

Revelation 12: The Woman, the Dragon, and Anti-Semitism

Revelation 12:1–13 | Sunday, March 12 | Revelation Series

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OVERVIEW

Before he reads a verse, Hal spends half the message on where anti-semitism came from. God is literal about what he says in prophecy; once the covenants made to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob began to be read allegorically instead, the Church concluded that it had become the new Israel — what Hal calls replacement theology — and the Israelites were reckoned impudent for still claiming to be a distinct people. He traces the consequence in three sentences that he says produced one another: you have no right to live among us as Jews; you have no right to live among us; you have no right to live. Only then does he read Revelation 12, from the woman clothed with the sun down to the dragon turning on her, taking the Greek as he goes — semeion, a sign with the finger of God in it, and allos, another of the same kind. Genesis 37 supplies the woman, because Jacob interprets his son's dream himself. And the chapter's own last line supplies the answer: the dragon persecutes the woman because she gave birth to the male child.

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 12:1–2 — A great sign in heaven: the woman clothed with the sun, in labor to give birth

Revelation 12:3–4 — Another sign: the great red dragon, seven heads, ten horns, seven diadems

Revelation 12:5–6 — The male child caught up to God; the woman fed in the wilderness

Revelation 12:9 — The great dragon thrown down — the serpent of old, the devil and Satan

Revelation 12:11 — They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony

Revelation 12:12–13 — Woe to the earth; the dragon persecutes the woman because she gave birth

Genesis 37 — Joseph's dream — the sun, the moon and eleven stars, interpreted by his father

KEY TERMS

Semeion — the Greek for a sign — a miracle whose point is to show that the finger of God is in it

Teras — a miracle given to show the power of God

Allos — another of the same kind

Heteros — another of a different kind

The allegorical method — interpreting Scripture, and prophecy especially, as other than face value

Replacement theology — the teaching that the covenants given to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were forfeited and passed to the Church as the new Israel

The third dispersion — the scattering out of which Israel returned to become a nation again, never to be destroyed as a nation

Stahlhelm — steel helmet — the german officers' union whose head was the father of Hal's friend

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Answer from the message itself. Every answer is in the teaching.

1. How literal does Hal say God is about what he says in prophecy?

2. What did Ezekiel predict about the return from the third dispersion?

3. What date does Hal call the beginning of the end?

4. Where does Hal say the allegorical method began, and who systematized it?

5. What is replacement theology?

6. Why does Hal say anti-semitism is not like other racial or ethnic hatred?

7. What three anti-Jewish policies does Hal name, and how are they related?

8. How does Hal put the three sentences that produced one another?

9. What does Hal admire in Martin Luther, and where does he say Luther still went wrong?

10. Is Hal blaming one denomination for this?

11. What do the sun, the moon and the eleven stars stand for, and who supplies the interpretation?

12. What single line in the chapter gives Hal the mystery's answer?

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Hal traces a straight line from a method of reading the Bible to a policy of extermination. Do you find the line convincing?

2. Replacement theology says the Church inherited what was promised to Israel. Where have you met that idea, even without the name attached?

3. Hal calls this hatred supernatural rather than merely racial. If that is true, what follows?

4. He admires Martin Luther enormously and still says he was wrong here. How do you hold both about someone you have learned from?

5. "Do not be infected with this virus." What would immunity look like in ordinary conversation?

6. Hal says he came to love the Jewish people simply by reading the Bible on his own as a tugboat captain, with no teacher. What has your own unguided reading taught you that nobody had to teach you?

MEMORY VERSE

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony. And they did not love their life, even when faced with death."

— Revelation 12:11, as Hal reads it in this message