

Revelation 12

Many people avoid Revelation because they see it as very confusing, full of allegory and imagery but in actual fact as Genesis is one bookend setting the stage for the bible and the beginning of mankind, Revelation is the opposite bookend concluding man's existence on earth and the plan God has for eternity.

Chapter 12 is specifically a good place to start in this prophetic book, as it gives you an overview of the biblical story in a very compact way. It will also make you do some searching to find out what things mean, when God put pictures or symbols in the bible He also put in their meaning, not necessarily in the next sentence, but always somewhere. It is God's will that you understand what He's saying.

Let's look at Revelation 12 verse by verse.

1 And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

2 She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

I've put verse 1 and 2 together as they flow quite seamlessly together in describing the woman and her condition and I think we need to see this develop as we move through both verses.

The first thing we are introduced to is the woman, and it is without doubt referring to Israel as we will see. Moving to the next verse seems to make the description more complex so we need to go looking elsewhere in scripture for proof as to who the woman is. The only place we find 12 stars, the sun and moon is in the story of Joseph in Genesis 37:9-10

9 Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?"

This is talking about the nation Israel which has its foundations in Jacob and his 12 sons, who are the 12 tribes. But this takes on a deeper meaning when we realise what is happening, which is the fulfilment of a prophecy which was given in Genesis 3:15.

15. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

When God was dealing with the serpent in the garden of Eden He says that in the future, through mankind, will come a seed that will 'bruise his head' and it will be the seed of the woman, Israel.

WORDS USED -

'Enmity' means hostility and hatred.

'Bruise' used here means to overwhelm, break or crush.

'Head' is a masculine word which relatively or figuratively denotes the top rank, the head, the ruler.

'Heel' which means the lower rear part as in a heel, footprint, hinder part, hoof, rear of a troop or footstep.

When these two seeds meet at some point in the future (from the vantage point of Eden), the seed of the woman will overpower the seed of the serpent, he will strike at the leader and overcome him, while the seed of the serpent will merely overcome the heel or the foot soldiers as it were.

Going back to the seeds, you may be right in thinking biologically there can't be two seeds if one is a woman, but if we understand the virgin birth we see that there was no human man involved in the birth of Jesus, he was conceived by the Holy Spirit so the seed was in the woman, this is very important. This also

proves that the woman can't be the church as some may think, as the church is clearly portrayed as the virgin bride in 2 Corinthians 11:2

2 For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

Ephesians 5:25–27 also explains the concept of the body or church being the bride and Christ the groom.

*25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,
26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,
27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such.*

We can see the prophecy right from Eden regarding Jesus. Israel is the line from Adam that will carry the seed and from Israel will come the Messiah, the Christ, this is why all through history Israel has been at the brunt of Satan's attacks and his attempts to destroy Israel. This may be the birth pains and the agony in waiting for Him to be born.

3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems.

We are now introduced to a second wonder in heaven which is the appearance of a Great Red (*the colour of fire*) dragon (*a great serpent or dragon*), but we don't have to look too far for the identity of the dragon. In verse 9 we are left with no question as to who it is; Satan the Devil, the deceiver of the whole world. Please take note, this is happening *in heaven*, many think Satan was cast to the earth after or before the fall of man, but this isn't true, that has yet to come.

The description of the dragon is very strange and again we have to look elsewhere for clarity and see that this isn't a physical description of Satan but a prophetic representation of his rise to power and how he will rule over the earth in the last days. In Revelation 17:8-14 we get another description of a beast with multiple heads along with an explanation.

8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

9 This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; 10 they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he does come he must remain only a little while.

11 As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction.

12 And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received royal power, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast.

13 These are of one mind, and they hand over their power and authority to the beast.

14 They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."

In Daniel 7:7-8 and 7:24 we have other descriptions of beasts and they can make up a study all of their own, but we need to realise that together the various beasts and personages coming to power in this time make up the Satanic trinity, the Devil, the Antichrist or false prophet and the Beast. We can glean a lot from the descriptions and revelations about what is going to happen during the great tribulation.

4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

This verse is describing a past event which is very important to note. At some point prior to the birth of Jesus, Satan was in heaven and 'enlisted' a third of the angels of heaven for his own plans to destroy the man, Jesus, the future of mankind, the saviour of the human race. He knew what was going on and how important Jesus was for mankind.

A note: *Satan is not against Jesus as God, he wanted to be like God, equal to God. His fight is with mankind who he thinks took his place as God's favorite. Satan was created perfect and beautiful and*

had/has great power but messed up, pride entered his heart and he thought he could be like God. God created Adam, in HIS own image, perfect, eternal, something which probably made Satan really jealous, and worried that 'the Adam' (mankind) was going to replace him and the angels in heaven. So don't think Satan was trying to kill Jesus = God, it was Jesus = man, who was going to be the perfect sacrifice and return mankind to its original state.

To understand this verse better don't turn to different version but go to the original, the problem with versions like the 'Message' paraphrases God's words so losing their intended meaning. In the Message it says - *With one flick of its tail it knocked a third of the Stars from the sky and dumped them on earth.* For me this puts far too much power in the hands of Satan and shows him stealing from God. This is absurd, he doesn't have that much power and couldn't do anything without God's agreement, which leads us to the original interpretation which says;

4. And his tail dragged, like a guard before the judge who is taking someone to prison or to punishment, a third of all the angels of heaven and threw them without caring where they fell, to the earth.

This puts a totally different light on why the angels followed him from the Messages version of events. It could show that the angels believed Satan over God, they chose their master and God let them go to their own fate, Satan was allowed to have them. Either way they were under his control and he wasn't too bothered about how he treated them.

Satan didn't do the job himself but I believe used Herod to try to bring about the death of Jesus, but ended up killing an unknown number of boys under the age of two (*possibly no more than a few dozen given the population of Bethlehem but still a horrendous act*). Matthew 2:16

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.

The fact that it says Satan 'stood before the woman' shows that Satan was waiting and watching Israel and no doubt trying his best to destroy her and stop the prophesied birth of Christ. It wasn't a case of turning up on the night, this would have been a concerted effort to derail the blood line going right back to Adam and Eve, and when we read the OT we see just that.

5 She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

Jesus is born and from that many prophecies are fulfilled about His birth and destiny, such as Matthew 1:23, Revelation 12:5, Isaiah 12:4, Psalm 2:9

23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

5 She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

4 but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

9. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

However, we are told that the child, Jesus, was caught up to God where He had a throne waiting. This verse like many others can cover a long period of time so we can't assume that the 'child' was caught up after birth and we know from scripture this isn't true. The life of Jesus spanned 33 years but this isn't the focus of Revelation 12, we have the gospels for that period, so we move on.

Now here comes the division in what this verse really means. One thought is that this refers to the rapture of the church, the other is that it refers to the cross and His ascension. I lean towards the latter, that this verse refers to the death and resurrection of Jesus and his ascension to heaven, Mark 16:19

19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

If you keep to the focus of Revelation 12 then it is has to be talking about Jesus being called up, not the church or the body of Christ, which leads me to conclude this is about the resurrection and ascension of Jesus himself. The whole purpose of Jesus as the saviour has been completed, hence the words that Jesus uttered in John 19:30, "it is finished".

30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

I believe this because from here we turn back to the woman, Israel. Jesus is safe, God's plan has been accomplished, and now the emphasis is on God's chosen people. They now need protecting.

Introductory gap

Before moving to the next verse you need to understand that as with many scriptures, and even more so when you read Revelation, that verses don't just follow on in time. It's almost like watching the program in a series where you get 'the story so far...' then it goes into the next chapter or episode. Remember verse numbers were never there in the original, so you could view verses 1 to 5 as the introduction. During these first 5 verses we are introduced to the protagonist and antagonist, the overview of who the main characters are, ending with a cliffhanger of a view of God's plan coming to fruition from the foundation of the earth.

The gap between verse 5 and 6 relates to the 2000 year life of the church or ecclesia, a called-out people who are described as a mystery in the bible. But when the church is raptured, then God returns to the Jews to pick up where he left off. For me this proves that the rapture will happen prior to the midpoint or beginning of the Great Tribulation.

A return to the story of Israel

6 and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

So where in time are we, when have we returned to Israel?

Again we must turn to other scriptures to see we have returned to the end times, following the rapture when the church has been called home. Whether you believe in dispensations or not God has moved from Israel to the church and now back to Israel, His promise to them is now going to be fulfilled.

Where do we see the 1260 days or 42 months in the bible? We see it when referring to the great tribulation.

Daniel 7:25. Here a time is a year, times two years and half a time half a year making 3.5 years.

25 He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

Daniel 9:27. In this verse a week is 7 years so half a week is 3.5 years.

27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

Revelation 13:5. This verse states 42 months which is 3.5 years.

5 And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.

All these verses refer to the period of tribulation and some specifically to the 'Great Tribulation'. Many think the tribulation will last for 7 years but scripture refers to the Great Tribulation as only lasting for the later half of the 7 year period. It is during this later half of the 7 years that Israel will be protected from the troubles which will befall the earth. When Satan, with the help of the antichrist and beast will go after God's chosen to try to destroy them from the face of the earth.

Daniel 9:27 speaks of a peace in the middle east where it appears Israel has been accepted in the world, but then mid-way through the Antichrist turns on Israel and the chosen and the great Tribulation begins and Satan's last attempt to destroy mankind.

At this time there is a place prepared for Israel so they can be protected from Satan. It is interesting to note the word prepared is the same used in John 14:2-3

2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Israel will be protected and Jesus will return for her.

7 Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,

This verse starts the story of Satan's final and permanent expulsion from heaven. Michael, an archangel, the defender of Israel is at war with Satan. As we read earlier, Satan has a third of the angels of heaven with him. Michael has his own angels. Daniel 10:21 and 12:1 tells us about this time in Revelation and who he is, the prince of the nation of Israel, her protector.

21. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and [there is] none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.

1. And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation [even] to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

Given that the verses which follow the war being described is a future event, after the birth of Jesus, possibly at the midpoint of the 7 years of trouble when the antichrist sits on his man-made global throne and declares himself as god; I believe it is at this point that Satan tries to stop Michael so Israel will be left defenceless from heavenly help, allowing Satan to claim the earth and all its inhabitants as his own. Matthew 24:15-16:

15 So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand

16 then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

8 but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Verse 8 clearly tells us that Michael wins, how could he not with God on his side, Michael cannot do anything without God's backing; we know this from Jude 1:8,9. Pitted against each other in their own strength, I'm sure Satan would have won. Michael called on the name of the Lord and 'His' authority.

8 Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil about the body of Moses; durst not bring against him a railing accusation; but said, the Lord rebuke thee

In verse 9 we see the final expulsion of Satan and his angels from heaven entirely, to the point where it says in verse 8 'they didn't have their place in heaven anymore'. We know originally Satan was removed from office but still had access to heaven, as did his angels, but now there wasn't a place for them. The context is like saying you don't have a place at the table or you've lost your room in this house. Your space is no longer yours and you can't occupy it any more. And with Satan they were all thrown down or cast out as some versions say. Where to? To the earth.

Ezekiel 28: 11-19 gives an account of the life of Lucifer (Satan) and his expulsion and eventual destruction, also in Isaiah 14, specifically verse 12.

12. "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn. How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!

Something we need to understand here is that Satan was now outside the heavenly realm, the apparent ease to which he had been able to traverse from the terrestrial to the spiritual realms appears to have gone, he was marooned on earth and in the realm of creation. God had had enough and threw him down to his own domain where Satan was king, as though to say go back to your own Kingdom where they call you god because soon they will look on you with derision and hate for all you did to them. No wonder Satan was angry.

10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

This freedom from Satan in heaven is declared loudly, it was a release and a sign of the coming age, a pivotal point in heavenly history. The end was in sight, the salvation of those whom he tormented and tried to destroy was about to be fulfilled and first heaven was free of his accusations and manipulations. Here we see also the confirmation that up until then he had had full access to the throne of God, and used it to put those that loved God down and to try to turn God against them.

11 And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

The question here is who are 'they' and I think it is all those who have their names written in the book of life, all those who God called to salvation. Revelation 20:15.

15. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

How did they conquer Satan and become exempt from the same fate as him, not only *by the blood of the Lamb*. Ephesians 1:7 and Romans 5:9 talks of this blood which has saved.

7. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace"

9. "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. "

but also by 'the word of their testimony', they spoke evidence of what Jesus had done, they didn't stay silent, and then because they didn't put their own life before this testimony and the blood of Jesus. Matthew 10:32-33.

32. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,

33. but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Many people say all you have to do is believe and you will be saved, and scriptures taken on their own back this up, but believing is a doing word, in believing I believe, not through works but through a maturity which comes from exercising your faith.

Finally we have the martyrs, those who died for their faith, who it says 'loved not their own lives even unto death'. There have been many martyrs throughout history who have died for the name of Jesus, who have put the gospel above their own lives. Like Jesus they have paid the ultimate price and no doubt will be rewarded for their loss and faithfulness. Matthew 16:25

25. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

During the Tribulation there will be people who come to the realisation of who Jesus and the antichrist are, there will also be people who thought they were Christians and were left behind after the rapture. The only way they can gain salvation is not to take the mark of the beast and be martyred, or survive to the coming of Jesus, unfortunately Grace won't be an option any more. As they rejected Christ's free gift and His sacrificial death, they now have to die for themselves.

What happens to them during this time, Revelation 20:4 which is describing a time after the tribulation when Satan is thrown into the bottomless pit.

4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

It is not enough to believe, which may sound very controversial, you have to live what you believe, put into practice the faith God gave you not hide it away and waste it. Remember the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. Living a Christian life will put you in direct opposition to the god of this world and the people of this world, if you align with them in silence then you are no better than them in your heart, you deny God. Luke 11:23

23. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

12 Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

So this is a time of rejoicing in heaven, they are free of him, but here we have the 'woe' to the inhabitants of the earth, woe being an expression of grief because the Devil has been kicked a death blow and he means to take as many with him as he can, starting with God's children. Satan isn't stupid, he can read the bible and probably understands it better than us and so knows his time is running out.

13 And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.

Satan as the dragon again, that old serpent, who perceives and has knowledge of his permanent expulsion from heaven also knows without a doubt what this means for him and his angels. He is intensifying his attack on humanity in the guise of a great serpent or beast again, and as in Genesis will use mankind against itself, this time to hunt the woman Israel.

If you turn to Revelation 13 you will read about the beast and the antichrist and how they are used and controlled by Satan himself, and as with Judas will make an appearance himself to try to destroy what he hates the most. John 13:27

27. Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."

Satan persecutes or pursues Israel with a concentrated effort, this verse makes no doubt it is the same woman from verse 3 and 5.

14 But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

Unfortunately for Satan, God is protecting His chosen people and here we see a strange sentence. If we remember back to verse 6, the description of the time Israel is protected is 1260 days, whereas here it is a time, and times and half a time. This is the same period of time but said in a different way. Time being a year, times being the dual of a year, so two, and half a time being half a year, making 3.5 years or 1,260 days.

A Note: The astute of you will say 3.5 years is actually 1,277.5 days not 1,260 and if you study Daniel seventieth week you will get some more figures for a period of time at the end as well as 3.5 years (Rev 12:14), 42 months (Rev 13:5) you also have 1,290 days and the 1,335 days in Daniel 12:11-12. These times are specific and have been examined by many people but for the purpose of this study we need to stick within this chapter. What we have to do is realise they are very specific and so mean something which I believe will be apparent at some time, even though it may seem contradictory to us now. Matthew 24:22 may hold the key.

God takes his people into the wilderness where they will be 'nourished', which means to nurture, feed, support and bring up. God will look after His people and protect them. This is at the onset of the time of the Great tribulation, which many think is 7 years but we know from scripture the length of the GREAT Tribulation to only be 3.5 years. This will happen mid-way through a 7 year period when the antichrist will be ruling, Daniel 9:27 and Revelation 11:1-2, We get another view of this time from Matthew 24:15-22 which relates to the abomination of desolation, the time when the antichrist breaks the peace and sits on the throne declaring himself as god, and now Satan goes after Israel then the world.

27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

*1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there,
2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.*

It says that Israel will be given two wings of a great eagle, which clearly represents their swift and powerful flight from the presence of Satan. The eagle can be interchanged with a griffon or vulture but I think the emphasis is on the greatness of the wings. I know some have attributed the eagle with America helping Israel flee, but I can't see in scripture anywhere where it says one nation will stand with Israel against the prevailing powers of the day, given Satan will be in control of the peoples of the world, or at least those who have taken the mark (Rev 14:9-12). This is more than likely a figurative way to describe the nature of their flight to the wilderness or desert.

15 The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood.

16 But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.

Satan goes after Israel. These two verses are very symbolic and have to be taken together to understand the symbolism and hopefully its meaning. I don't think we can assume that Satan, described as the serpent in this verse actually spews out water from his mouth, enough to cause a flood big enough to wash away a nation. The rest of Revelation 12 has symbols so this verse wouldn't be any different.

If we look elsewhere in scripture we find similar symbols to these and in the same context; 'waters' or 'seas' referring to many people, this is a common theme in the bible and the book of Revelation. Rev 13:1, Jer 46:8, Jer 47:2 and Isaiah 59:19

1. And I saw a beast rising out of the sea

8. Egypt rises like the Nile, like rivers whose waters surge. He said, 'I will rise, I will cover the earth, I will destroy cities and their inhabitants.'

2. *“Thus says the Lord: Behold, waters are rising out of the north, and shall become an overflowing torrent; they shall overflow the land and all that fills it, the city and those who dwell in it. Men shall cry out, and every inhabitant of the land shall wail.*

19. *So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.*

I think we can safely say the earth doesn't have a mouth to swallow the water or people, but would have a crack or opening to destroy or stop the people Satan sent against Israel. The word mouth (*stoma*) means what we know it to mean but also an opening in the earth. God could cause an earthquake to destroy Satan's armies. Much like in Exodus 14 when Moses led Israel across the Red sea when God parted the waves then made them come crashing down on the armies of Egypt. God protects His people, sometimes in miraculous and spectacular ways.

17 Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.

Satan can't destroy Israel, he has just been defeated and suffered a great loss so his attention now turns to those who, it says, are Israel's offspring, those that keep the commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. His intentions is to make war with them, that is anyone who has refused the mark of the beast, who has decided to choose God over him.

We are well and truly in the last 3.5 years of the Great Tribulation, a time which the world has never seen where the evil of mankind will reach new heights and God's wrath will be poured out on the earth.