

# **God's Master Plan In Prophecy**

## **Lesson 3 – The Woman Clothed with the Sun**

*Key Scriptures: Revelation 12:1-17; Matthew 24:29-31*

### **Introduction**

We have already discussed how that the book of Revelation is not in perfect chronological order but is in fact a collection of visions and stories that tell over and over again the same events from a slightly different perspective. Once you realize this, you will find that often some of the details of the stories and visions overlap and help support each other. For the remainder of this study, we will take prophetic visions recorded in the Bible – mainly from Daniel and John in the book of Revelation – and search for clues that refer to the events and visions that we have already studied. When and if we find such correlations, everything will begin to piece together.

### **The Vision of the Woman Clothed with the Sun**

The 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Revelation contains a vision that John received while on the isle of Patmos. We will discover that the vision is chronological order with itself and turns out to be an extremely broad, panoramic, historical view of history and how everything wraps up. Its perspective is that of the clash between the devil and God and His people. We will take the vision verse by verse:

**Rev 12:1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;**

As it is impossible for a human to be “clothed with the sun” and have “the moon under her feet” it is obvious from the start that what John saw in this vision is imagery that represents something else. Since this is not a literal lady, the first question that we must answer is “who or what does the lady represent? The clues given are that she was “clothed with the sun,” had “the moon under her feet,” and a “crown of twelve stars.” It would help if we could find another vision or story in another part of the Bible that used these same symbols and there is such a one: all the way back in the first book of the Bible, Genesis. These same symbols are found in the dreams that God gave to Joseph:

**Gen 37:9-10 Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." 10 He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?"**

In this dream, God predicted the future of Joseph's life. The symbolism in the story is easy to grasp and was readily given by Joseph's father, Jacob. The sun represented Jacob, himself, the man whose name was changed to Israel and from whom the nation of Israel would spring. The moon represented Joseph's mother, and the stars represented the sons of Jacob of which there were twelve. That the eleven stars would bow down to Joseph indicated that there would come a day where the eleven brothers would bow to a fellow star, Joseph, and submit themselves to him. The immediate fulfillment of this prophecy is found in the story of Joseph as recorded by the book of Genesis. When the brothers got jealous and faked his death and sold him into slavery, God worked it out so that Joseph was elevated to second-in-command of all of Egypt and eventually the brothers would come to Egypt looking for food and – not recognizing their long-lost brother – would come and bow themselves before him. God's prophecies always come true!<sup>i</sup>

Taking these symbols and inserting them into the vision recorded in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation gives us some clues as to the identity of the woman clothed with the sun. The sun, is Jacob who became Israel, and the fact that she is clothed with the sun and stands upon the moon, indicates that the woman finds her identity in Israel and his wives' offspring. The offspring, the twelve sons of Jacob/Israel that would later grow into the twelve tribes of Israel, are what is meant by the twelve stars in her crown. All clues, then, seem to indicate that this woman presented in this vision represents the nation of Israel. Let's read the rest of the chapter with that in mind and see if everything harmonizes and makes sense.

**Rev 12:2 and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.**

**Written by R. Jeremiah Sibley, all rights reserved.**

**This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> revision of what was previously known as the "Dispensation Prophecy Bible Study."**

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The woman conceived a child and progressed to the point of giving birth to that child. We gain further clues as to who this child was in the next few verses:

**Rev 12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.**

Here another figure is introduced, a great red dragon. The dragon had seven heads, ten horns, and a crown on each head.<sup>1</sup> We do not have to guess as to the identity of this dragon because verse 9 of this chapter tells us clearly that it is the one who is called “the devil and Satan.” Make a mental note of the description given of the devil here as having seven heads and ten horns and each head having a crown because we will come across the details again in a later study.

**Rev 12:4 And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.**

Let’s examine the many details given here one by one. First, the dragon’s “tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth.” This is a direct reference to Satan’s rebellion in heaven against the plan of God in the beginning. Several times in the Old Testament, the angels of heaven are referred to by the symbolism of “stars.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Satan is referred to as “the angel of light” and his fall from heaven was described as “lightening.”<sup>3</sup> From various parts of the scriptures, we can find hints and brief clues as to Satan’s rebellion.<sup>4</sup> He was created as an archangel or “chief angel” in the beginning. Satan or “Lucifer” is one of only three angels that are named in scripture. The other two are Gabriel and Michael both who are always found in a particular role: Gabriel is always found delivering a message and thus must be chief over the “messenger angels”<sup>5</sup> and Michael is always found fighting and must be chief over the “fighting angels.”<sup>6</sup>

From the various clues and hints of scripture, we can derive that Lucifer/Satan was the chief angel over the “worshipping angels” and yet pride was found in his heart and he wanted to be worshipped as God instead of worshipping God as he was created to do. Because of this pride, he was cast down from his place of power in heaven and flung to the earth. That his “tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth” seems to indicate that when he rebelled, he apparently took one third of the angels that were under his command with him. This means that the devil is a fallen angel who is in rebellion against God and the demons under his control are the fallen angels who were once under his command in heaven.<sup>ii</sup> It is important to grasp the fact that Satan is not in hell as so many people believe, nor is he in charge of hell, but roams the earth seeking those “who he can devour.”<sup>7</sup> At the end of time, he will be cast into the lake of fire but as of right now, he is free upon the earth.

When the woman in the vision of the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation began to give birth, the dragon positioned itself to try to be able to devour and destroy the child as soon as it was born.

**Rev 12:5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.**

It is here that the clues to the child become detailed to the point of revealing the identity of the child. The child was male, and a son was born to the woman. This male child was destined to rule all of the nations firmly and was eventually caught up to sit upon the very throne of God. Such a description can only apply to one man in history: Jesus Christ! He is the child that was born of woman who yet sits upon the very throne of God and who is King of Kings!

Now that we have discovered the identity of the figures used in this vision, let us make sure that we understand what has thus far been presented. The vision is a broad, historical panorama from the perspective of God’s dealing with His people and their enemy, the devil, who has tried to thwart God’s plan in all manner of ways. The woman represents Israel formed from the twelve sons of Jacob. The dragon represents Satan and, before the birth of the child from the woman, he rebelled and drew a third of the angels with him. Israel gave birth to a male child who would be destined to rule the nations of the earth and who would ascend into heaven to sit upon the very throne of God, and that was Jesus Christ. When Jesus was born, Satan, tried to destroy Him as soon as He was born through the decree of Herod that all male

<sup>1</sup> “Diadem” is a fancy word for “crown.”

<sup>2</sup> See Job 38:4,7; Isaiah 14:12-13.

<sup>3</sup> See 2 Corinthians 11:13-14; Luke 10:18.

<sup>4</sup> Some of the scriptures that give illusions to this event are Isaiah 14:12-19 and Ezekiel 28:13-19.

<sup>5</sup> Gabriel scriptures include: Daniel 8:15-16; 9:21-22; Luke 1:11-13, 18-19, 26-31.

<sup>6</sup> Michael scriptures include: Jude 9; Daniel 10:12-14; 19-21; 12:1; Revelation 12:7-9.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Peter 5:8.

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babies were to be killed.<sup>8</sup> The child being “caught up” refers to the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven after his resurrection.

### **Back to the Future**

So far so good, and we can be confident in our interpretation of the symbols of this vision so far because the story that it unfolds, accurately matches the same details given elsewhere in the Bible. After having given a wide, 4,000 plus view of historical events, the visions narrows to specific details of this struggle between the woman and the dragon that are yet to come:

**Rev 12:6 Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.**

The woman fled from the dragon into “a place prepared by God” and she was nourished there for 1,260 days. The Hebrew calendar only has 360 days a year with each month having exactly 30 days. Thus, 1,260 days is exactly 3½ years.<sup>9</sup> We have just been given a clue as to how this vision ties in with the prophetic events that we learned of from Daniel and Jesus last lesson, the Abomination of Desolation. We learned from the writing of Daniel and the words of Jesus last lesson that the event known as the Abomination of Desolation would happen in the middle of the seven year period known as Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week and that the Abomination of Desolation would begin the Great Tribulation which would last for 3½ years. Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week was then divided by this event into two 3½ year periods, the first one of peace and safety and the last one of extreme persecution. We also learned that the last 3½ year period, the Great Tribulation, would be mainly the great persecution of the Antichrist against the nation of Israel that lived around the Jerusalem area. That this woman in our current vision represents Israel and that she is given a “time of nourishment” indicates that this 1,260 days is in reference to the first 3½ years of peace immediately before the Abomination of Desolation. We will find definitive proof of this in a moment.

**Rev 12:7-10 And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, 8 and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. 10 Then 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 brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.**

Here we find a description of a war in heaven.<sup>iii</sup> The first issue to these scriptures that must be answered is, “has this war already happened?” Many people teach that these scriptures are about Satan’s original rebellion and falling from heaven, but I do not believe that for the following reasons:

- *We have already had a reference to the original rebellion and fall of Satan in verse 4 of this chapter.*
- *The vision seems to be in chronological order with itself which means that this war happens after Jesus’ birth and after His ascension back into heaven.*
- *This war also happens after one 3 ½ year period of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week which is yet to come.*
- *If this war refers to the original rebellion of Satan, how can it be said in heaven, “now . . . the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night” if it happened before there were “brethren” or “people” to accuse?*

Everything continues to harmonize when we realize that Satan, although cast down from his position with God, still has access to the throne room of heaven today. As verse 10 said, “he accuses the brethren before our God day and night.” To be able to accuse the brethren before God, means that Satan has access to heaven and this fact is born out by many other scriptures in the Bible. For example, the story of Job begins with Satan presenting himself to God with the other angels and coming into the throne room of God to make accusations against Job.<sup>10</sup> If Satan is the “accuser of the brethren” even in New Testament times, then obviously he still has access to the throne room of heaven today. This is strengthened further by the next verse detailing how the “brethren” overcame their accuser:

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<sup>8</sup> See Matthew 2:16-21.

<sup>9</sup> Here’s the math: 30 days in a month x 12 months out of a year = 360. 360 days a year x 3.5 years = 1,260 days.

<sup>10</sup> See Job 1:6-8. For some other scriptures that indicate the same point, see 1 Kings 22:19-23 and 2 Chronicles 18:18-22.

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**Rev 12:11 "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.**

They overcame Satan "because of the blood of the Lamb," the word of their testimony, and because they were willing to give God a life-long submission. If this war where the accuser of the brethren was cast down happened in the beginning before Adam and Eve and before Jesus Christ and Calvary, then how could they have overcome him by "the blood of the Lamb?" It is obvious that Satan still has access to heaven today and is still the accuser of the brethren and that these three things are still the key to overcoming and defeating him today!

This scripture is also interesting because "the brethren" must refer to the members of the Apostolic church because only the church of God has access to the power "of the blood of the Lamb." Modern-day Israel has largely rejected Jesus Christ as their Messiah and throughout the New Testament epistles, the members of the Apostolic church are referred to as "brethren" or "brothers and sisters in Christ." Obviously the war spoken about in these verse is still yet to come.

**Rev 12:12-13 "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time." 13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child.**

These verses are important because within them we find some further details of the future events that we have studied so far. When this war is waged in heaven and the devil is defeated and banished from having access to heaven, he will realize that according to prophecy<sup>11</sup> he has but a short time and so he will come to earth having "great wrath." And the immediate result of his defeat in this war in heaven is that he will begin to persecute Israel with great persecution. Now it becomes clear that the 1,260 days of verse 6 refer to the first 3½ years of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week because after Israel is nourished for 1,260 days, she will begin to experience great persecution from the devil. This coincides perfectly with the Great Tribulation and the timetable of Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week as outlined by Daniel and Jesus.

The added details given to us by this vision are important for several reasons. First, they are yet further proof that the Great Tribulation and the events known as the wrath of God are two separate and different events. The Great Tribulation is the persecution of the Antichrist and the devil against Israel and the wrath of God is the future punishment of sin upon the earth by God, Himself. Although many people confuse the two events and blend them into one, these are actually presented in scripture as different events that happen at different times.

The details given here are also important in that they portray to us what is going on in the spiritual world during Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week. The scriptures about the Abomination of Desolation that we studied in our last lesson presented how Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> week would look to the natural and political eye on earth. This vision shows us the same timetable but from a spiritual sense. And the fact that this war in heaven happens after 3½ years of Israel being nourished and signals the beginning of Satan's great persecution against Israel perfectly corresponds to the 3½ years of peace given by the Antichrist's "confirming of a covenant" and then the war in heaven and Satan's being cast down to the earth and the start of the great persecution matches perfectly the timing of the Abomination of Desolation and the subsequent start of the Great Tribulation. These are two different views of the same events!

The Abomination of Desolation is when the Antichrist goes into a rebuilt Jewish temple and enters the most holy place proclaiming that he is God. Such is a portrait of what Satan tried to do in the beginning and the timing of the Abomination of Desolation and the details of the event seem to indicate that the Antichrist will be acting in conjunction with Satan, himself. Maybe or maybe not the Antichrist will become possessed by Satan, but he will certainly become a pawn in Satan's hand and plan. Satan's wrath and sense of urgency will cause the Antichrist to drop the pretense of being a man of peace and to exalt himself as God and to begin to persecute Israel.

**Rev 12:14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.**

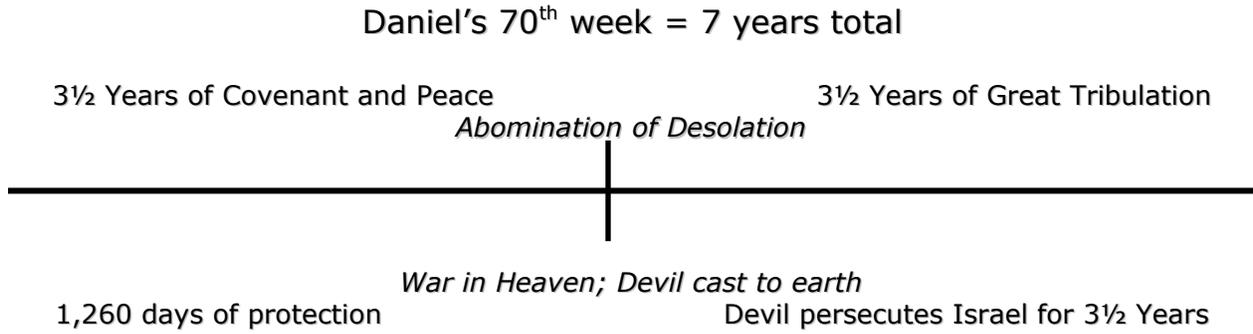
God will help Israel in this time of Great Tribulation by sending her help in the form of "two wings of the great eagle." Make a mental note of that fact as we will come back to it in our next lesson. For now, focus on how long the scripture says that God nourished and protected Israel from the devil: "for a time, and times, and half a time." That cryptic-sounding timetable makes sense when we realize that "a time" represents one year. Israel had to be helped by God because of the great persecution of Satan for a time (one year), times (more than one year or two years), and half a time

<sup>11</sup> Remember that the devil knows the scriptures also and to a point understands the prophecies of this book, too.

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(half a year). One year plus two years plus a half a year is another way of saying “3½ years” and this description of the length of the persecution of Satan against Israel matches perfectly with Jesus’ description of the length of the Great Tribulation. This is the latter half of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week.

In our last lesson, we presented the teachings of Daniel and Jesus about Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week, the Abomination of Desolation, and the Great Tribulation in a visual graph. Let’s take that same graph and place under it the details given here at the end events of the Vision of the Woman Clothed with the Sun:



Different terms and details are given, but it is very obvious that the events of the vision of the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Revelation that are yet to come, concur perfectly with Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week.

**Rev 12:15-16 And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.**

Because these scriptures are detailing future events that are yet to happen and there doesn’t seem to be any other scriptural references about this part of the event, we can only guess as to what these verses mean. It could refer to a literal flood or a tide of extreme persecution that came from Satan. The “earth opening its mouth” seems to be a reference to Korah’s rebellion in Moses’ day where God caused the earth to open up and swallow those who rebelled against Godly authority. The point of these scriptures, though, is that Satan will do his best to destroy Israel and will be frustrated in his attempts to completely sweep them away. God will make sure that Satan’s attack to utterly destroy Israel will not go as planned.

**Rev 12:17 So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**

This verse states that the devil became angry when he could not destroy Israel as he desired and so he changed focus and went to make war “with the rest of her children who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.” Who are these people who are the product of Israel and yet distinctly different? What group is alive today that keeps the commandments of God and holds to the “testimony of Jesus?” This is certainly not the current nation of Israel, three-quarters of which is currently agnostic and even the orthodox Jews who try to keep the commandments of God of old deny that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, God in flesh. This verse can only refer to the Apostolic church; the Apostolic church is the only group of people who can find their roots in Israel and yet claim to be a distinctly different group that obeys the commandments of God and who “hold to the testimony of Jesus.”

But realize what such a deduction means: if Satan is able to persecute the church after being cast down from heaven to the earth, then that means that at this time toward the end of the Great Tribulation – the last 3½ years of Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week – the church is still on earth and the Catching Away of the Saints has not yet taken place.<sup>iv</sup> We will eventually learn that the wrath of God does not begin until after the Great Tribulation. As we will see when we study the Wrath of God, the Bible is very clear that the church will be caught up before the Wrath of God is poured out on the earth,<sup>12</sup> but the Bible never says that the church will not have to endure great persecution. In fact, the scriptures tell time and time again that we must endure persecution with faith. Paul told us:

**2 Tim 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**

<sup>12</sup> See 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

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It is true that God will not beat up His precious bride, the church, but it is also true that there is a difference between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God. The Great Tribulation is the persecution and wrath of the Antichrist and the devil against first Israel and then later the church. The Wrath of God is the judgment of God upon the ungodly after the Catching Away of the Saints. By way of distinction, the name of this view of prophetic events is known as “pre-wrath.” To believe “pre-wrath” is to say that you realize:

- *The Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God are two different events.*
- *The Great Tribulation only lasts 3½ years beginning with the Abomination of Desolation.*
- *While the timing of the Catching Away of the Saints cannot be precisely predicted, for the devil to be able to persecute the saints toward the end of the Great Tribulation, then they must still be on earth.*
- *Nobody will be saved by Grace after the Catching Away of the Saints.*

### **Conclusion**

In closing, let’s briefly return to Jesus’ teaching in the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew and consider His teaching on these key events that we are studying:

**Matt 24:29-31 "But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. 31 "And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.**

After describing the Great Tribulation that was signaled by the Abomination of Desolation, Jesus then says, “immediately after the tribulation of those days” some further events will take place. The sun being darkened and the moon not shining and the stars fallen from heaven are things that always characterize the Wrath of God. The Antichrist cannot cause the sun to darken and the devil cannot cause the moon not to shine; those are things only God can do and the Wrath of God happens “after the tribulation of those days.” That is, the Wrath of God does not begin until immediately after the Great Tribulation according to the Word of Jesus.

After the Great Tribulation, Jesus also said, “then the sign of the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky” will appear. It will be then that the trumpet will sound and that all of God’s children will be gathered together to meet Him in the sky. This is the “Catching Away of the Saints” more commonly referred to by scholars and preachers as “the Rapture of the Church.” If this is not referring to the Catching Away of the Saints, then to what event does it refer? And yet the timing clues of Jesus’ words cannot be ignored: “immediately after the tribulation of those days” then the Wrath of God begins to fall and “then they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds” and then the trumpet sounds and then there is the catching away of the saints. This would not be controversial if people had not been taught pre-tribulation theories in mainstream Christianity because it is very clear and exact. From this we can begin to see a truth that will become evident in later lessons: the wrath of God beginning to fall and the gathering together of the church and the Catching Away of the Saints are simultaneous events. God has not appointed us to wrath and as His wrath begins to be poured out, He will gather us up to be with Him in heaven. There is, however, no promise in the Bible that we will not have to suffer some persecution. And there is no proof of a “pre-tribulation” rapture of the church. If the words of Jesus mean anything at all, He will come to catch away His elect “after the tribulation of those days.”<sup>v</sup>

More importantly, though, we have seen how a vision that John saw in the book of Revelation perfectly ties in with the visions that Daniel saw and the teachings of Jesus and the Apostle Paul. The Vision of the Woman Clothed with the Sun, is at first a broader view of these proceedings and then it narrows to give us a view of what is going in the spiritual world when the Antichrist makes his move. Such is the style of scriptural teachings to give us layer after layer of truth until a complete portrait is presented.

## Endnotes

For those wishing to explore the distant fulfillment of this prophecy, it is found in the story of Jesus Christ. The entire story of Joseph is an “anti-type,” that is to say, a spiritual representation of Jesus’ life. Jesus Christ, who was sold out by the sons of Israel, endured extreme persecution and one day all of His enemies will bow before Him and admit that He is the King of Kings. There are many parallels between Joseph of old and Jesus Christ and the subject – while beyond the scope of this study – is worthwhile subject to explore on your own. For example, both Joseph and Jesus were delivered from being killed at a young age by escaping into Egypt.

<sup>ii</sup> There is much controversy among Bible scholars as to when in history the rebellion of Lucifer actually took place. The scripture is not explicitly clear on the matter and opinions differ widely from the belief that the rebellion took place before Creation of the world as we know it, to well after Creation in history. My opinion on this matter is drawn from the fact that so many places in the Old Testament refer to the angels as “stars.” I think it very possible that the “stars” – meaning the angels – were created at the same time that the real stars were and that the rebellion of Satan happened shortly after the seven days of Creation. Whatever the correct timing, we know that Satan fell before Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden.

<sup>iii</sup> These verses are how we know that the serpent in the Garden of Eden was definitely Satan. This is the only reference in the Bible to the devil as “the serpent” and it does not precisely say such a thing in Genesis, but, here, in the last book of the Bible we get further clarification of what happened in the first book! Truly, to understand scripture, we must take all of the Word of God!

<sup>iv</sup>

This contradicts the teaching of the “pre-tribulation” view of prophecy. Not only does the scripture teach that the Great Tribulation is a 3½ year period instead of a seven year one, and that the Great Tribulation is a separate and different event from the Wrath of God, but it also teaches that the devil will turn to try to persecute the Apostolic church at the end of the Great Tribulation when he cannot destroy Israel. From trying to reconcile all of this and yet hold up their pre-conceived view that the Catching Away of the Saints happens before the Great Tribulation, comes the false teachings of the popular Left Behind Series which teach that people are saved according to Grace, after the Catching Away of the Saints and the time of Grace is over. Such is fanciful thinking that finds no support in scripture and the logical end of believing a “pre-tribulation” view of prophecy.

<sup>v</sup>

Such teaching bothers some people and occasionally someone will have the attitude of, “well, if that is so, then I can go live in sin and how I want to and just get right with God later.” Such thinking is dangerous and foolish for the following points:

1. Are you only living for God to escape His wrath? Or are you only living for God righteously because of a great fear that you will miss the Rapture of the church? A Godly fear is profitable, but our primary motive for living for God and living right ought to be because we love God and we believe that His ways are right. Such an attitude reveals a very lacking view of what living for God is all about.
2. In dealing with prophecy, we are doing our best to rightly divide the Word of truth and to let scripture interpret scripture with sound interpretational techniques, but many great men of God have been wrong in their deductions from these prophecies before. What if these studies miss the mark and it turns out that Jesus Christ is coming back today? Why take the chance?
3. Who said that you could come back to God when you want to on your own terms? Jesus said that “nobody comes to the Father except the Spirit draws him.” Conviction is permission to repent and we must first have God draw us to Him in repentance. After you have been presented the truth once and walked away there are no guarantees that you will have God call you back and no guarantees that you will even realize such a call in your willful sin lifestyle.
4. How do you know that your life will not end today or tomorrow? Who promised you that you would live long enough to see such things? Our lives are fragile and it is God who sustains us day to day and God who determines when we will die. To quote the wise words of an old song: tomorrow is not promised, better serve the Lord today!