

Series: The Cosmic Battle Retold (a study in Revelation 12-14)

Sermon Text: 13:1-10 The Sea Beast

(Use **app** to get lesson/slides, ask questions)

Last time, we learned that Revelation uses Exodus language to help its 1st century audience (and us!) visualize connections between past and present. We concluded that believers in all centuries **can expect Exodus-level assistance** because the event where God, through Moses, freed Israel from slavery was a micromodel of an historic international Exodus He's been conducting through Christ who sets us free! Although, for Israel, freedom wasn't what they expected. We may similarly wonder: *"If Christ's cross and resurrection secured our freedom, then why do we often feel like exiles in a barren and beastly wilderness?"* Academics refer to this tension as *"the already"* and *"the not yet"* because while **heaven already** celebrates Christ's victory, **earth** has not yet surrendered. The difference is sort of like [D-Day](#) and [V-E \(Victory in Europe\) Day](#) during World War II--some argue WWII ended the day allied forces stormed the beaches of Normandy and overwhelmed the Nazis. Yet, it took over a year for the reality to be realized by troops on the ground in Europe [and finally in Japan](#). Our notes have 4 clickable links about that, including [one to an article](#) comparing Christ's 1st advent to D-Day and His second advent to V-E Day and Hiroshima. However, Christ hasn't crushed Satan's rebellion with military means, but by [being crushed for our sins](#) (cf. Isaiah 53, Philippians 2). His methods are much more revolutionary and subversive than the warfare of this world, which is a major point being made in Revelation.

Thus, a more fitting analogy for *"the already"* and *"the not yet"* is the difference between Abraham Lincoln signing [the Emancipation Proclamation](#) on January 1, 1863 and African Americans in Texas tasting freedom 2.5 years later [on June 19, 1865](#). Because, as we know, pockets of satanic resistance remain--modern day Nazis and other racists who, it seems, still haven't gotten the memo. As soldiers of the cross, we must resist and put down all such dehumanizing ideologies. Maintaining morale to do so requires intentional reminders that victory was already won when God, through Christ, invaded history. So, using apocalyptic imagery, John introduced us to a **dragon** (Satan) who was **thrown down to earth** where he began to chase and **make war on a woman's offspring** (God's people). In **12:12**, he advised 2 responses: *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!* **Chapter 13** contains more coded illustrations of how **Satan** continues his **earthly wrath** and war for worship through the power and propaganda of human empires. Ultimately, **chapter 13** conveys this...

BIG IDEA: Believers must wisely resist the allure of human empires!

Let's let Professor Michael Gorman (p. 123) set the scene: "*Chapter 12 presents the central conflict narrative in cosmic perspective, chapter 13 in political perspective. Chapter 13 reveals Rome's political-economic-religious system to represent the devil's rule, to be antithetical to God's purposes, and to be an enslaving system, one that deceptively demands inappropriate allegiance.* Check out John's words in *verses 1-2: I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.* Talk about symbolism overload! These are images from the Old Testament book of Daniel chapter 7 where 4 monsters emerged from *the sea*. Daniel said, "*These four great beasts are four kings who shall arise out of the earth*" then described a 4th *beast* that would surface as a massive, brutal world empire from which *horns* (i.e., evil kings) seem to keep coming and coming (*Ever felt this way about world politics?*). The thing about John's 1 *beast* is that it's a composite of Daniel's 4 *beasts* which turns this into a timeless description of wicked empires.

Verses 3-6 say that One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. Scholars see this as a veiled reference to a well-documented rumor about Emperor Nero supposedly returning to life or how Emperor Domitian was worshiped as a second Nero. Regardless, it was like the Roman Empire just wouldn't die! John also said: *They worshiped the dragon (Satan), for he had given his authority to the beast (Rome), and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?" The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.* Emperors claimed titles such as "lord, god, son of god, savior, etc." while demanding worship and devotion from their subjects. John unmasks this *blasphemy* (divine disrespect) as *dragon (devil)* worship because *Satan* is always the enemy behind the enemy. This invites contemporary questions like: "*Where is blasphemy occurring today, what's the line between honoring world leaders and disrespecting God, and when is it wise to use coded language like John did instead of speaking plainly?*" (see our notes below for quotes about the government and the state).

As a side note: some of you asked about this repetitive "*42 month*" concept. For example, *chapter 11* depicts the holy city being trampled for *42 months* during which witnesses prophesied for *1260 days*. Mathematically, *42 months = 1260 days = 3.5 years*. Certain Futurists (not all) think this represents the last half of an event Revelation never plainly mentions... a 7-year tribulation. Most scholars realize these

numeric values appear all over the Bible to illustrate “*a short duration*”, not a precise period (see quotes below). In that light, John was just assuring churches that the time of Satan’s temper tantrum won’t last forever. Regardless, *verses 7-8* reveal more about *beastly* empires: *Also, it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them* (Satan’s ongoing quest). *Authority was given to it* (by the dragon) *over every tribe, people, language and nation; and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain*. This *dragon worship on earth* is an outright denial of what we’re told in *chapters 5-7*, namely that people from every *tribe, people, language*, and *nation* now *worship in heaven*. It’s significant that *verse 6* calls them “*the dwelling place of God*” because their presence *in heaven* proves our victory has already been won even if we can’t see it *on earth*! Here’s the takeaway: As we learned in *chapters 4-5*, an effective way to refute *Satan’s* last stand is to let *worship* that’s already happening in heaven drive *worship on earth* where he has not yet surrendered. Such *worship* is both a subversive and empowering means of warfare that brings more of God’s kingdom to earth through us. In other words, as Satan and crew show resistance to God’s kingdom with slavery and sword, we show resistance to his would-be kingdom with resilient worship!

Verses 9-10 remind us that true worship has a cost. Riffing off Jesus in *Revelation 2-3*, John said: *If anyone has an ear, let him hear: If anyone is to be taken captive, to captivity he goes; if anyone is to be slain with the sword, with the sword must he be slain. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints*. This is just simple realism--anyone swept up and carried off by *the dragon’s* political hot air may persecute or kill us as our allegiance to the *Lamb* rebuffs their ungodly agendas. Thus, worship is a powerful weapon in spiritual warfare and post-resurrection clean-up work. Done well, it will cause our *earthly* experiences to mirror the harsh realities endured by Israel, Jesus, and 1st century churches (cf. Jeremiah 15:2, 43:11; Matthew 24:9), which is something the disciples had a hard time processing. That’s why John received this revelatory reminder that the war which is already settled in *heaven* is still being wrapped up on *earth* where *the* defeated *devil-dragon* furiously turns human empires into puppets that try to convince people his agenda still has a chance. He even stirs up magical marketing teams, as represented by *the land beast* we’ll address next time. Until then, consider questions like: “Where is Satan working right under our noses, what post-resurrection clean-up work is left for us to do, and how could that lead to us being hated, persecuted, or even killed?” Ponder all this with your people, and remember, we never need to take our next step alone--spiritual growth is a communal, family project.

For Communion: As we prepare to participate in the Lord's Supper together, let's meditate on another passage that reframes John's point. James 4 NLT says, *"Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God...But he gives us even more grace to stand against such evil desires...God opposes the proud but favors the humble. So, humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor."* Before ascending to heaven, Jesus established a meal that sustains and nourishes us in a world filled with wickedness inspired by the one he threw out of heaven. It also reminds us that we're troops on the ground who have clean-up work to do after God's victorious invasion through Christ. We bring offerings along, not to buy access to the table, nor buy our way into heaven, but to show that we're putting our possession where our mouth is. So, believers, come ahead when you are ready.

Sunday to Monday Connection:

- **Question:** Where do you see Satan's fingerprint of isolation, domination and control in your everyday life...In your neighborhood and community, at work, and in your own relationships? Ask God to help you see what He sees.
- **Next Step:** Prayerfully consider sharing one of these things with your small group or other Holy Spirit filled people and ask them to discern with you how God may be inviting you to partner with Him.
- **Note:** If you are not a Christ follower and would like to investigate further what all this might mean for you, please come talk with any of our leaders, or the person who brought you.

Alternative takeaways to discuss with your people:

1. Discuss questions like these: What are some similarities and differences between our world and the 1st century world? Where do we see the power of the first beast? Where today do we see the power of the second beast?
2. How are the "already" and "not yet" aspects of Christ's work sort of like the differences between "D-Day" and "V-E Day"? How might they be much more like the differences between the signing of "The Emancipation Proclamation" and the ongoing struggle to defeat racism?
3. What does this passage suggest about identifying and disassociating from political powers that claim divine or quasi-divine status, or perhaps those who claim divine blessing and demand total or unquestioned allegiance? In what ways might such disassociation become costly, and in what circumstances might disassociation necessitate disobedience? See Romans 13
4. Check out these other dragon and sea monster texts: Isaiah 51:9-10; Psalm 74:13-14
5. **If you like poetic retellings of God's story or struggle to grasp them:** Consider reading fiction books like [The Chronicles of Narnia series](#) or [The Screwtape Letters](#), both by C.S. Lewis.

Considerations for discussion leaders:

1. Keep circling back to the big idea and main points of the passage to stay on track.
2. Keep the group small for deeper sharing.
3. Keep the discussion around 30 mins. Once you hit the “sweet spot”, spend your time there.
4. Keep these simple questions in your back pocket: What is God teaching you? What are you going to do about it? How will it help you love & serve others?

Other Articles/Songs/Videos: Please ask us for help obtaining other resources.

- [5 Strategies for Reading Revelation](#) from the Bible Project (the first 17 minutes is GOLD!)
- [Heaven and Earth Theme](#) from the Bible Project
- [Other super helpful Revelation summaries](#) from the Bible Project
- [How Revelation mimics ancient Olympic games](#) by Marty Solomon

Quotes related to this passage:

- **If your Bible has an asterisk after verse 17:** Some translations end the chapter here, while others add the next sentence. It's a moot point, however, since the original manuscripts had no chapters or headings (a.k.a. pericopes, literature cut into segments). Our Bibles have them, which is fine, but sometimes it's best to ignore them.
- **Context for chapters 12-13:** “As it will be pictured in the two scenes that follow immediately (13:1–10 and 11–18), should not be a cause for surprise. If in these coming two scenes their suffering is portrayed in terms of the Empire and emperor worship, here they are being told that what lies behind it all is the dragon himself, Satan, and this as a direct response to his being cast out of heaven, defeated through Christ's death (at Satan's own hands) and subsequent resurrection (through God's power)... here the seven churches are being offered the ultimate reasons for their suffering, which finds its present expression in the Empire's unyielding attitude toward those who refuse to call the Emperor ‘lord’ or to acknowledge that he is in any way divine. Thus, the emperor will be pictured as the ‘beast coming out of the earth’ (13:11), while the Empire itself is the ‘beast coming out of the sea.’ (13:1).” (Fee, 174-175)
- **Serpents and sea monsters:** “Throughout the Old Testament (they) represent evil forces opposed to God and his people (e.g., Gen. 3:1–24; Ezek. 29:3; Isa. 27:1; Jer. 51:34). Naturally, such figures provide a fitting symbol for Satan, the archenemy of God. (The dragon is explicitly identified as the ‘ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray’ in 12:9.) The color red alludes to the devil's character of violence and bloodshed (cf. Rev. 6:4; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24). His ‘crowns’ (diadēma) portray real power but not power equal to that of the King of kings (Rev. 19:12, 16; cf. John 12:31; 14:30; Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4). In addition, while the Lamb has seven horns (Rev. 5:6), the dragon has ten horns, a symbol of evil's widespread power and a common trait of other evil forces (cf. the beast in 13:1 and the prostitute in 17:3, 7). The ‘ten horns’ also recall Daniel's vision of a ten-horned beast (Dan. 7:7–8, 20, 24).” (Duvall, 161)
- **A composite of Daniel's beasts:** “Jewish tradition understood the fourth beast as Rome, which most Jews believed would be the fourth world empire to subdue Israel (4 Ezra 12:10–11; 2 Bar. 39:7). Judeans (as well as an exile on Patmos or citizens of Ephesus) would perceive Rome as coming from ‘the sea’ even geographically, and the sand of the seashore may represent ‘the nations’ over whom the beast claims to rule (Rev. 20:8). Yet the beast in Revelation differs from the fourth beast of Daniel, being a composite of different beasts: Besides ten horns (13:1; cf. Dan

7:7, 24) it is in some respects like a leopard, in others like a bear, and in others like a lion (Rev. 13:2). Composite descriptions can amplify the glory of a creature (Ezek. 1:10), but here they amplify its hideousness. Thus, though John makes his allusion by way of Rome, the point goes beyond Rome to the general threat of an ‘evil empire.’ The ‘ten horns’ and ‘seven heads’ (13:1) connect this beast with its suprahuman mentor, another beast, namely, the serpent (12:3); this image in Revelation fits the Bible’s use of images from the ancient myth of the superhuman enemy (Ps. 74:14). The ‘blasphemous name’ (Rev. 13:1) probably evokes the arrogant boasts of Daniel 7:8, 20, as do his blasphemies or slanders against God and the saints in Revelation 13:6. These would prove especially relevant to John’s audience: Roman coins in the eastern Mediterranean announced that the emperor was ‘son of God’ and ‘God’; Domitian even demanded the title ‘Lord and God.’” (Keener, 335-336)

- **The 2 Beasts:** “Most interpreters of Revelation would identify the first beast, from the sea (that is, coming from the west by way of the Aegean Sea to reach the cities of western Asia Minor), as the Roman Empire, the emperor (perhaps one specifically, such as Domitian), or imperial power. The second beast, from the earth (that is, of local origin), is then seen as those who promote the imperial cult, perhaps local government and/or religious officials in and around cities like Ephesus and Pergamum. The mark of the beast might be an imperial slogan, seal, or image...The identifications from the first century, however, make perfect sense within the context of Revelation. But these historical symbols also need to be plumbed for their ongoing significance. Together they speak of theopolitical megalomania and of any collaboration of political power and religious sanction—civil religion—that falsely claims to represent the true God and God’s will. As Eugene Boring writes: The beast is not merely ‘Rome’ ... It is the inhuman, anti-human arrogance of empire which has come to expression in Rome—but not only there ... All who support the cultural religion, in or out of church, however Lamb-like they may appear, are agents of the beast. All propaganda that entices humanity to idolize human empire is an expression of this beastly power that wants to appear Lamb-like.” (Gorman, 124-125)
- **Sustenance:** “The people of God are nourished and protected by God from demonic assault, but they remain vulnerable to persecution and martyrdom. The people of God live between the ‘already’ of Christ’s death/resurrection/exaltation and the ‘not yet’ of his glorious return. Throughout Scripture we see that God’s people receive nourishment and spiritual protection from God while encountering trials in this world (e.g., Matt. 10:22; John 16:33; 2 Cor. 4:16–18; Phil. 1:29; 1 Thess. 3:2–4; 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 12:1–3; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:6; 4:12–13).” Duvall, 164.
- **Mortal wound:** “After Nero’s death in AD 68, the rumour spread that he would return to life, and this tradition may be behind verse 3. Some impostors claimed to be Nero while others thought Nero was hiding among the Parthians. Moreover, Domitian (the emperor when John was probably writing) was often called a ‘second Nero’ because he readily killed those he deemed a threat. The return of the beast from the dead is one of the ways Satan parodies the risen Christ.” (Chester, 101)
- **History of rumors about Nero:** “Most New Testament scholars, liberal and evangelical alike, recognize the image of a new Nero here. Nero was the first emperor to declare an official state persecution against Christians (though probably limited to Rome), and he burned hundreds of Christians alive to light his imperial gardens at night and butchered others in various ways. Nero died June 9, A.D. 68, but even at the end of the first century, many believed that he remained alive. Even if he is exaggerating, it illustrates the point when Dio Chrysostom suggests that ‘most people’ believed Nero was still alive, despite the impostors who had risen in his name (Or. 21, On Beauty 9–10). A false Nero arose shortly after Nero’s death (Tacitus, Hist. 2.8–9), and another

during the brief time Titus was emperor, about a decade and a half before Revelation was written (Dio Cassius, 66.19.3). Finally, around A.D. 88—during Domitian’s reign and less than a decade before Revelation was written—another false Nero arose, and this one proved a terrifying threat to the empire, garnering the support of the feared Parthians (Suetonius, Nero 57). This fits Revelation’s warning about a Parthian invasion (9:14–16; 16:12). Some Jewish people also believed Nero would return (Sib. Or. 5.33–34, 137–54, 361–85). Shortly before Revelation was written they even predicted that Nero, ‘the fugitive from Rome,’ would return at the head of the Parthians (4.119–20, 124, 137–39) and conquer all lands (5.365, 368–69). Some even expected that he had died yet would return (5.367). Christians expected a new Nero (8.68–72), who would be called ‘a great beast’ (8.139–59). The myth of the new Nero continued to develop in the decades following Revelation.¹⁴ The tradition that Nero would come back as the final Antichrist became so pervasive that in the Armenian language ‘Nero’ actually became the equivalent for Antichrist.” (Keener, 337-338).

- **Emperor worship:** “Verse 3 draws attention to a particular feature of Roman rule in the second half of the first century. The ancient Roman republic had become an ‘empire’ under Augustus, a hundred years or so before, after the murder of his adopted father Julius Caesar (44 BC) and the ensuing civil wars. But with the reign, and then the death, of Nero one might have thought that the precarious, self-glorifying, top-heavy empire would come crashing down under its own weight. Certainly the year after Nero’s death (AD 69) must have looked like a mortal wound to the whole monstrous system, with four would-be emperors in quick succession marching on Rome, killing their enemies, claiming the crown, and then—except for the last one—being killed in turn by the next army to arrive. Galba, Otho and Vitellius came and went; Vespasian came, and stayed. Within months his son and heir, Titus, completed the military task on which Vespasian had been engaged before his troops encouraged him to go for the big prize. Titus’s legions destroyed Jerusalem, burning the Temple to the ground. To many observers, it must have seemed like the end of the world. Meanwhile, rumours went around that Nero hadn’t died after all—or that he had indeed died, but had then come back to life. Several would-be ‘Nero-alive-again’ leaders emerged, and, though none lasted long, the rumour persisted. He was, is not, but is to come, they said (17:8). This may be what John is referring to when he says that one of the monster’s heads appeared to have been killed, but its fatal wound had been healed (verse 3). But the central and important feature, which all his readers would have recognized at once, is that the monster claimed worship, and shared that worship with the dark pagan gods that stood behind it. A glance at Roman coins of the period tells its own story, as one emperor after another not only claimed to be ‘son of god’ but to dress up in the garb traditionally associated with this or that ancient pagan divinity. And of course, once the emperor becomes a god, there is no room for other gods.” (Wright, 116-117)
- **Blasphemy:** “Not all power is bad and not all empires are evil. But this empire utters ‘blasphemies’ (v 5–6). It takes the place of God, redefines morality and demands ultimate allegiance (v 8). Inevitably that brings it into conflict with God’s people for we have a competing allegiance. So, it wages war against the church (v 7). The result is that Christians will be imprisoned and martyred (v 9–10). It’s not hard to find parallels of this today. Perhaps the most obvious example is the personality cult of the Supreme Leader in North Korea. In the West we don’t live under an idolatrous empire. But there are idolatrous elements to any and every society. Our governments are redefining morality in areas like euthanasia, abortion, gender and sexuality. We too live in Babylon.” (Chester, 102)

- **On government:** “Revelation 13 and Romans 13 have often been compared when thinking about the relationship between the Christian and the state. The apostle Paul reminds us that God created human government and ‘there is no authority except that which God has established’ (Rom. 13:1; cf. Dan. 4:17, 25, 32; John 19:11). When operating properly under divine authority, the state upholds law and order and serves as an instrument of justice (Rom. 13:4). But human institutions may be hijacked for evil purposes, and such is the case in Revelation 13. Satan sometimes works through secular power systems and the wicked individuals who rule those systems. When the state turns tyrannical and demands unconditional allegiance, Christians have no choice but to ‘obey God rather than human beings’ (Acts 5:29). John Stott identifies the theological principle at work: ‘We are to submit right up to the point where obedience to the state would entail disobedience to God. But if the state commands what God forbids, or forbids what God commands, then our plain Christian duty is to resist, not to submit, to disobey the state in order to obey God.’ Also...Christians are called to conquer the beast by being conquered. The response called for in Revelation 13:9–10 is about as un-American as it gets. We are called to sacrifice and suffering as our primary response to evil. We endure tribulation because we know this is precisely how we conquer Satan and his forces (12:11; 15:2). In responding to evil, we should not become like the perpetrators of evil (Matt. 5:44–45; 26:52; Rom. 12:14; 1 Pet. 3:9). Rather, we should imitate our Lord, who conquered Satan through his death on the cross (5:5–6). We stand for truth through our prophetic witness to Jesus and our faithful endurance along the path he has pioneered (Heb. 12:1–3). The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17).” (Duvall, 182)
- **The passage warns against demonizing the state:** “We must render to Caesar what is Caesar’s (including taxes—Mark 12:17; Rom. 13:6), but when a state begins to claim the worship due God alone, it has usurped a divine prerogative and succumbed to the spirit of the Antichrist. Genuine Christians differ over where to draw the line between the state’s legitimate authority and idolatry, but they cannot deny that such a line exists. Some grounds exist for civil disobedience, whether that disobedience is resisting the worship of Caesar or refusing to serve in the military enforcing South African apartheid.” (Keener, 345)
- **Views of the 1260 days/42 months:** According to Historicists, the 1260 days is 1260 years, being the duration of the power of papal Rome. According to Preterists, the 1260 days is the period of the Jewish War, of Nero’s persecution, or both. According to Futurists, the 1260 days refer either to a period of a literal three and one-half years at the end of the Tribulation or to two different periods of that length totaling seven years. According to spiritualists, the 1260 days symbolize the entire church age. (Gregg, 217-218)
- **History of the 1260 days/42 Months/3.5 years:** “The reason for the exact number of ‘forty-two’ here and in 13:5 is likely to recall the same time of Elijah’s ministry of judgment (Luke 4:25; Jas. 5:17; see on 11:6) and Israel’s entire time of wilderness wandering after the Exodus, which encompassed a total of forty-two encampments (so Num. 33:5–49). This is reinforced by possibly reckoning forty-two years for the Israelites’ total sojourn in the wilderness, since it appears they were in the wilderness for two years before incurring the penalty of remaining there for forty years until the death of the first generation. Remember that the trumpet plagues take us back to God’s judgments on Egypt, by which His people were released into the wilderness. In 11:6–8; 12:6, 14, the community of faith is pictured as battling against a spiritual Egypt, or as being protected in the wilderness. The uses in 12:6 and 12:14 confirm that 11:1–2 alludes to an attack on the community of faith throughout the church age. In 12:6, the messianic community (= the ‘woman’) is protected from the dragon’s onslaught during the three and a half years by taking refuge in “the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God.” The picture of 12:14 is

virtually identical. This ‘place’ in which Christians are kept safe from the devil is likely none other than the invisible sanctuary of God (see 12:6, 14), since that is to be the object of attack during the three and a half years in Daniel, and since that is the idea in Rev. 11:1–2 and 12:5–6. Rev. 12:5–6 shows that the three and a half year period was inaugurated at Christ’s resurrection, since the ‘woman’ (the covenant community) flees directly on the heels of the resurrection, and that time of fleeing commences the three and a half years (there is no hidden long time gap between v. 5 and v. 6, as contended by some futurists). This three and one half year time will be consummated at Christ’s final coming (see on 12:5–6; cf. 14:14–20). 11:2 indicates that the period is the time of the treading under foot of the holy city. V. 8 implies that this treading under foot and, therefore, the three and a half years, was set in motion when ‘the Lord was crucified’ in Jerusalem, especially since the ultimate basis for the trampling—the persecution of the church—is Christ’s death. This period was inaugurated at Christ’s resurrection, and will be consummated at His final coming. Another reason that a three and a half year period is chosen to represent the church’s witness is that it is the approximate duration of Christ’s ministry. The pattern of the narration of the witnesses’ career in 11:3–12 is intended as a replica of Christ’s: proclamation and signs resulting in Satanic opposition, persecution (John 15:20) and violent death in the city where Christ was crucified, followed by the world looking on their victim (Rev. 1:7), the world’s rejoicing (cf. John 16:20), and then resurrection and vindication by ascension in a cloud. The prophetic precedents of Moses and Elijah point to this pattern and are alluded to in vv. 3–13 in order to fill out the pattern in more detail.” (Beale, 218-219)

Bibliography (Note: Our use of these materials does not imply full agreement with them)

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