. John also sees the personality of Satan as he tries to prevent the birth of the personality Jesus, the Messiah Savior of the Jewish people. He tries to prevent the birth of this Savior, and then to kill Him after He is born.

John also sees the God-man Jesus Christ as the one who is destined to rule the world with absolute authority and with imposed absolute righteousness. John also sees the Lord Jesus Christ snatched up to heaven following His atonement for the sin of the world. He is brought back to heaven to share the Father's throne temporarily while the earth is being prepared for His return to rule upon His throne, the throne of His father King David in the millennial kingdom here on this earth.

**The Divine Timetable of Jewish History**

The divine timetable for this, I remind you again, is all very, very important. Without it, none of this makes any sense. A great deal of the book of the Revelation is a secret to people. It's a closed book simply because they have never anchored what they read to the timetable that God has given us of the passage of these events. You should understand that timetable very clearly, because these events are immediately upon us. The world is rapidly moving to the culmination of what we are reading in the book of the Revelation. Therefore, the timetable becomes more important than ever.

I remind you that that timetable was given to the prophet Daniel. He recorded it in Daniel 9:24:27. This is the divine timetable of Jewish history. This was given in response to Daniel's prayer concerning God's future plans for the Jewish people in order to conclude all that He had promised to do for this people. The reason Daniel asked that question was that he was reading the prophet Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 25:11, he read, "And this whole world shall be a desolation and a horror, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon 70 years." He is referring there to the desolation and destruction to be brought upon the tribes of the southern kingdom of Judah, and their captivity in Babylon. It would be a period of 70 years of captivity, making up for all those Sabbath years – all those years that they did not permit the land to rest every seventh year from planting.

Well, Daniel begins figuring up when they were taken into captivity. Suddenly, it hits him that: "We're the 68th year of this captivity. We only have two years to go." He goes to God and says, "What's going to happen after these two years?" The Lord says, "I'm glad you asked, Daniel. Here's the picture. I'm going to give you the schedule. Here's the timetable." Daniel very carefully wrote it down. The message was delivered to him by the angel Gabriel.

We read, "70 weeks have been decreed for your people, and your holy city." We have found historically that these 70 weeks are not weeks of days, but weeks of years. Therefore, Daniel was told that God has 490 years left of the history of the Jewish people when they come back from Babylon. And He gives them the declaration as to what will happen at that time: to finish the transgression: to make an end of sin: to make atonement for iniquity: to bring in everlasting righteousness: to seal up vision and prophecy; and, to anoint the most holy place. All of this is a declaration that all the promises of spiritual blessing and of honor upon the Jewish people which were promised to Abraham, and reiterated in other covenants, would all be fulfilled. It's all going to be brought to an end. The Messiah Savior will come; salvation will be provided; and, the Jews will be a righteous and perfect people.

Then, he says, in verse 25, "So, you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem." Now, fortunately, historical records give us precisely the day when that happened. It was done by the Persian King, Artaxerxes Longimanus, and the day was March 4th, 445 B.C. On that day, he signed the decree, and he told the Jews, "Rebuild the city. Rebuild the temple. Restore the nation that had been destroyed by the Babylonians.

Then the timetable goes on to say: "From the issuing of this decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince." Aha! From this date to the day when the Messiah is on the scene, there are going to be two periods. One is seven weeks, and the other is 62 weeks. Seven weeks equals 49 years. 62 weeks equals 434 years. So, it comes in two segments. He says, "There will be seven weeks and 62 weeks. It will be built again with plaza and moat even in times of distress."

What happened was that during this period of seven weeks (49 years) Jerusalem was rebuilt. It was restored, and the wall was put back up. Then there was a period of 434 years that followed when the Messiah Jesus Christ was on the scene. The total of these two is 483 years, and they passed like clockwork, from the time that the decree went out to rebuild the walls and rebuild the city, and we came down to the time when Jesus Christ was here on this earth. We come to April 6th, 32 A.D. Again, this is precise and exact chronology. We know when all this took place. This was a Sunday. It is what we call Palm Sunday. Jesus Christ rode into the city of Jerusalem on that little donkey declaring officially, "I am the Messiah Savior, the God-man, who has come to establish the Davidic kingdom."

Please remember that when Jesus came, His first mission was to establish the covenant with Abraham, and then with David, to establish a kingdom of God upon this earth, ruled by the Jewish people as the leading nation, and with Jesus Christ as the world ruler. That was His mission. He kept telling them, "I'm here. I have come to visit you to bring this about."

The final offer, after three years of ministry, verifying His credentials, and proving who He was, He now came in and the people exploded with joy. They looked at Him, and they said, "This is the Messiah." And while some wanted the disciples to calm down, Jesus said, "If they don't cry out like this: 'Hosanna' (Messiah Savior is what it means), these rocks will scream out My praise.” So, the day of visitation had come for Israel.

One final thing was required – national repentance. You have to come to faith in the Savior Messiah, and that was expressed by believing in Him and accepting Him as their king and Savior. This was April 6th, 32 A.D. The thing that's interesting about this day, folks, is that it's precisely to the last day of the 483rd year of Daniel's predicted timetable.

This is the background of what Jesus said which is recorded for us in Luke 19:38. Jesus is descending the mountain, and the people are saying, "'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.' And some of the Pharisees in the multitude said to him, 'Teacher, rebuke Your disciples.' And He answered and said, 'I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out.' When He approached, He saw the city (the city of Jerusalem), and He wept over it," because he knew what was coming five days later – His own crucifixion, by the hands of these same people who were calling out now in praise for Him to save them.

"He wept over the city, saying, 'If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace, but now they've been hidden from your eyes, for the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and around you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you in the ground, and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." April 6th, 32 A.D. was the time of their visitation.

Jesus was telling them that at the end of that day, because they had turned their backs upon Him, He laments over the city, and He declares that their future is going to be nothing but destruction; the city is going to be ruined; and, there will not be a stone left upon another. And in 70 A.D., less than 40 years later, that happened precisely at the hands of the Romans.

So, this is the timetable. You'll notice that there's one problem. God said, "I'm going to give you 490 years." We have 483 years accounted for to the very day. God's predictions are always to the very day. That leaves us seven years to go. That's the tribulation era – seven years of Jewish history. Nothing has changed. God's program and God's timetable has not changed. The first 483 years were fulfilled to the day. You may expect that the seven final years are going to be fulfilled in precisely the same way.

However, now the question is: when does the clock start ticking off these seven years? At the rapture of the church. Between April 6th, 32 A.D. and whenever the rapture takes place, the church age has been inserted, and God's special people from among the gentiles (you) have been drawn out.

So, today, and to the end of the tribulation, there is a judicial blindness placed by God upon most Jewish people – not every Jew, but almost every Jew, so that he cannot look upon Jesus Christ and recognize now that He is their Messiah. This is what Paul was referring to in Romans 11:25-26 when he said, "For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery (this secret now revealed), lest you be wise in your own estimation that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the gentiles comes in." Paul says, "You gentiles are obviously living high on the hog now. You are the chosen people of God. You are the elite. You are His client nation now, particularly in our day – the United States.

However, don't get arrogant, gentile Christians. While you are the apple of God's eye now, and the Jew is the dog's tail, this is only temporary. This is until the fullness of the gentiles has come in. There is a period of time when the gentile domination will be brought to an end.

In verse 26, Paul says, "And thus all Israel will be saved, just as it is written, that the deliverer will come from Zion. He will remove ungodliness from Jacob." So, the time is coming when the blindness is going to be removed from all the Jews. Then those living at that time will see their Messiah; they will realize that their forefathers made an enormous mistake; they will realize that they have been lied to by the rabbis; and, they will trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior. They will do what their forefathers should have done on the day of visitation, on April 6th, 32 A.D. They are going to trust the Messiah Savior then.

Some Jews are released from this blindness now, and that's why they become Christians. A Jew has not only the scale of the old sin nature blindness, which all of us have, but he has the second whammy of the blindness that is placed upon their nation for killing the Messiah. Here and there, that double blindness is removed, and that Jew is saved. That's what Paul means when he says, "Israel is blinded in part.

So, the prediction in Daniel 9:26 is that: "After 62 weeks (this second period), the Messiah will be cut off." That was April 6th, 32 A.D.: "He will have nothing (that is, that He should have, as King, for which he came). And the people of the prince who is to come" (the antichrist). His people are the Romans: "Will destroy the city and the sanctuary." They did that in 70 A.D.: "And its end will come with a flood, even to the end, there will be war and desolation determined."

Then it leaps forward over the centuries to the antichrist, to the last seven years. It telescopes again. We know this from other Scripture: "And he (the antichrist) will make a firm covenant with the many (the many people of the children of God – the Jews) for one week (this seven-year period). But in the middle, he will put a stop to the sacrifice and grain offering," because he will have permitted them to rebuild their temple, and to restore their worship program in Jerusalem: "And on the wing of abomination will come one who makes desolate. He, who will destroy (the antichrist), does an abominable thing until his own complete destruction that God has decreed with the report upon him – the one who makes desolate."

Jesus indicated in the New Testament that what this desolation would be would be that this evil man would set himself up in the Jews' temple, in the middle of this seven-year period, and declare himself to be the God of the world. He will demand that the Jews worship him. He is the future prince, which is being referred to here in the book of Daniel.

So, with this frame of reference (this timetable), the book of the Revelation now fills out the picture, and we have the precise guidance to know where we are in God's prophetic program. What John sees is that this antichrist will befriend and support the Jews, and they will sign a seven-year treaty with him. This will bring them peace, because the antichrist will be in a position of the superior power of the Western world, and he will squelch the Arabs. And the Jews will be able to rebuild their temple and live in peace.

However, now John sees the Jewish people in the last half the tribulation, and suddenly, he sees them fleeing for their lives from the antichrist. The antichrist has been their friend for three-and-a-half years. Now he has turned against them; set himself up as a god in the temple; and, demanded that they worship him. The horrified Jews refuse to practice such blasphemy, and then they will be persecuted to the death. They will not just be imprisoned. They will be persecuted to the death.

The Lord Jesus Christ warned that the tribulation generation of Jews were to expect this all-time great persecution. You have that in Matthew 24:15-21. At that point, Jesus said that the signal that the persecution is about to begin is the setting up of the antichrist in the temple as your God. Jesus said that the moment that you see that, you are to flee immediately to the mountains to escape death. This was a simple direction. And Jesus said, "And I mean immediately. Do not delay to go up on the housetop to pick up anything. If you're in a field, do not go down to your house to pick up anything. Go right from the field." Jesus said, "Pregnant women and nursing mothers will have a very hard time trying to escape under these conditions." And He urged that they pray that this would not happen in the adverse weather of winter, nor on the Sabbath day. And the reason He says that is that the Sabbath day in Israel is the day when things shut down. There is no transport available to any extent. And everybody who is fleeing, like a lot of refugees, are certainly going to be evident, because they're traveling.

Isn't it interesting that The Dallas Morning News, on Monday, November the 19th, 1990, in the section summarizing events around the world, says, "The Israeli cabinet on Sunday overrode opposition protests, and approved legislation to restrict indecent advertising and public transport on Jewish holy days." This just happened a few days ago. The Israeli cabinet said, "You're going to shut down the transportation on the Sabbath day. That's one of our holy days. You're going to respect the Sabbath day. You're going to shut down businesses. You're going to shut down indecent advertising all the time. But on a holy day, you're going to stop using your cars; transportation is going to shut down; and, this country is going to have a Sabbath rest day."

That's exactly what we're talking about. Can you imagine Jews trying to flee out of their fields; out of their housetops; and, out of wherever they are, heading out to some mountainous area to find refuge because they're going to be killed (not just captured) if they refuse to honor the antichrist, and take his mark upon them, and they can't have any means of transportation? Or they may be moving on a day when they're exposed, if they are really trying to get someplace. I mean, what's going on here? Are we living in the last days, or what? Are things shaping up? Or have we not been able to put two and two together here? These are exciting times. That's exactly what is taking place.

This tribulation persecution of the antichrist will be Satan's final effort to annihilate the Jewish race. The Bible tells us, as I showed you last week, that, of the three million people of Israel, only a million will escape. The antichrist and his agents will kill three million. One million will survive, but the question is: where are they going to go?

Here's what the Jew faces. Here is this little country of Israel surrounded by Arab nations. Is she going to go to Syria? She can't go there. Lebanon? She can't go there. She can't go out to sea. She can't go east to Jordan. She can't drop down to Saudi Arabia. They don't have too many friends in Egypt. This little country is surrounded by powerful Arabs. Jesus said, "Get out to the mountains: (implying) out of the country, or you will not survive." There's obviously no refuge here. So, the question facing the Jews is: where will they go?

Well, there is a haven of rest. There is only one direction in which they can go and hope to escape the antichrist, and that is to head down toward the Dead Sea, and to move eastward across the Dead Sea into the territory which, in the ancient world, was held by Ammon, Moab, and Edom. These countries are a virtual wilderness to this day. This is a place of rugged mountains, and very poor roads. They are the boundaries of what form today the modern state of Jordan. Eden is today southern Jordan; Moab is central Jordan; and, Ammon now constitutes northern Jordan. And isn't it interesting that the capital of Jordan is Amman, from that ancient territory that the northern part is made of? The Bible says here, in this mountainous area, east of the land of Israel, there is some place out here, in the territory of Edom, a place where God has provided a refuge for the people of Israel.

**Petra**

In Isaiah 16, we have a very clear specification. And the Jews who are paying attention to their Bibles will have probably a pretty good idea of where to go: "Send the tribute lamb to the ruler of the land, from Sela." "Sela" is the ancient name for a little spot called Petra. This was a territory known as Petra, or Sela, in the ancient world. So, here, interestingly enough, Isaiah is talking about this little spot: "Send the tribute lamb to the ruler of the land, from Petra by way of the wilderness to the mountain of the daughter of Zion. Then, like fleeting birds or scattering nestlings, the daughters of Moab will be at the hordes of the Arnon. 'Give us advice. Make a decision. Cast your shadow like night at high noon. Hide the outcasts. Do not betray the fugitive. Let the outcasts of Moab stay with you. Be a hiding place to them from the destroyer.' For the executioner has come to an end. Destruction has ceased. Oppressors have completely disappeared from the land. A throne will even be established in faithfulness, and a judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David. Moreover, he will seek justice, and be prompt in righteousness."

What is Isaiah talking about? He is saying, "The time is coming when the Jews are having to flee for their lives (for their preservation from their physical distress) and go to a place (go to Petra – old Sela). And there you will be safe until the Messiah Savior comes back as the conqueror: to get rid of the antichrist; to put down the gentile nations; and, to reestablish the people of Israel."

Southeast of the Dead Sea, in ancient Edom, lies the city of Petra. It is in some terrific mountain areas. It is practically impassable. When you talk about military vehicles, you're talking about non-existent operations to try to move in this kind of territory. This is real desert. This is isolated. This is nearly impossible to go through.

Now, the builder of Petra was Esau, the brother of Jacob. The Edomites Arabs have come from Esau. They had been the builders of what is going to be the preserver of the Jews that they don't like. Genesis 36:1: "Now, these are the records of the generation of Esau; that is Edom." Verse 8: "So, Esau lived in the hill country of Seir (Petra); Esau is Edom."

So, there in Scripture, you have Edom, the descendants of Esau, creating this major center, Sela, or Petra. Mount Seir was known as Petra in the ancient world. Esau and his posterity ruled in this city. Archeology has discovered several dwelling places cut out of beautiful red sandstone that would easily house a population of 276,000 people, just from what is there. It could easily have had three or four times that many people, in caverns; caves; and, other dwelling places which had been cut out.

One of the things that you'll find in Petra is a place called the treasury building, just to give you a little idea. Out of these rose-colored, sandstone walls have been called these magnificent buildings, openings, and dwellings. This was a very old place for one of the kings. Petra is an amazing place, and I think that God has probably prepared that as this spot for the Jews to flee to. It's the one place that the antichrist would have a very difficult time getting to, and would not be in a position to be able to spend a lot of time pursuing people there, because he's going to head in full with armies that are opposing him, and that are going to be coming against him at the same time.

**Esau**

After selling his right in the Promised Land to Jacob, Esau went south, and he carved out this kingdom of Edom in the mountains of the Arabian Desert. Over the centuries, Petra became an important trading place and a weigh station for caravans. It became the stronghold center for the Nabataean Arabs, who had a great commercial empire, who were highly civilized, and highly skilled in metalwork. Herod the Great, the Edomite, that was alive when Jesus was born, and who wanted to kill the baby Jesus, had possession of Petra. And as a gesture of goodwill, he gave it to Mark Anthony, the Roman general, and Mark Antony gave it to his girlfriend, Cleopatra.

So, Petra has been handed around as a big, monstrous, rose-colored present. In 106 A.D., the Roman Emperor Trajan incorporated Petra into the Roman Empire for defense purposes. I'll tell you in a moment why this is a defensive place like you wouldn't believe. It's not a city sitting out in the open on the desert. When he said "mountains," he really meant mountains.

Markings in the caverns (the walls) in Petra indicate that it was inhabited as late as 400 A.D. by a Christian community, because they include Christian markings. But with the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of Islam in 600 A.D., Petra rapidly declined, so that, by 1200 A.D., it was abandoned and forgotten, and nobody knew that it existed.

Out there, in the mountain of Edom, this, which had been a major trading city, and a major defensive point of the Roman Empire, suddenly is just a faint memory in writings and records, and the archaeologists were kind of interested in it. Then, in the year 1812, it is rediscovered, and it just blew the lid off the archeological world, in amazement, as they walked into what is an enclosure within these mountains, and they saw this magnificent city laid out, with a stadium for 3,000 to 3,500 people. It had these multiple caverns carved out in the walls as dwelling places. It had these magnificent other structures and rooms that have been carved all over the place. It has been setting there for something like 600 years in practically total silence.

Is God doing something, or what? Petra is located 160 miles south of Amman, Jordan. It is really in the crater of a dead volcano. But the only way to get into the crater (and that's the problem) is through a narrow, winding canyon two miles in length, and this canyon goes form a width of eight feet to 40 feet. It has walls that rise from 200 to 1,000 feet on each side. Do you have the picture? This is a canyon that winds in and around, with a lot of hidden turns.

It reminds me of a place in Zion National Park called the Narrows. Some of you may have been there, but the Narrows is one of the scary heights you take, because you go in exactly this kind of a construction. You go through places where you can touch the walls on each side. And there is a river, and you have to be prepared all day long to go in the river and out of the river. Sometimes, you're up to your neck in the water, going through. It always made me uneasy, because I knew that if there was a sudden cloudburst, that Narrows becomes a gushing river, and the water rises up the walls. I found myself looking up for hiding places, and something to grab onto, and how fast you could climb up if we suddenly found ourselves in that kind of a situation.

But you could kind of appreciate this – that once you're in there, there is no way out. You can't go up the wall, and you have to come back out slowly the same way you came in. Some out you former Berean Youth Club members will remember that famous trip camp we took.

Well, this is a true Narrows. Can you imagine trying to charge through with an army? This is why it was such a marvelous defensive position. Anybody who tried to get through there that was easily picked off. You did not come into this volcano except through this entrance, and it was easily defended by a small group. What an amazing configuration to give this exceptional protected position out here in this desert area for the city of Petra. It was hard to get to, and when you get there, it hard to come into it. Here you have a place that is big enough for 5 million people. It is large enough to care of 5 million people. You would only need room for a million for the Jews. That million that's going to escaped – that's all they would need. This place is plenty big enough. And it would have no problem sheltering a million surviving Jews.

Isaiah 26:20-21: "Come, my people, enter into your rooms, and close your doors behind you. Hide a little while until indignation runs its course. for behold, the Lord is about to come out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; and the earth will reveal her bloodshed and will no longer cover her slain." Isaiah is talking about the tribulation. Isaiah is talking to tribulation Jews. Isaiah is talking to the people in the last half of the tribulation who are being told to flee.

Isn't it interesting that in verse 20, Isaiah says, "Come my people, enter into your rooms." Some of your translations may say "chambers," which is exactly what the walls of Petra are filled with. Caverns, chambers, and rooms are carved out of this easily manipulated sandstone structure: "Hide for a little while until the indignation runs its course" – the indignation of the antichrist. Hide until when? Until the Lord comes, from His place up in – from His Father's throne, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth is going to learn what real bloodshed is then the Son of God comes in to do the battle. And the battle will be so great that they will not even be able to bury their dead fast enough.

It is interesting that at the entrance to the passageway into the canyon, somebody, in times past, has carved a magnificent eagle. It was probably the Romans who had the eagle as their emblem. In Revelation 12:14, we're reading about Satan chasing this remnant. It says that these free Jews, this remnant that has survived, probably the million that we're referring to here: "And the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman (that is, to Israel) in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place where she was nourished for time and times and half-a-time (that is, three-and-a-half years) from the presence of the serpent; that is, the devil." He says, "Two wings of an eagle." Has God led some Roman to carve their emblem at the very entrance of this canyon into Petra, and here Jews look for the eagle? God says, "You're going to go on eagles' wings, and here's the eagle to mark the way in. This is the place." Is God doing something, or what?

It is interesting that Christians, in previous generations, have raised the money and taken the trouble to store hundreds of Bibles in Petra, so that the Jews, who will be fleeing there, will find those Bibles; have them readily available to start reading; and, maybe at that time, with the help of those Scriptures, to put two and two together, and realize that the next thing they're going to see is the arrival of Messiah, the Jesus that they turned their back on, the true Messiah that their forefathers rejected.

In Zechariah 12:10, we read what the result will be at that point in time: "And I will pour out on the house of David," God says, "and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me," Jesus says, "whom they have pierced, and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son. And they will weep bitterly over Him, like the bitter weeping over a firstborn." Why will they be mourning? I imagine that any tenderhearted Jew will think about all the millions of Jews over the centuries who marched straight into the lake of fire, because they listened to their rabbis who said, "Jesus is not the one." All the millions of Jews, they will realize, who suffered under Hitler are sitting in the same hell with Hitler. And they thought that they were having a hard time at his hands. Now they are finding out what suffering really is, and this time, there's not going to be any termination of it, like when they had physical death.

While the people are being sheltered in Petra, a few miles away, a great event will be taking place. A few miles north is Bosra. Bosra will be the location of one of the climactic battles of the Armageddon campaign. In Isaiah 63:1-4, we have what is possibly the picture of Jesus Christ, having finished the campaign of the nations of the world gathered on the plain of Megiddo for the final battle against Him. Jesus Christ finishes them off, and now He is moving down to present himself to the enclave of the millions of Jews sheltered in the volcanic center of Petra.

Isaiah 63:1: "Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colors from Bosra? This one, who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness if His strength." This is the picture of Jesus the Messiah in His clothes stained with the blood from the battle that He has just engaged in: "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Why is your apparel red, and your garments like the one who treads in the winepress? I have trodden the wine trough alone, and from the people there was no man with Me. I always trod them in My anger, and trample them in my wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all my raiment." If you listened carefully to Psalm 2 which we read in the previous session, you had the results of the nations who did not pay attention to the warnings: "Make your peace with the Savior Jesus, or bear the consequences."

Well, the nations of the world are going to get fed up with the antichrist right at the end, and they're going to come swooping down on him from different directions, and he is going to have to turn to pay attention to them, and they are going to gather for their battle. Finally, they all end up on the field of Megiddo, and they are going to turn loose atomic weapons. They're not going to sit around, because they're all going to be like Saddam Hussein is today. Saddam Hussein has never had a devastating lethal weapon that he has not used. Never! The worst kind of poison gas, which none of the rest of the world, in all of World War II, would dare use, Saddam Hussein has had no trouble using. Can you imagine what he would do with an atom bomb if he acquired one? I tell you, in the inner recesses of the White House, that's what the intelligence agencies are trying to ferret out: Does he have an atomic weapon to drop on us, because that sure will stop everybody in their tracks immediately.

Well, these people are going to have it, and they're going to be like Saddam. They're going to have no hesitancy in using it. That's why the Bible says that if Jesus did not cut the tribulation period short, there wouldn't be a single person left alive on the face of the earth to go into the Millennial Kingdom.

So, here, Jesus, has finished them off. Suddenly, while they're getting ready to fight the antichrist, they see Jesus coming from heaven, and here you people are, coming along with Him (the great army), dressed in your linens of righteousness. This is not the righteousness of Christ, but your righteousnesses (the righteousnesses of your good works). Whatever you send up there is the kind of garment that you'll come back in. But here is this mighty army of God coming, and they look, and they realize that this is the person who is causing them all the trouble. It is the Messiah God. Then they join forces, and they make an agreement among themselves. The former enemies team up, and they all say, "This time, we're going to finish them off." But they're mistaken, because you and I will be in that army, and you and I know that they're not going to finish us off, let alone to finish the Lord off.

So, Jesus cuts it short. Here is the picture. He comes back from the battle. He has come down from Bosra, and He is moving down toward Petra, where His people are waiting. Isaiah 63:4: "For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and My year of redemption has come." Finally, Jesus says, "The time of battle is past, and the time of redemption is here. That's a fascinating passage. You have it exactly in conformity to the geographic layout here of the location of Petra, if that is indeed the sanctuary to which the Jews flee. And it seems that it almost could not be any place else.

The Jews of the chamber of Petra are warned not to be deceived by the announcement that the Messiah is at hand. They're going to be getting information in some way or another. One of the pieces of information they'll be given is, "Come on out. The Messiah has come." Therefore, Jesus, in Matthew 24:23, took the trouble to warn them that once they're in the place of safety and sanctuary: "If anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ, there He is,’ do not believe Him. For both false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even be elect. Behold, I have told you in advance. If, therefore, they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go forth; or, 'Behold, He is in the inner room,' do not believe them. For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be.

What he is saying is that when Jesus comes, everybody is going to see Him. Nobody is going to have to tell you, "There He is." So, if somebody comes and says, "Hey, folks, come on out of the sanctuary – the Messiah is out here in the desert waiting for you," don't believe it. Who is waiting for you is the antichrist and his hosts.

In some way, God puts in a canopy of protection over this volcano. There is going to be some supernatural protection obviously involved. It is not just this location and just this mountain. The physical features are involved, but as you see, we're also told that God comes through with logistical grace for their physical survival, which obviously they would need.

Communities have lived in this area of Petra before. They have produced the food that they needed. This has been a very large community in times past. So, there perhaps undoubtedly will be some of that. But whatever the means that God is going to provide, we're told, in Revelation 12:6 that they go here for the reason that they might be nourished for 1,260 days. The word "nourished" is the Greek word "trepho." This word "trepho" means "to provide physical nourishment and sustenance." It's the food provision of God. It is in the present tense, which means that it's going to be a continual supply for this three-and-a-half year period. It's active, which means that the refugees themselves are going to be the ones who are going to be fed. It is subjunctive mood – it's a potential which God is going to make real.

I remind you again that, in prophetic years in the Bible, a year is 360 days. The Jews had 12 months, and each month was 30 days in length. Therefore, their year was 360 days. They threw in some extra special days that they had for various reasons (holidays), and that's how they made up the other five or six days that they needed, so that the years came out right and stayed on track. So, when you read this figure of 1,260 days, you have to divide it by 30, and you will find that it comes out precisely to three-and-a-half years. That fit's exactly with the seven-year period, because it's seven years of 360 days.

So, here is the final divine provision in a period when God will take care of that group of a million survivors. It is a provision which only ends when Jesus Christ comes for them, after the final defeat of the nations of the world on the plains of Megiddo in the last battle of a campaign of Armageddon. Armageddon is not just one battle. It is a series of battles. You must call it the *campaign* of Armageddon. And thus, Jesus Himself now comes to the rescue of His own people who finally come to their senses. And that generation of Jews does believe and trust in Him.

This nation of Israel is quite an anomaly. It is a strange little nation. He is a picture of the ancient world, and here are the great nations of the world as they live today around the Mediterranean Sea, and up in the European area, with Spain, France, Germany, England, and others. And on the Mediterranean Sea is a little speck of land called Israel, and the nations of the world want this little speck of land. Why in the world are all the Arab countries, to this very day, in such mortal combat and squabbling over this little country that you have to look carefully to even see on a map? Why in the world should the world be fighting over such an insignificant little piece of land, with all of the territory that the Arab world possesses? Why do they want that little chunk? Why is there all of this mad fighting?

Well, it all began in the year 1897. If you will join us next time, we will tell you why there is this present madness. Thank you so much for the Word of God and for the.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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