***God Protects the Believing Jews

RV162-01***

Please turn in your Bibles once more to Revelation 12:13-17. Our subject is "The Last Persecution." This is segment number two.

Things are flying very, very fast in the world in which we move. The Gulf situation has been settled, but out of that has evolved the condition of an attitude of mind of people who are looking to a world government, and who are acting on the basis of a world government.

If you saw your "Dallas Morning News" front page today, you perhaps observed the fact that the American government has warned Saddam Hussein that if he uses poison gas on the rebels in his country, we will come after him. A few months ago, such a statement would have been unthinkable. We would not have dared to take the attitude that we are a world community; we are a world government; and, and we will impose our will on anybody who counters it. Saddam Hussein has moved the world a giant step closer to the conditions which are to prevail at the return of our Lord from heaven.

I was chatting with our missionary, and I was surprised that he said, "I understand that the White House has ordered literally several hundred copies of Dr. Walvoord's book on the oil embargo (Dr. Walvoord is the former president of Dallas Seminary) and of the book Babylon by Dr. Dyer of Dallas Seminary." I was surprised that he knew it. I knew that. He added that this has been distributed throughout the levels of the American government, in order to give those who are in positions of authority some orientation to where Scripture is moving. Those people have a tough time. Wouldn't it be tough to be president today, and know what the Bible says on prophetic matters? How would you make decisions? How would you act upon it?

I also learned from a reliable source, who has inside channels into the government, that the Star Wars (the Strategic Defense Initiative) program, which has been so ridiculed, is now complete and in place, and has been for the last two years. The hand has been tipped a little bit by what the patriot missiles did, which is a rather primitive form of the Star Wars, in stopping the scud missiles. The world is ready for the big blow out.

**The Abrahamic Covenant**

I was thinking recently that when God was about to destroy the city of Sodom because of its widespread and tolerated practice of homosexuality, God thought it proper that He should inform His servant Abraham beforehand of what He was going to do. God predicts the future. So, we read in Genesis 18:17-18: "And the Lord said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I'm about to do, since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?'" God is referring to the promise made way back in Genesis 12:1-3; as a matter of fact, very specifically, Genesis 12:2, where God told Abraham that if he would follow Him, and trust in the Savior that was to come, that God would do dramatically great things through the descendants of this man Abraham. Genesis 12:2 said, "And I'll make you (Abraham) a great nation, and I'll bless you. I'll make your name great. So, you shall be a blessing." God promise that He would bless Abraham, but He also promised that He would make him a blessing.

**Abraham was a Blessing to the Gentiles**

The apostle Paul, in writing to the churches in the city of Galatia, gives us an insight as to specifically what this blessing is that is to come to the gentiles from Abraham. Galatians 3:8-9: "And Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles by faith." Do you know what the word "justify" means? The word "justify" means that you have God's righteousness credited to your account. So, in God's eyes, you're as good as Jesus Christ. That is perfect. Nobody gets into heaven unless you have God's absolute righteousness credited to your account. Once you have that, you're justified in the sight of God. And this is what Abraham was to become the channel of – the means of worldwide justification, because through the Jews would come the Savior who would make that justification possible, because He would pay the price of death which everyone must pay, either yourself or Christ, for your own personal moral guilt.

So, here Paul says in Galatians 3:8: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All nations shall be blessed in you." This is the very expression that we have in Genesis 12:2, which shows us that, when God said, "I'm going to bless the gentiles," He meant, "I am going to give the gentiles salvation."

"So, then, those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer." We gentiles do not share in the Jews' particular covenant promises in relationship to God, but we do share in the blessing of salvation which has come through that nation.

**Believing God**

We are told that Abraham himself believed God. He believed the promise that God gave him, that he would provide justification for him by covering his sin through a coming Savior. The result was that Abraham was saved. In Romans 4:3, we have this declared to us. Paul says, "For what does the Scripture say (that is, the Old Testament Scripture)? It says, 'And Abraham believed God, and it was written to him for righteousness." What did Abraham believe? Abraham believed that God was not lying. Abraham believed God when He said, "I'm going to send a Savior. He will cover your moral guilt. And if you trust Me, and accept this Savior, and keep your hands off the system (don't try to throw in some good works of your own so that you contaminate the grace basis), then I will save you." Abraham said, "I'll believe it, and I'll accept it, and I'll keep my hands off of it. I'll let God do it all for me."

**Works must be Excluded**

Paul goes on to explain why this was important for Abraham to know – that he had to keep his hands off the process of salvation. He could not be involved in it in any way. Only God can save you, and the human being has to stay out of the process of salvation, or the process gets contaminated by his sin nature.

Paul goes on and explains this by saying, "Now to the one who works (does any work, or does any religious ritual to gain merit with God), his wage is reckoned not as a favor, but as what is due." When you work for something, then your employer does not give you a gift when he gives you your salary. This is what you're entitled to. It is not a gift. You have earned it.

In verse 5, he says, "But to the one who does not work, but simply believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness." We are to have enough sense not to approach God with any works whatsoever, or with any formal religious rituals of any kind. God said to Abraham, "If you believe in My promise to send the Messiah, and you trust in that Messiah to get you into heaven, I will give you My righteousness." And Abraham believed, and the Bible says that immediately he became absolutely righteous in God's sight. He wasn't righteous in his practice, as we well know. But as far as his destiny was determined, he was righteous. As far as his destiny was concerned, Abraham now had God's absolute righteousness.

**Born Again**

The New Testament describes that as being born-again into the family of God. The reason that Jesus used that analogy was to make it clear that you cannot reverse a birth. You can't be going to heaven today, and going to hell tomorrow. You must either be in or out. There are no two ways about it.

He goes on in this passage, and verse 6 says, "Just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons (He imputes) righteousness apart from works. (David said,) 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, and whose sins have been covered.'" Covered by whom? By David's human efforts? David was terrible. David was a murderer. He was an adulterer. He was all kinds of things. But he's in heaven, not because he covered himself, but because God took care of all that sin for him. David says, "Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account. How true!

Then he goes on in verse 9, and he stresses that all of this was the result of God's work and human work.

So, Abraham understood that no one can be saved and go to heaven on the basis of his own good works, or any kind of religious rituals. That was the mistake that the Jews made. The Jews thought that because of their religious rituals, they were going to gain favor with God. They still think that today. That's why the Jews who do not trust in Christ can never go to heaven. No Jew goes to heaven. Millions of Jews go lock-step into hell, because Jesus made it very clear in John 14:6, when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes unto the Father, but by Me." So, apart from Jesus Christ, there is no hope.

Paul goes on in Romans 4:9-12, and stresses this grace basis: "Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, 'Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.'" Paul says, "Now, I know that Abraham performed the religious ritual of circumcision. He was supposed to do that. That was proper. Then he says, "How then was absolute righteousness reckoned to him? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised?" Was Abraham saved before he was circumcised, or after? He says, "Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised."

"And he received the sign of circumcision ( which is a sign of removal of the domination of the flesh – the old sin nature), a seal of the righteousness of faith, which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe, without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them." This passage stresses for us that salvation did not come to Abraham because of his religious rituals. What happened was that Abraham believed God. So, while he was still uncircumcised, he was completely saved.

**Salvation is a Free Gift from God**

The only way then that a person can secure salvation, as God made clear to Abraham, is restated for us by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace (and 'grace' means 'gift') you have been saved through faith." This is not just believing something, but faith, confidence, and trusting in Jesus Christ. By a gift from God, you have been saved through your confidence in Christ to cover your sin. And that salvation is: "Not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not as the result of works, that no one should boast." So, nothing could be clearer than the fact that we go to heaven on the basis of something that God has done for us, not on the basis of something that we have done.

However, there's another element that's important to remember. Not only do we go to heaven only on the basis of what God has done through Christ in covering our sin, but we go there because we do not contaminate the grace basis. Did you notice what Ephesians 2:8-9 says? God says, "I can save you if you take it as a gift. If you don't take it as a gift, I can't do anything for you. If you insist on working for it, then I have to pay you, and I can't pay you with salvation, because nothing that you can do in the way of works will cover your sins. This is very important to understand.

In this passage dealing with Abraham, in Romans 4:4-5, this is very clearly stressed, as we pointed out to you: "The one who works: his wage is not reckoned as a gift, but to the one who does not work, but believes in Christ, He justifies the ungodly – his faith is reckoned to him as righteousness.

**You can't Mix Faith and Works for Salvation**

That is nailed down even more securely in Romans 11:6 – the absolute mutual exclusion of grace and works. You can't mix them partway: "But if it is (that is, salvation is by grace), it is no longer on the basis of works. Otherwise, grace is no longer grace." It's amazing how people miss that simple little principle here in Romans 11:6. God says, "I'll save you if I give it to you as a gift. But if you throw in a work, then there is no grace." *Grace must be uncontaminated.* That's a sobering thought, because many people today think that they can help their salvation by deserving it, but nobody ever deserves salvation, no matter how good you are. However, because they think they must help secure salvation by deserving it through their conduct and their works and their rituals, the door of heaven is actually slammed shut upon them.

I found it difficult to understand why Jesus, on one occasion, speaking about the way to salvation as being through a small gate and a narrow way, and then He said, "Few there be that find it." That's a chilling statement, because most of the people who have lived since Adam's time have been religious people. And what Jesus is saying is that *most of humanity will be in hell*. Then He even nailed it down further, and said, "Few there be that find it." Only a few people, since Adam's time to our day, to the return of Christ, will ever be in heaven. Why? In part, because of this simple little principle – that they don't understand what Abraham understood: "I must be saved as a result of God doing it all, and I have nothing else to do with it but accept it. If I try to prove myself worthy, or to keep myself saved by behaving myself, then God will send me into the lake of fire."

Abraham understood that no one could ever be good enough to deserve salvation, and thus to go to heaven. It has to come as an undeserved gift from God. The gift of salvation is simply given to the person who is lost, who trusts in Christ, apart from his human works, and accepts the gift of God of eternal life.

In Romans 6:23, Paul ties it up when he says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." How could you contrast it better than that? The wages for your personal sin is eternal death. Who's going to pay for it? You have one of two options: either you will pay for that in the lake of fire for all eternity; or, you will say, "I'm glad Christ paid for that, and covered all my past, present, and future sins." The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I must stress to you that this gift comes to us immediately. There are some people who have the mistaken notion that they are on the road to salvation, and that they are making their progress. Sometimes you may hear somebody pray, and they close their prayer and say, "And O God, save us in the end. What they're implying is that: "I'm on a progress (I'm on a road), and I'm not there yet, but I sure hope that I'm going to get there." Any time I hear somebody say that, I know that person is, in all likelihood, headed for the lake of fire.

I have had the occasion of asking somebody, "Are you going to heaven?" And they say, "Well, I hope so." Immediately, I know that that person is not going to heaven. How do I know that? Because I know that they are, in their minds, saying, "I don't know if I deserve it. I don't know if I've proven myself." That is like the Mormons who like to say, "Have I demonstrated the fact that I am worthy of eternal life?" God says, "It's not whether you are worthy, but whether Christ is worthy. He indeed is. And He's not a dead Savior. He's a living Savior. If He were dead, we'd be hopeless. He's alive, which proves that God has accepted the sacrifice for our sins, and He raised them back to life. That's what Jesus said: "If you see Me walking alive, you're going to know that the Father has accepted My covering for your sin."

So, what has happened? Abraham understood what Paul summarizes for us in 2 Corinthians 5:21: "And He (God the Father) made Him (God the Son), who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf." Our sins were laid upon Him while He hung on that cross. For what reason? "That we (lost sinners) might become the absolute righteousness of God in Him." Now, isn't that a deal? We accept Christ as Savior, and trust in Him. God says, "I'll swap you your sin guilt for My righteousness. That makes it absolutely sure that you will go to heaven.

Now, have you got it straight? Salvation is an act of God, and if you accept it as a gift, you're in solid. If you contaminate it by coming in and saying, "Oh, I have to be water baptized," you're out. The minute you come to God and say, "I trust in Christ as Savior, and here's my water baptism, you're out.

I remember in the denomination that I grew up in, people were taught that if a baby was born, and that that child was in desperate condition (going to die), you run to that kitchen sink, and don't you dare let that baby die until you sprinkle him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (which isn't baptism to begin with). They taught that you must do that, or that child will not go to heaven. That is paganism. It is blasphemy. It is suggesting that a human ritual can remove your sin. Paul says, "If you do that, you'll spend eternity in the lake of fire, reconsidering, and wishing that you had learned the Bible a little better.

Some people say, "I must go to the Lord's Supper to be saved." I have some relatives who, every now and then, say, "Boy, I really haven't been to the Lord's Supper in a long time. I've got to go, and get right with God," thinking as if that ritual was going to do something for them. And those are the people I usually find who say to me, "I sure hope that I'm going to heaven." That tells me that you're not sure that you're worthy. Salvation is entirely the work of God, in which the lost sinner has no part except to accept the gift of eternal life in heaven. It is the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for the sins of the world that has been done once for all, and has been done absolutely perfectly.

It's amazing that Abraham understood all this. When God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, He said, "I've got to tell Abraham what I'm going to do because he is My child. He has believe Me about this issue of salvation, and I must treat him accordingly as a member of My family. And Abraham was no paragon of virtue, but he was certainly solidly in the family God, because he understood that salvation is an act of God in our behalf. It's a great gift.

So, in Romans 6:8-10, we read, "Now, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again." Do you understand that? The payment of Christ (the sacrifice) was complete the first time, once-for-all: "Death no longer is master over him, for the death that He died, He died to sin (for the issue of sin) once-for-all. But the life that He lives, He lives to God."

In Hebrews 7:27, we have the issue of the complete satisfaction of God's justice against us through Christ stated again: "Who does not daily (referring to Jesus Christ, as our High Priest, in contrast to the priests of the Old Testament, who does not need daily, like those high priests) to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because He did this once-for-all when He offered up Himself." Again, we have that same expression: once-for-all.

I hope you know that you're listening to the resounding voice of God as I read these words. This is not the opinion of men. This is the statement authoritatively of God. Hebrews 9:24-28: "For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands (some kind of an earthly temple), a mere copy of the true one (the true temple in heaven), but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Nor was it that He should offer Himself often, as the high priests enter the holy place year-by-year with the blood not His own." Those Old Testament priests could never cover sin with those animal rituals. They did it again and again: "Otherwise, he would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world, but now, once, at the consummation of the ages, He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes the judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin to those who eagerly await Him."

What this passage tells us is that Jesus Christ has done the covering of our sins once-for-all. He doesn't have to repeat His sacrifice. His sacrifice, as a matter of fact, must not be repeated or that would be an insult to Him. And when He comes back, it's not going to be to deal with the sin issue. It's only going to be to deal with our blessing of eternal life. Isn't that amazing? He will appear a second time for salvation, to give us the full benefits of salvation without reference to sin.

It's hard for people to understand that God is not mad at them. There's no issue between the slimiest scum ball sinner and God about his sin. Christ has covered that. There is only one thing between the scum ball and God – that he has the sense to say, "I can't help myself. I'll accept what Christ has done for me," and thereby he is covered.

God's dramatic promise of this kind of salvation to Abraham, and of nationhood, was to motivate Abraham to teach his descendants to obey God's moral law, and to understand the principle of eternal life? And that's an interesting connection. God says, "I'm going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, this hotbed of homosexuality. I'm going to wipe it off from the face of the earth. You won't even be able to find the grease spot that I leave. I'm going to tell Abraham beforehand, because he's got a nephew in that city, and I want him to know what's coming, because Abraham has believed Me. Now, I must treat Abraham as My own son. He's in My family, however unfaithful he is at times, and I have to discipline him when he disobeys, but he's My son, and he will always be My son. I've got to tell him what I'm going to do." The Bible is so clear that Abraham became that son by simply believing and trusting in the coming Christ.

In Genesis 18:19, God says, "For I have chosen him (Abraham) in order that he may command his children and his household after him, to keep the ways of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him." God said, "I want Abraham to teach his family to do what is right. I want him to understand, when I destroy Sodom, that this is how I, as a holy God, act toward sin. I want Abraham to know that he must teach his family how to go to heaven on the basis of trusting in a provision of God, apart from their efforts. And I want him to know what is coming when my moral laws are violated.

In the same way, God has taken you and me as Christians today, because we have indeed trusted in Christ, apart from the contamination of our own efforts of any kind of human doing. We who are in the family of God – God cannot ignore. When God is going to bring the boom down upon this world, as indeed very shortly He will, He says, "I must tell all of you who are in My family what is coming," just as he had to tell Abraham. So, He reveals to us His plans here in this great book of the Revelation. Knowing what is coming in the tribulation should warn the unsaved to turn to God.

The world tonight is headed for its final showdown with God before the Second Coming of Christ. John sees the future, and he sees a specific time in the future here, in Revelation 12. This is the church age. We are living right down at the very end. When Christ returns, what is described for us in the book of 2 Thessalonians: to take the believers out; for us to meet them in the air; and, for Him to take us back to heaven. At that point, the final seven years of Jewish history begins – the tribulation period. We are here at the midpoint. Satan has now been cast out of heaven, so he can no longer go there to accuse the believers. He is in a rage. He knows that he has this three-and-a-half year period left before Christ comes back with those of us believers who are in the church age, in order to face-off with the nations of the world at the great field of Armageddon.

I have been on that plane. I stood there and looked across this great valley, this great plains of Megiddo, where this battle is going to take place. As Napoleon said, this is one of the most splendid battlefields that the world has ever seen. Before the battle ensues, and mankind destroys itself, the Lord Jesus Christ returns, and with the word of His mouth, He destroys them. Then comes 1,000-year period of the reign of Christ on earth (the millennium) before eternity itself begins.

So, we're right down in the middle of this tribulation period, and Satan finds himself thrown out of heaven. He is now in a great rage. The humiliation is more than he can bear. And what does he do? He comes down to this earth, determined to set in motion the greatest holocaust of anti-Semitism the world has ever seen. Satan, moves his man, the antichrist, to go all out at this point to kill every Jew on the face of the earth.

So, we begin with Revelation 12:13, where we read, "And when the dragon (which is another word describing Satan – describing him in his reptilian ego) saw the he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time, times, and a-half time, away from the presence of the serpent."

When you read things in the book of the Revelation, at first they seem completely meaningless, until you have the key. The key is that it uses symbols that are used elsewhere in the Bible. When you bring those symbols over, and you understand the time patterns from the book of Daniel, things very readily fall together.

We're dealing with some kind of symbols here. This woman, which is Israel, is now under the gun of the antichrist's great rage. The woman Israel is given the wings of an eagle, which is symbolic of some kind of transportation which is supplied by God for these persecuted Jews to be able to escape. The suggestion of an eagle's wings implies rapidity and a great power. Eagles fly fast, and eagles have great power. And it was given to this woman in order that she should be able to fly to a wilderness area; that is, for immediate transport.

We've already seen that up in Revelation 12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nursed for 1,260 days. 1,260 days is the same as this time, times, and a-half time. We find in Daniel that the code for "time" (the word for "time) refers to one year. Times refers to two years, and a-half time is half of a year. This comes out to three-and-a-half prophetic years, and a prophetic year is 360 days. That comes out to exactly 1,260 days. So, it's talking about the same thing. This woman is going to flee to someplace where she will be protected for this period of time.

In Matthew 24:15-21, Jesus spoke about this period, and he told the Jews not to look back. He said, "When you see the antichrist set his own image up in your temple in Jerusalem (which will be rebuilt by this time) and you see him telling you to worship him as God, that is what Daniel calls 'the abomination that makes desolate.'" And Jesus said, "Get out of town. Don't go back to the house for your coat. If you're in a field, go as quickly as you can. It is these Jews that are fleeing. Now, they have some means of rapid transportation. 2 Thessalonians 2:4 speaks of this same condition.

What this refers to specifically are the Jews who live in the province of Judea in Israel. They are going to flee to a desert place. As we've already looked at this previously, I'm not going to go into detail. But as we pointed out before, in the south part of Israel, there's only one desert area, and it's across the Jordan River in the area of what is the country of southern Jordan today Jordan. There is the great stone city of Petra, from ancient times. It's a citadel. It's a sanctuary. This, in all likelihood, is probably where these Jews are going to flee, and where God will be taking care of them. Daniel 11:41 and Matthew 24:16 give you additional information on that.

God compares his delivery of the Exodus Jews from Pharaoh's grasp as transportation on eagle's wings. So, here's an Old Testament clue to what God means by eagle's wings. He means some kind of rapid, powerful transportation. I can't tell you what it is. It'll be divinely provided. It could be something supernatural. Yes, it could be helicopters. It could be something that is very practical that we have access to today.

In Exodus 19:4, God says, "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to Myself." When the Jews were finally fleeing out of their 400-year slavery in Egypt, and Pharaoh was pursuing them, were they carried out on actually eagle's wings flapping? No. We have a symbol such that God said, "I supernaturally carried you like an eagle carries its young on its back with its powerful wings to transport it."

In Ezekiel 29:3, interestingly enough, Pharaoh is called "the dragon." The dragon is the symbol of Satan. So, Pharaoh was the old Satan dragon, pursuing the Jews of the Exodus generation, and God said, "I took you on eagle's wings." Moses himself compared the care that God exercised upon the Jews of his day to that of an eagle covering her young with her wings.

Deuteronomy 32:9-11: "For the Lord's portion is His people (the Jews). Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance." God has given Himself the Jewish people as His own inheritance: "He found them in the desert land, and in the howling waste of a wilderness. He encircled them. He cared for them. He guarded them as the pupil of his eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young. He spread His wings and caught them, and carried them on his pinions."

Now, I've seen pictures taken of a mother eagle coming down on her nest, and doing this very thing – flapping over the nest. And the little eaglets get up on the mother and hang on, and then she goes over the cliff and out there with those powerful wings, transporting them elsewhere. That's a perfect picture. God says, "That's how I took care of you. Like a flood, Pharaoh was barreling down upon you, but like an eagle, I carried you up to safety.

Vitality from God in time of crisis is also compared to rising on eagle's wings. When you're facing some crises, and God gives you the vitality to carry through, it's like being caught up and carried on an eagle’s wing. Isaiah 40:31 says, "Yet those who wait for the Lord will gain new strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not become weary."

So, here are a few references in other parts of the Bible that tell us that when God speaks about eagles wings, He means a powerful system of transportation. What it is specifically, I can't spell out for you. Those who are alive at that time will know exactly what it is.

It says that this means of transport was given to this woman Israel (the Jews who were fleeing), in order that she might fly into the wilderness – into her *place* in the wilderness. This is probably the city of Petra. For what reason? So that she should be nourished. The word here means to feed the Jews who are hiding in this desert wilderness – God's provision for their survival during the final three-and-a-half years of the greatest anti-Semitic outburst on the face of the earth. God will be there doing this for the Jews.

This, of course, recalls God's care of the Exodus generation when they were in the wilderness, and they had no way to care for themselves while they were fleeing from Egypt. God came through and provided some nourishment for them to survive. In Deuteronomy 29:5, Moses says, "And I have led you 40 years in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandal has not worn out on your foot." Why? Because God has been there taking care of the people of God.

Nehemiah 9:21 says, "Indeed, 40 years You did provide for them in the wilderness, and they were not in want. Their clothes did not wear out nor did their feet swell." For 40 years God, God provided for them. Well, He's going to do it again here for three-and-a-half years.

This period of time, times, and a-half time is explained in Daniel 11:13. We've gone over that so we won't do that again, but it does refer to three-and-a-half years. Interestingly enough, James 5:17 says that this is the same period of time that God fed Elijah when he was hiding from Ahab and Jezebel – three-and-a-half years.

**Satan's Principles of Society**

John hears this voice from heaven describing this even, and he says that this woman Israel is going to be protected for this three-and-a-half years from the very presence (meaning from the very face-to-face) of what is called "the serpent." "The serpent" here again is the word, of course, that refers to Satan in his role as the tempter of mankind. Satan has organized all of the world to operate on three basic principles. Even some Christians get trapped in his net. Satan has organized our societies to operate on the principle of sensuality; of greed; and, of arrogant pride.

This is pointed out to us in 1 John 2:15. John says, "Do not love the world's system of Satan, nor the things of his world system. If anyone loves that world, the love of the Father is not in him." Some of you young people may be all captivated with lowlife types like Madonna, or The Simpsons, or the rock and roll stars – these vile creatures that are just floating beneath the surface. Can you imagine what is going to happen the day after the church is caught up in the rapture and removed from this earth? At that point in time, the United States will go into a tailspin. That's why we don't find any record of the United States in prophetic Scripture. We do find other nations, but not the U.S. Why?

I think that it is, in part, because there are millions of Christians in this country. They are the finest of the citizens. When they're suddenly taken out, who's left? Madonna; the Rolling Stones; and, the Simpsons types. What happens is that the Holy Spirit is taken out. The Holy Spirit is taken out with us. That means that He is no longer here as Paul says in 2 Thessalonians, "Restraining evil." Then all hell breaks loose on this earth. It'll be just like before the flood in Noah's day, when violence was everywhere. There was no thought in Noah's days, the Bible says, that could come to man, no matter how low; how despicable; or, how vile it was, that he wasn't free to indulge it. That's the kind of a world this is going to be. It'll be a world that will be able to go full-steam to do what God says now is the way Satan has organized the world, but the Holy Spirit holds it back.

Therefore, in 1 John 2:16, we are alerted to what this world is like. The Holy Spirit says, "For all that is in the world (this world that Satan has organized): the lusts of the flesh (sensuality); the loss of the eyes (greed); and, the boastful pride of life is not from the Father, but it is from the world." Do not think that because you are a Christian that you are immune from immoral sensuality. You're not. You may be a child of God going to heaven, but you're not immune from that. Nor are you immune from greed. The Bible says, "The love of money is the source of all evil," and you're not immune from greed. It is very easy for a Christian to devote his life to getting all he can, and canning all he gets, because he thinks that this is the sum of his life. And you're not immune from that arrogant pride that makes you think that you are something when you are nothing.

The position that we Christians need to take is what the apostle Paul says, and he was a great man. Paul said, "I am what I am by the grace of God. If I amount to anything; if there's any significance to my life; or, if I've accomplished anything, it is the grace of God that has enabled me to do that.

Well, the serpent has organized life on that basis, and he is going to hate anybody that resists that lifestyle. And these Jews are a thorn in his side. They have brought into being Jesus Christ, the Messiah Savior, promised to Abraham, and Genesis 3:15 said that when that Savior comes, it's going to put a wound (a mortal blow) to Satan, and indeed on the cross, Christ to that. Satan is a defeated wimp who is snarling and slashing and trying to get all the vengeance he can.

God is going to protect these Jews, the survivors of this great holocaust of anti-Semitism, so that Satan will not be able to get to them, because they'll flee to the place of refuge that God has prepared for them, and He will put a canopy of protection over them. This will become the new frame of reference for the mercy of God among the Jewish people. Today when the Jews think about God's treatment of them, and to illustrate (to have a frame of reference for) God's mercy for them, they refer to what God did when Pharaoh was coming after them, and they suddenly found themselves going toward that Red Sea (that army – really the Sea of Reeds). They found mountains on the right; mountains on the left; this deep water area in front of them; and, Pharaoh's army coming down behind them. They were in a panic, and Moses said, "Just relax, and watch the hand of God in your behalf this day." Well, boy, that was the greatest hand.

One of the Old Testament writers says, "God snuffed out of His nostrils, and the waters parted. They stood up like walls, and the ground was dry to their feet." And they walked through this long distance. Can you imagine how long it would take a million-and-a-half people to walk through an extensive distance of several miles? Well, God held the Pharaoh's army back all that night. The cloud was light on the side of the people of Israel, and dark on the side of the Egyptians. The Egyptians got into a turmoil back there. They got the roads clogged. Their chariots were running into each other. Things were in turmoil. Finally, when the Israelites were all through, then God turned the light on, and the army of Pharaoh saw what the Jews had done, and they charged into that sea with the wall of water on each side of them. Then God made the ground wet. Where it had been dry to the feet of the Jews, it was now wet. And it says, "The chariot wheels sank down and bogged down. The chariots piled up. I can tell you that there is nothing in a military operation that is more horrifying than to find vehicles that are clogged on the road, and jammed up so that you cannot have forward motion. That is the kiss of death.

You may have been seeing the pictures north of Kuwait, where, as the Iraqis fled, they ran into that same thing. They didn't control their channels of direction. They didn't control their traffic. And they all bogged up and piled up on one another so that they were sitting ducks when the American planes came by and dropped their cluster bombs on them. Their vehicles sit there, burned out, as a testimony to their foolishness.

Well, the Jews always look back and say, "Talk about God taking care of us! That's a great example." But Jeremiah says that after the tribulation, you're not going to look back to the time that you were in Egypt anymore. Jeremiah 16:14-15 says that they will have a new frame of reference, when they want to illustrate the mercy and the grace of God to you: "'Therefore, behold, old days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when it will no longer be said, 'As the Lord lives, who brought up the sons of Israel out of the land of Egypt.''" That's no longer going to be the frame-of-reference comparison. Instead, they'll say, "As the Lord lives who brought up the sons of Israel from the land of the North, and from all the countries where he had banished them, for I will restore them to their own land which I gave to their fathers." The frame of reference will be: "In the tribulation period, I preserved them from the hand of the antichrist who wanted to kill every one of them," and at the end of the tribulation, the antichrist is dead, and God gathers the Jewish people from all over the world, because He protected and preserved them at the hand of this horrible creature.

Well, when this happens, the Word of God says that the antichrist now really gets mad. They have been protected right there under his very nose. At this point in time, he has set himself up with his headquarters in Jerusalem. He's no longer in Western Europe. Jerusalem is his headquarters. His image is in the Jews' temple as God. And these Jews flee from Judea. They head south. They go across the River Jordan, and they head into southern Jordan. There they enter Petra, and there they're safe. Others flee elsewhere.

Also, gentile Christians will assist them. Remember that in Matthew 24:25, Jesus says, "Those of you who are sheep demonstrated that you were My people because you took care of the Jews." Gentile Christians are going to hide them; bring them in; and, feed them. They hide them in various places so that they cannot be killed all over the world. There will be gentiles hiding Jews just as they did in Hitler's Germany during World War II. And the result is going to be that the antichrist is going to be frustrated in his pursuit of the Jews out of Judea, and Satan is really going to be hopping mad that things have not panned out right, because even Satan cannot go to Petra to do anything to those Jews.

So, what does he do? He now goes on to maximum attack, and we shall look at that next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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