

**THE BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON  
THE HATRED OF ISRAEL AND ITS IMPLICATIONS  
FOR ANTISEMITISM: TO BE THE ENEMY OF ISRAEL  
IS TO BE THE ENEMY OF GOD**

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*Hatred of Israel and modern-day antisemitism is anything but a new phenomenon. Though its presence has ebbed and flowed throughout history, it is as old as the nation of Israel. Understanding the biblical testimony about this malevolent hatred is essential. This analysis explores the biblical perspective on the hatred of Israel, asking and answering the fundamental question: Why has the nation of Israel been subject to such hatred throughout history? The Old and the New Testaments present both the historical and the spiritual roots of this hatred against God's chosen people.*

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Introduction

Many have noticed in the past decade a distinct increase in attacks against the Jewish people and against various Jewish institutions. The common term used to describe this racial hatred of anything related to the Jewish people is “antisemitism” (originating from German).<sup>1</sup> A recent and significant attack against the people of Israel took place on October 7, 2023 by Hamas terrorists who attacked the Israeli communities near the Gaza strip. Hamas’ hideous and blood-thirsty assault had a polarizing effect on global opinions of Israel and the Jewish people. Many expressed deep sadness and grief over the cruel rampage of destruction, murder, rape, and kidnapping that Hamas perpetrated against their Israeli neighbors. Shockingly, this massive terrorist onslaught also prompted a world-wide increase in antisemitism.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Marr, *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism*, trans. Gerhard Rohringer, 8th edition (Bern: Costenoble, 1879), [http://archive.org/details/marr-wilhelm-the-victory-of-judaism-over-germanism\\_202012](http://archive.org/details/marr-wilhelm-the-victory-of-judaism-over-germanism_202012).

This tragic event, the ensuing war, and the innumerable reactions to it have been constantly in the headlines, reminding the world of the animosity the Jewish people have suffered throughout history and which they continue to endure in the present.

This horrific incident is only an example of the hatred Israel has endured all throughout her history. In light of this event and other such attacks on Israel and the Jewish people, the intent of this article is to look to Scripture and provide a biblical perspective on why such hatred of Israel and the Jewish people exists. This article seeks to answer the question: *Why has the nation of Israel been subject to such vicious hatred throughout history?* Approaching this study from a biblical-theological perspective, the material is organized chronologically.<sup>2</sup> The Old Testament portion of this article provides a selective overview of the animosity that the people of Israel endured in ancient history, whereas the New Testament portion focuses on key explanations for this worldwide phenomenon and the animosity Israel will face in the future, according to Revelation 12, 16, and 20.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, this article shows that according to the Scriptures, the hatred of Israel, and therefore modern-day antisemitism, is an act of opposing God’s people and God Himself.

### Definition

Hatred of Israel and antisemitism has a long history, making it difficult to explain comprehensively.<sup>4</sup> One definition specifically of “antisemitism” that Robert S. Wistrich proposes is: “All forms of hostility toward Jews and Judaism throughout history.”<sup>5</sup> The term “antisemitism” in the German language is credited to Wilhelm Marr, a man who himself has been charged with expressions of hatred against the Jewish people in his writings.<sup>6</sup> Beyond identifying antisemitism in the general populace, researchers have argued that the organized church has also been often

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<sup>2</sup> See John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 35. It must be acknowledged that the designation “Biblical Theology” is perceived by some as inherently antisemitic. See, e.g., Jon D. Levenson, “Why Jews Are Not Interested in Biblical Theology,” in *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel*, ed. Jacob Neusner et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 295, where he states, “To the Christian biblical theology is concerned with christological issues in a way that excludes the Jews and finds no parallel in Judaism.” This study, however, does have parallels in Jewish interpretation of the Scripture and focuses on, rather than exclude, the Jewish people.

<sup>3</sup> Brian Kinzel is responsible for the Old Testament section, and Oleg Korotkiy for the New Testament section.

<sup>4</sup> For a standard definition, see the statement on “What Is Antisemitism?” *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*, accessed May 22, 2024, <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>; for helpful treatments of the subject see Linda Maizels, *What Is Antisemitism?* (New York: Routledge, 2022), <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781003021827-2>; Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Antisemitism: Here and Now* (New York: Schocken, 2019); David L. Bernstein, *Woke Antisemitism: How a Progressive Ideology Harms Jews* (New York: Wicked Son, 2022); Steven K. Baum et al., eds., *Antisemitism in North America: New World, Old Hate* (New York: Brill, 2016), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctv2gjwsz3>.

<sup>5</sup> Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (New York: Pantheon, 1991), xvi. See also a talk by Josh Sofaer, “Why Are Jews Hated?” in which Sofaer defines the term as “hatred against Jews because they are Jews” ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6ogEw\\_XL9o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6ogEw_XL9o); 2023).

<sup>6</sup> Maizels, *What Is Antisemitism?* 3, wherein she explains that Marr believed that hatred of the Jews “was both rational and necessary.”

guilty of antisemitism in its history.<sup>7</sup> Debra Lipstadt, a world-renowned expert on this topic, has even attempted to link antisemitism to the New Testament.<sup>8</sup> Michael Brown—who rejects the view that the New Testament is antisemitic—states that many think, albeit incorrectly, that “there was a straight line from the New Testament to the Holocaust.”<sup>9</sup> While this inaccurate perception that Christianity and the New Testament are antisemitic may exist, church leaders must endeavor to demonstrate that, as Dan Sered and Simon Stout explain, antisemitism is a spiritual problem that sincere followers of Jesus must eradicate.<sup>10</sup> Not only must the followers of Christ reject this sentiment from their hearts and lives; they must also desire and pray that the gospel would reach the Jewish people globally. As Paul wrote in Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

In view of such deep-rooted history of animosity toward the people of Israel, this article will attempt to show that both the Old Testament and the New Testament condemn any hatred of Israel and modern-day antisemitism as deplorable and diabolical. Though, to be sure, the term “antisemitism” describes anti-Jewish sentiment in modern history, examination of Scripture reveals that hatred of Israel and the people of Israel originated in ancient history with the devil as its source. Scripture demonstrates that such antagonistic treatment of the people of Israel is not merely superficial but in fact spiritual. On the one hand, it stems from God’s archenemy—the devil. On the other, it seeks to destroy God’s people because God promised to bring the Messiah through the nation of Israel in order to defeat the devil.

As noted above, then, this article will advance the view that hatred of the people of Israel—in history, in the present, and in the future—is driven by the agenda of the devil who opposes God’s plan to bring the Messiah through the people of Israel in order to save sinners from their sin, reverse the curse, and make all things new.

## The Biblical Perspective on the Hatred of Israel in the Old Testament

### Roots of Spiritual Conflict

The reality and depth of hatred toward God’s chosen people Israel is clearly illustrated in OT history. In the Torah (or the Pentateuch), two important passages explain that the roots of this hatred are spiritual: Genesis 3:15 and 12:1–3.

In Genesis 3:15, the Bible first describes the broadest meaning of enmity: it refers to the spiritual conflict between the serpent and the seed of the woman as “enmity” (אִי־בְרָתָא). It was the serpent who tempted Eve to mistrust God and disobey Him. As a consequence for the serpent’s sin, Genesis 3:15 predicts an ongoing conflict between the seed of the woman and the serpent (later revealed in Rev 12:9–

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<sup>7</sup> For evangelical studies of this point see Michael L. Brown, *Our Hands Are Stained with Blood: The Tragic Story of the Church and the Jewish People*, revised ed. (Harrisburg, NC: Destiny Image, 2019); Thomas Fretwell, *Why the Jewish People?: Understanding Replacement Theology & Antisemitism* (London: Ezra Foundation, 2021).

<sup>8</sup> Lipstadt, *Antisemitism*, 17–18.

<sup>9</sup> Brown, *Our Hands Are Stained with Blood*, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Dan Sered and Simon Stout, “The Spiritual Problem of Antisemitism,” *Lausanne Movement* (blog), May 11, 2020, <https://lausanne.org/global-analysis/the-spiritual-problem-of-antisemitism>.

10 to be Satan). While this verse does not refer directly to the people of Israel, one point to draw out from this verse is that Scripture identifies the ultimate source of all conflict to be spiritual and to flow from the chief enemy of God.<sup>11</sup>

Genesis 12:1–3 then gives a more specific indication that the sons of Israel should expect opposition. God’s promise to Abram in this passage stands as a turning point in biblical history.<sup>12</sup> It is impossible to overstate the importance of this promised comprehensive favor to Abram (land, nation, name, and blessing).<sup>13</sup> This promise (later ratified as a covenant in Gen 15) divides all people into two camps. On the one side, God promises His blessing to all those who in turn bless Abram. On the other side, God promises to curse (אָרַר) those who despise (קָלַל) Abram.<sup>14</sup> That is, from this point in history, God promises “all the families of the earth” to expect either His blessing or His displeasure in response to their treatment of the nation emanating from Abram. As Victor P. Hamilton notes, “God states that his relationship to others will be determined by the relationship of these others to Abram. Abram can expect to encounter both those who will bless him and those who will curse him.”<sup>15</sup>

Regarding the subject of this study, the passage suggests that from that point forward, Abram should expect to encounter “the one who curses you” (12:3). The near context gives an example of this principle when Pharaoh took Sarah (12:10–20). God later warned Abram that his descendants would be enslaved and oppressed 400 years (Gen 15:13). In his own life, the patriarchs saw this opposition when Ishmael mocked Isaac (Gen 21:9), when the Philistines seized Abraham’s wells near Beersheba (Gen 21:22–26), and when Isaac also suffered because of the Philistines’ envy (Gen 26:12–33).

Taken together, Genesis 3:15 and 12:3 foreshadow the suffering that ancient Israel would experience at the hands of their enemies. It is significant that the word

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<sup>11</sup> Gerard Van Groningen, “The Fall,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 241. He writes, “This enmity would be expressed in an abiding antithesis between Satan’s dominion and the cosmic kingdom of God.” See also Eugene H. Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 199–226.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, AB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), liii, where he divides the book into two sections (chap 1–11 and chap 12–50). He writes on p. 87 that 12:1–3 “signal the beginning of the integral history of a particular group.” For this same division see Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 369; Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967), 123–24; Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987), lii.

<sup>13</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 52; Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 52; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 113, where he explains that “bless” in Genesis “describes primarily two benefits: progeny and material wealth.” Cf. Michael Brown, בָּרַךְ, *NIDOTTE*, 1:758, where he writes, “*nothing was more important than securing the blessing of God in one’s life or nation*” (emphasis original).

<sup>14</sup> Though the two words for “curse” in 12:3 are typically translated the same in English because they are synonymous terms, the verb קָלַל is a malediction that calls down a curse (e.g., Goliath to David, 1 Sam 17:43) while אָרַר describes the resultant state and a divine pronouncement of a curse (e.g., God to Satan, Gen 3:15). Wenham writes that אָרַר “refers to a judicial curse pronounced on evildoers” (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987], 276. See also Leonard J. Coppes, קָלַל, *TWOT*, 2:800; C. A. Keller, קָלַל, *TLOT*, 3:1144; C. A. Keller, אָרַר, *TLOT*, 1:181.

<sup>15</sup> Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, 373.

“enemy” (אֹיֵב) comes from the same root as the “enmity” (אִיֵבָה) of Genesis 3:15. The history of ancient Israel shows that the term “enemy” often describes the “national enemies of Israel,”<sup>16</sup> those who violently opposed God’s people.

### Exodus 1—The First Holocaust

Exodus 1 gives the first description of state-sponsored persecution of ancient Israel.<sup>17</sup> Vague accusations against Israel culminated in wholesale enslavement and infanticide. The reason behind this awful history is described in 1:7—Israel’s remarkable fruitfulness. This verse uses verbs characteristic of the creation account in Genesis 1 to describe the divine “creation” of the nation of Israel (רבה, מלא, שרץ (פרה,)). Only one verb in 1:7 is not from the creation account, עצם, “to be mighty”; this addition to the list brings to the foreground the fact that Israel “grew immensely powerful.”<sup>18</sup> This one brief verse describes how the blessing promised to Abraham to become a “great nation” came to pass by God’s providential work.

The story becomes ominous when we read in the next verse that the new king “did not know Joseph” (1:8). Here, the verb “to know” (יָדַע) does not mean that the new king had no information about Joseph (e.g., how he saved Egypt by a combination of divine revelation and astute management). Just as “to know” can have the positive sense of care, confidence, and even intimacy, so also “to not know” in this context has the negative sense of neglect, distrust, and estrangement. Hamilton writes, “The new Pharaoh refuses to acknowledge the worth of Joseph’s contribution to Egypt’s well-being. He repudiates the legitimacy of Joseph’s time in office, refuses to acknowledge him and to extend any further courtesy to Joseph and his kin.”<sup>19</sup> There undoubtedly were political realities behind Pharaoh’s decision to disenfranchise the Israelites, possibly the memory of the Hyksos domination of Egypt.<sup>20</sup> The account regards those details, like the name of the Pharaoh, as extraneous.

Pharaoh’s speech to his nation plays on their natural fears with what must be the oldest antisemitic trope: this people cannot be trusted.<sup>21</sup> His speech in 1:9–10 includes accusations that have been leveled against the Jewish people through the ages: they will dominate our culture (1:9), they are not trustworthy (1:10), they will side with our enemies (1:10), they are “rootless” and will leave us at an inopportune time (1:10). He begins with the very dubious assertion: “the people of the sons of

<sup>16</sup> Tyler F. Williams, “אֹיֵב,” *NIDOTTE*, 1:366; he counts 129 out of 284 occurrences describing Israel’s enemies.

<sup>17</sup> For a similar opinion see Steven Leonard Jacobs, “Religion, Theology and American Antisemitism,” in *Antisemitism in North America: New World, Old Hate*, ed. Steven Leonard Jacobs et al. (Brill, 2016), 60–63, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctv2gjwsz3.9>.

<sup>18</sup> Robin Wakely, “עצם,” *NIDOTTE*, 3:484.

<sup>19</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 7.

<sup>20</sup> For this opinion see Iain Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel*, 2nd edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 184; Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, 98. However, for a contrary opinion see Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 82. For the history of the Hyksos in Egypt, see Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 98–124.

<sup>21</sup> Maizels, *What Is Antisemitism?*, 38, calls this “a classic antisemitic allegation: the dual loyalty charge.” However, she questions the historicity of the account.

Israel are more and mightier than we” (1:8). Did the population and might of the sons of Israel actually exceed that of native Egyptians? Douglas K. Stuart writes that this statement is “surely an exaggeration intended to frighten rather than to present the facts accurately.”<sup>22</sup> It is noteworthy that the new king interpreted God’s providential blessing on the sons of Israel as a threat to his people and to his rule. For the first time in the Scriptures, the Israelites are called a “people” (עַם), a great population bound by common ancestry. It is ironic that this recognition comes from one who hates and fears them.

The Egyptians’ actions against Israel fall into two measures of persecution. First, the Egyptians imposed servitude on the Israelites (1:11–14). Oppressive control, loss of freedom, miserable affliction, and forced labor are all the result of Pharaoh’s fear. Yet these measures cannot thwart the plan of God to multiply Abraham’s seed—“the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied” (1:12). Second, they attempted to weaken or destroy Israel by murder, namely male infanticide (1:15–22). Pharaoh’s inability to halt Israel’s amazing propagation leads him to this sinister stage of oppression. Apparently, the logic behind this step is that with the males dead, the female Israelites could be taken as wives for the Egyptians’ slaves, a stratagem illustrated in the Old Testament.<sup>23</sup> The courageous stand of the midwives (1:15–21) initially thwarted the king’s plan. Consequently, Pharaoh commanded all the Egyptian people in 1:22 to participate in this genocide, bringing guilt on his entire nation.

In summation, this account in Exodus 1, the first mention of state-sponsored and concerted oppression of Israel in the Scripture, paints an awful picture of Israel’s existence in Egypt. The nation of Israel faced grinding slavery compounded by the horror that parents would experience each day fearing for their infant sons’ lives. Israelite parents were forced to live in dread, knowing that at any time an Egyptian might take their baby boys and kill them. The text is silent on how widespread this chilling edict in 1:22 was actually obeyed. It seems that the edict remained in effect until the exodus from Egypt. The next account implies that enough Egyptians complied with the orders to commit the murder of Israelite boys so that Moses’ mother feared for her son’s life (2:2–3). It is encouraging to remember that the Exodus account particularly emphasizes “Yahweh’s ability to deliver his people, defeat all their enemies, men or gods, and control the kings of the earth for his own glory and his people’s benefit,” so that “the Exodus event became the salvation event par excellence in the OT.”<sup>24</sup> Merrill explains that since “Egypt would no longer bless the people of the Lord [they] therefore would forfeit the blessings that otherwise could be expected.”<sup>25</sup> The terrible persecution against Israel continued, but Israel continued to multiply. Rather than experience blessings (e.g., as under Joseph), the Egyptians experienced God’s curse in the ten plagues. In the end Pharaoh and his army were decisively defeated in one instant when they drowned in the sea (Exod 14).

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<sup>22</sup> Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 64. So also Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 1:273 and William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, AB (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974), 131, where he writes, “Pharaoh’s paranoia is ludicrous, yet sinister.”

<sup>23</sup> Propp, *Exodus 1–18*, 141, citing *BibAnt* 9:1 and references to this practice (Deut 20:14; 21:10–14; Judg 5:30; 21:11–14; 1 Kgs 11:15).

<sup>24</sup> Eugene Carpenter, “Exodus: Theology,” *NIDOTTE*, 4:611.

<sup>25</sup> Merrill, *Everlasting Dominion*, 254.

## Amalek and Implacable Hatred of Israel

The Scripture presents Amalek as the archetypical enemy of Israel. There are few details about the Amalekites in the Bible.<sup>26</sup> Researchers have not found information about Amalek outside the Bible, as is true of other details in Scripture as well.<sup>27</sup> The Amalekites apparently were semi-nomadic, dwelling in the Negev (Num 13:29). They are described often as raiding Israel. The book of Judges records how the Amalekites repeatedly inflicted grief on Israel as marauding plunderers allied with the twelve tribes' enemies (with Eglon king of Moab [3:12–13]; with Midian [6:3, 33; 7:12]; with the Maonites [10:12]). In a positive resumé of king Saul's warfare, the account reads, "And he did valiantly and struck the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them" (1 Sam 14:48). The Amalekites attacked Ziklag when David and his men were away (1 Sam 30). By kidnapping the women and children, the Amalekites again showed a propensity to attack the defenseless. Duane A. Garrett aptly calls them "desert pirates."<sup>28</sup>

As Debra K. Reid explains, "The Amalekites are consistently presented as an enemy of Israel and therefore of Yahweh himself."<sup>29</sup> For ages Jewish writers recognized the role of the Amalekites as the perpetual adversary.<sup>30</sup> Joel S. Kaminsky notes that historically Jewish writers explained Amalek's hatred of Israel as demonic, meaning that "the theological idea that massive historical evils perpetrated by individuals and groups who harbor an irrational hatred of Jews and Judaism are part of a larger cosmic pattern."<sup>31</sup> This pattern is explained clearly in three places: 1) Exodus 17:8–16; 2) the account of Haman in the book of Esther; and 3) Psalm 83.

*The Unexpected Pogrom (Exodus 17:8–16)*

Exodus 17:8–16 describes the first encounter Israel had with Amalek, which provides the earliest paradigm for understanding this people. In this passage, the

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<sup>26</sup> Brian Britt et al., "Amalek, Amalekites," *EBR*, accessed August 20, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1515/EBR.amalekamalekites>; Samuel Abramsky, David S. Sperling, and Elimelech Epstein Halevy, "Amalek, Amalekites," *EncJud*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1:28–31; Gerald L. Mattingly, "Amalek," *ABD*, 1:169–71. Though Mattingly calls them "a relatively obscure people," he acknowledges that they are presented as one of the traditional enemies of Israel.

<sup>27</sup> One possible identification for Amalek outside the Bible is explained by Bob Becking, "Amalek," *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Leiden/Boston: Brill/Eerdmans, 1999), 26. He notes that some think "Amalek" is the name of a Canaanite mountain deity mentioned in the Egyptian source called the Egyptian Leiden Magical Papyrus dating to 1292–1069 BC. Becking acknowledges that this identification is disputed.

<sup>28</sup> Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2014), 435–36.

<sup>29</sup> Debra K. Reid, "Amalek," *NIDOTTE*, 4:371. Robinson essentially agrees, writing that "Amalek has chiefly a symbolic function, standing for any group or nation who by attacking Israel resists the divine will," see Bernard P. Robinson, "Israel and Amalek: The Context of Exodus 17:8–16," *JSOT* 10, no. 32 (June 1985): 18. By this he needlessly casts doubt on the historical details of the account.

<sup>30</sup> Steven Leonard Jacobs, "Rethinking Amalek in This 21st Century," *Religions* 8, no. 196 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8090196>.

<sup>31</sup> Joel S. Kaminsky, *Yet I Loved Jacob: Reclaiming the Biblical Concept of Election* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2007), 115–16, also cited by Jacobs, "Rethinking Amalek," 5.

Amalekites appear unexpectedly and attack Israel at Rephidim. The context explains that the Israelites suffered from a lack of water, causing a nation-wide crisis (17:1–7). Apparently, the Amalekites journeyed far from their normal territory in the Negev in order to attack Israel. Deuteronomy 25:18 adds that the Amalekites attacked “all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary.” The cruelty of a surprise attack on vulnerable non-combatants adds to Amalek’s guilt.

Joshua, introduced for the first time, is given one day (i.e., “tomorrow”; 17:8) to assemble an army for defense. Given the Israelites’ lack of preparations, it is not surprising that victory over the Amalekites was uncertain during the battle. Many questions have been posed about the meaning in 17:11–12 of Moses holding the “staff of God.”<sup>32</sup> What is clear is that only when the staff was raised did Israel prevail. This must indicate that help from God came as Moses held up the staff, which throughout the previous chapters represented the power of God. Joshua was victorious over the Amalekites, but not completely because the text states that Joshua “weakened” Amalek, allowing them to survive to fight another day against Israel.<sup>33</sup> Amalek is presented as the powerful enemy that nearly defeated Israel.

After Joshua’s victory, the text explains Amalek’s opposition to God and Israel in several ways. First, God commands Moses to record by written and oral means God’s intention to “utterly blot out the memory of Amalek” (17:14). It is notable that this is the first time writing is mentioned in the Bible, and that it is in reaction to the expression of hatred of God’s people Israel. This act of anti-Israel animosity was so significant that God required Israel to guard the memory of the event by means of a written document.<sup>34</sup> Second, Moses erects an altar (17:15). Although the passage does not give a reason for the altar, contextually the best explanation is that Israel sought to commemorate the victory over and the vow against Amalek.<sup>35</sup> Third, the final verse in the pericope predicts perpetual war with Amalek. Exodus 17:16 states that the “war” (מִלְחָמָה) is between Amalek and Yahweh perpetually (מִדּוֹר דּוֹר, “from generation to generation”).<sup>36</sup> The conclusion underscores again God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3—that to be the enemy of Israel is to be the enemy of God Himself.

<sup>32</sup> For a recent treatment, see Tomer Greenberg, “The Battle with Amalek (Exod. 17.8-16): When God Trusts in Man,” *JSOT* 47, no. 3 (March 2023): 304–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/03090892221149048>.

<sup>33</sup> Brevard S. Childs, *Exodus*, OTL (Richmond, VA: Westminster John Knox, 1974), 311. Greenberg also interprets הִלֵּשׁ in this way, writing that the verb, “indicates a close victory rather than a knockout” (“The Battle with Amalek [Exod. 17.8–16],” 317). However, some lexicons explain the verb in 13:13 as “defeated” and not “weakened.” *HALOT* and *DCH* differentiate between I-הִלֵּשׁ “to weaken” and II-הִלֵּשׁ “to defeat.”

<sup>34</sup> Millard notes that Exodus 17:14 shows that writing was normal in ancient Israel, and that written documents had more authority than oral tradition (Alan R. Millard, “Authors, Books, and Readers in the Ancient World,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, ed. Judith M. Lieu and J. W. Rogerson [Oxford University Press, 2008], 543–63, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199237777.003.0031>); see also Alan R. Millard, “Literacy: Ancient Israel,” *ABD* 4:337. Although she misrepresents Millard’s view, Susan Niditch nonetheless agrees that “the Bible offers ample evidence of an Israelite literate mentality” (Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word: Ancient Israelite Literature*, Library of Ancient Israel [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1996], 94).

<sup>35</sup> Garrett, *Commentary on Exodus*, 436–37.

<sup>36</sup> The first phrase of 17:16 is (וַיִּאָמֶר כִּי יָדָא עַל־כִּסֵּא יְהוָה) a notorious crux with multiple interpretations and emendations. The LSB renders it, “Because He has sworn with a hand upon the throne of Yah.” Durham instead explains the phrase as referring to Amalek’s enmity to God: “The Amalekites have raised a hand against Yahweh’s sovereignty, symbolized repeatedly in the OT by reference to his כִּסֵּא/כִּסֵּא ‘throne’” (John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987], 237). For a helpful discussion of this point, see Greenberg, “The Battle with Amalek,” 316.



*Haman and the Resurgence of Amalek (Esther 3)*

Despite the commands and attempts to eradicate Amalek, this people group reappears several times in Israel's history. The Scriptures show that this enemy persistently continues to fight. As noted, they plagued the tribes during the Judges. Saul was commanded to continue a holy war and to "utterly destroy" (חרם) Amalek (1 Sam 15:3, וְהִתְחַדְּמָם, "and devote to destruction").<sup>37</sup> Saul almost completely obeyed when he "devoted to destruction all the people" (1 Sam 15:8, וְאָתֵת כָּל־הָעָם הִתְחַדְּמָם). Since Saul failed to finish this holy war, Samuel himself killed King Agag (1 Sam 15:33). At this point in the biblical narrative the reader might think that Amalek then ceased to exist as a people. Yet they reappear soon after in the raid against Ziklag (1 Sam 30). The Chronicler later explains that not only did David war against them (1 Chron 18:11), but that again during Hezekiah's reign centuries after David, men of Simeon "defeated the remnant of the Amalekites who had escaped" (1 Chron 4:43).

The resurgence of Amalek was anticipated in Exodus 17:16 where it is stated that in "every generation" God Himself would wage war against them. This tension between perpetual warfare while attempting to erase Amalek's memory is reflected by the ironic call to "not forget" to "blot out the memory of Amalek" (Deut 25:19). As Diane Lipton notes, "A common thread is the call for total destruction alongside acknowledgement of persistent survival."<sup>38</sup> Tomer Greenberg concurs: "Amalek has some extraordinary ability to oppose God, an ability that is not easily subdued—not only now but always."<sup>39</sup> The account of Haman in the book of Esther is a dramatic example of this motif as well.

Haman appears in Esther 3:1. His promotion by the Persian king is surprising, since 2:21–23 records how Mordecai saved the king from an assassination plot. Expositors typically have explained that "the author must have intended the designation of Haman as 'the Agagite' [אֲגָגִי] to indicate descent from Saul's opponent Agag, king of Amalek."<sup>40</sup> There can be no doubt that Mordecai refused to honor Haman because of his association with the perpetual enemy of God (cf. Esth 3:4). If Mordecai was guilty of violating a royal command, he alone should have been punished. But Haman's true genocidal intentions are revealed in Esther 3:6 where we read, "Haman sought to destroy all the Jews." The ensuing story is how the threat of genocide hangs over the Jewish people in every part of the Persian empire.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of the intertextual allusions to Amalek in 1 Samuel 15, see Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Indiana Literary Biblical Series (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, 1985), 482–514.

<sup>38</sup> Diane Lipton, in Brian Britt et al., "Amalek, Amalekites," *EBR*, see section (I), "In the Bible."

<sup>39</sup> Greenberg, "The Battle with Amalek (Exod. 17.8-16)," 313.

<sup>40</sup> Bezalel Porten et al., "Haman," *EncJud*, 2nd ed., 8:293. So also: Kathryn Schifferdecker (in Jo Carruthers et al., "Haman," *EBR*, <https://doi.org/10.1515/ebr.haman>); Mervin Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 326; Reid, *Esther*, 89; Frederic William Bush, *Ruth, Esther*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1996), 379, 384. See especially Carey A. Moore, *Esther*, AYB (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974), 35, where he summarizes this point: "This is the view of Josephus (who rendered it *amalekiten*), the Talmud, and the Targums, as well as of most commentators, who rightly view Haman as a descendant of the Amalekites." Despite this, some commentators express skepticism about the connection between אֲגָגִי and אֲמָלֵקִי, e.g., K&D, 4:213, where they write that this "can by no means be proved. The name Agag is not sufficient for the purpose."

<sup>41</sup> For contemporary historical examples of genocide see Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 326, who cites Robert Gordis, "Religion, Wisdom and History in the Book of Esther—A New Solution to an Ancient Crux," *JBL* 100 (1981): 383.

The eventual complete reversal of Haman’s plan and the salvation of the Jewish people point out that while God is not actually mentioned in the book, He is nonetheless present to save His people. A dual-sided theme in the book is (1) the threat to God’s people along with (2) His providential salvation. Haman illustrates that danger to the Jewish people can appear unexpectedly and suddenly. In the book, Haman is called the “attacker” of the Jews (רָצַח, 3:10; 8:1; 9:10, 24) and the “enemy” (אֹיֵב, 7:6), using the word that reminds the reader of the enmity in Genesis 3:15. Mervin Breneman calls this theme “the danger of antisemitism” and then applies it to his own faith: “Esther says to the Christian that anti-Jewish hostility is intolerable to God.”<sup>42</sup> The positive side of this dual theme is that even though God may not be mentioned in the book, He is even so clearly acting. Indisputably, it was the hand of God that elevated Esther “for such a time as this” (4:14).

### *Prayer for Protection against Genocide—Amalek in Psalm 83*

The previous passages describe concrete episodes of historical animosity toward Israel. Psalm 83, in contrast, summarizes typical threats of animosity toward Israel. As Willem VanGemeren explains, this psalm presents “a *national lament* in which the psalmist prays the Lord’s intervention against many enemies.”<sup>43</sup> This provides a helpful conclusion to the first part of this study since Psalm 83 gives a reflective answer to the question of why Israel was so hated and so threatened. This is an imprecatory psalm directed against ten groups of enemies (tribes, nations, and cities) while remembering the defeat of another seven individuals. Amalek is mentioned, but obviously the expansive lists show that this prayer aims at a broader application. This psalm repeats the observation of Exodus 17:15—the enemy of Israel is the enemy of God Himself.

Who are these enemies? The ten groups mentioned (83:6–8) represent most of Israel’s enemies who at one time or another threatened the security of God’s people. In this setting, Amalek is just one of many. The Bible does not record a specific episode when all of them banded together against Israel. As Tremper Longman expresses, “Rather than indicating a specific historical moment, these are the traditional enemies of Israel, and thus the psalm could have been used in any similar conflict.”<sup>44</sup> The list almost certainly reflects the Egyptian idiom of “nine bows” that represents all the enemies of the state, with Assyria as the great world power leading the coalition; hence, John W. Hilber explains, the psalmist includes “a stereotypical list of enemies.”<sup>45</sup> In other words, the two lists, both the ten active

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<sup>42</sup> Breneman, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*, 297.

<sup>43</sup> Willem VanGemeren, “Psalms,” *EBC*, rev. ed., 5:627. He reflects the majority opinion among commentators that the psalm does not reflect a specific national threat to Israel.

<sup>44</sup> Tremper Longman III, *Psalms: An Introduction and Commentary*, TOTC (Nottingham, England: InterVarsity, 2014), 308.

<sup>45</sup> John W. Hilber, “Psalms,” *ZIBBCOT*, 5:89, citing Eric Uphill, “The ‘Nine Bows,’” *Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-egyptisch Genootschap Ex Orient Lux* 19 (1965–1966): 396–98. The phrase appears in Egyptian canonical and monumental texts where James K. Hoffmeier calls it “a popular expression for the enemies of Egypt” (“The Gebel Barkal Stela of Thutmose III,” *COS* 2.2B:15; see also James K. Hoffmeier, “The [Israel] Stela of Merneptah,” *COS* 2.6:41, where the idiom is used also).

enemies and the seven vanquished foes (83:9–12), summarize all those opposed to Israel, past, present, and future.

What is the goal of this coalition aligned against Israel? Their program is presented in a telling chiasm.<sup>46</sup>

83:3 (A) Enemies of God	“For behold, Your enemies ...”
	“Those who hate You ...”
83:4 (B) Enemies of Israel	“... against Your people ...”
	“... against Your treasured ones
83:5 (B') Enemies of Israel	“... let us wipe them out as a nation ...”
	“... the name of Israel ...”
83:6 (A') Enemies of God	“For they have conspired ...”
	“Against You ...”

As the structure points out, the enemies of Israel are the enemies of God Himself. The psalm further develops the recurring theme that to oppose Abraham's descendants is to invoke God's curse; those who hate God are the same ones that attack the chosen people. In this case, the epitome of their desire is to “wipe them out as a nation/that the name of Israel be remembered no more” (83:4). This verse speaks plainly of the enemy's desire to carry out genocide against God's people Israel. Since the Scriptures (as well as modern history) record numerous incidents where genocide was actually attempted against Israel, this statement cannot be considered as poetic overstatement. Calvin recognizes that the psalmist “enumerates the many nations which had conspired together for the express purpose of *exterminating the people of Israel*.”<sup>47</sup> W. Schottroff explains that the idiom of “the cessation of memory” is “*equivalent to total annihilation*, [and] is expected for evildoers and enemies ... or conferred upon them in curse and judgment sayings.”<sup>48</sup>

### Summary

This section has surveyed a selection of passages from the OT that show that the hatred of Israel, and even attempted genocide, was a reality in ancient Israel. Exodus 1 shows that animosity toward the people of Israel emanated from Pharaoh's distortions and misplaced fear. The long history of Amalek's attacks shows that such hatred can appear unexpectedly and without explanation. Haman continued Amalek's hatred by attempting to annihilate Israel, using slanderous tropes and bribery. Psalm 83 provides a reflective and prayerful description of the hatred of Israel in the era of ancient Israel, describing how numerous enemies wanted to destroy the nation. The psalm ties such attacks to enmity with God Himself—to hate God is to hate the nation of Israel. This psalm ties together two themes. First, the psalm reminds that the ultimate source of such enmity is the serpent himself (Gen

<sup>46</sup> Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1990), 345, citing B. Costacurta, “L'aggressione contro Dio: Studio del Salmo 83,” *Biblica* 64 (1983) 518–41. The two כִּי phrases serve as an inclusio.

<sup>47</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries*, trans. John King, Accordance electronic ed. (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847), paragraph 15200 (emphasis added).

<sup>48</sup> W. Schottroff, “זכר,” *TLOT*, 1:385 (emphasis added).

3:15). Second, and most obvious, the psalm hearkens back to Genesis 12:1–3 where God vowed to punish with a curse any who dared to oppose Abraham’s descendants.

### The Biblical Perspective on the Hatred of Israel in the New Testament

Despite the belief that hatred of the people of Israel in ancient history or antisemitism in modern history is merely a human phenomenon, Scripture shows that behind this ideology are demonic origins.<sup>49</sup> This portion of the article uses intertextual and literary analysis<sup>50</sup> to examine the hatred of the people of Israel in three texts: Revelation 12:1–17, 16:12–16, and 20:4–10.<sup>51</sup> To study these texts we answer five main questions.

- (1) What is the *structure* of the texts and how does this structure help discern their meaning?<sup>52</sup>
- (2) What is the placement of the texts within their units and how does this placement help discern their meaning? That is, what is the *context* of each passage?
- (3) How does the *literary analysis* of the content of the texts help discern their meaning?
- (4) How do the *allusions* in the texts help discern their meaning and how do they contribute to their overall message?
- (5) What is the *theological message* of these texts?

#### Revelation 12:1–17

Revelation 12 is the cornerstone text exposing the demonic powers behind the hatred of the people of Israel. John the Apostle describes seeing two heavenly signs that, frame by frame, in a metaphorical but clear form, revealed the truth behind this ideology. Following literary analysis, we define the boundaries of chapter 12 by two phrases, the first of which refers to a heavenly sign: “A great sign appeared in

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<sup>49</sup> Here we use the New American Standard Bible (NASB) and *Novum Testamentum Graece*, Nestle-Aland, 28th ed.

<sup>50</sup> Craig Koester, “Book of Revelation,” *NIDB*, 4:787, says that there are different approaches to text analysis, for example, “readers approach,” where “interpretation is affected by what kind of material they think they are reading.” But this article uses the text-centered approach that pursues authorial intent and which involves three dimensions: first, understanding the Bible as a text; second, reading the Bible as a text; and third, exegeting the Bible as a text. See Yee-Cheung Wong, *A Text-Centered Approach to Old Testament Exegesis and Theology and Its Application to the Book of Isaiah* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 2001). Although this article does not allow for a more in-depth literary analysis of the text, which would be based on its three important characteristics such as compositional cohesion, compositional strategy, and compositional coherence, proposed by Robert De Beaugrande and U. Dressler Wolfgang in *Introduction to Text Linguistics*, Longman Linguistics Library (New York: Longman, 1981) and in working with text genres, this research nevertheless traces the development of animosity toward Israel in the book of Revelation.

<sup>51</sup> Despite the fact that in the Gospels (Matt 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, etc.) and Epistles (2 Thess 2:1–12; 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:1–6, etc.) there are texts that point to the role of the devil and the Antichrist in their work against Israel and the Messianic line, the clearest texts revealing the essence of anti-Israel activity are arguably found in the book of Revelation.

<sup>52</sup> For further discussion, see Adela Yarbro Collins, “Book of Revelation,” *ABD* 5:696.

heaven” (12:1), while the second refers to an earthly vision: “And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea” (13:1), between which John placed 12:1–17.

### (1) Structure

Although many commentators define the structure of chapter 12 thematically, we focus on its literary markers to show how John built the framework of the passage.<sup>53</sup> In this chapter, John employs two phrases. The first phrase is “A great sign appeared in heaven” (v. 1). The second phrase is “Then another sign appeared in heaven” (v. 3).

- (1) The first sign: the woman (12:1–2)
- (2) The second sign: the dragon (12:3–17)

This structure implies a specific composition of the text. It is constructed in such a way that the reader can see two interconnected elements of one picture—the opposition between Israel and the devil—which demonstrates the essence of the hatred of God’s people.

### (2) Context

The place of chapter 12 in the book of Revelation plays an important role in providing understanding for the hatred of the people of Israel.<sup>54</sup> Inasmuch as chapter 12 precedes chapters 16 and 20, the content of chapter 12 establishes the nature of the first wave of animosity toward God’s people described in chapter 16 (“And I saw” v. 13) and the nature of the second wave of animosity described in chapter 20 (“Then I saw” v. 4).

### (3) Literary Analysis

It is important to note at the very beginning of chapter 12 that the two signs (12:1, 3) that John saw were heavenly phenomena. This chapter not only depicts “heavenly warfare”<sup>55</sup> but also “embodies a surrealistic word-picture which describes the spiritual struggle standing behind historical events.”<sup>56</sup> Following this idea, when working with the analysis of the text of chapter 12, we will note two plots associated with the description of the hatred of God’s people, the first of which relates to the object of persecution, and the second to the initiator of this persecution.

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<sup>53</sup> See Tyler D. Mayfield, *Literary Structure and Setting in Ezekiel*, *Forschungen Zum Alten Testament* 2/43 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010). Although there are various literary markers (formulas, phrases, words) in the book of Revelation, the key words in its first chapter are: “saw” (v. 2), “see” (v. 11), “see,” “saw” (v. 12), “saw” (v. 17), “have seen” (v. 19), “saw” (v. 20), and they indicate that the book is built on a multitude of visual pictures of the future, which largely determines its structure.

<sup>54</sup> “Then I saw” (13:1), “I saw” (13:3), “Then I saw” (13:11), “Then I looked” (14:1), “And I saw” (14:6), “Then I looked” (14:14).

<sup>55</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *The Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 166.

<sup>56</sup> Ladd, *The Revelation of John*, 167.

*The First Scene: The Object of Persecution*

In the two signs of Revelation 12 that relate to the dragon's war with God, three objects are clearly visible that were subject to persecution by the dragon: (1) the woman, (2) the child, and (3) the faithful remnant.

In both the first and second heavenly signs, John saw a woman. The word "woman" (γυνή) is used in the text eight times (12:1, 4, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17). In addition to this word, John mentions 17 pronouns when referring to this woman.<sup>57</sup> Thus, in chapter 12, John uses 25 direct references related to the woman who was persecuted by the dragon. Although there are different opinions about who this woman is,<sup>58</sup> a strong argument can be made that the woman represents Israel (first woman).<sup>59</sup> The terminology John uses in 12:1 to describe this woman, and the context of the chapter, both deal with Israel. The description in 12:1 is: "a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." Later, chapters 17–18 deal with Babylon (the second woman), and chapters 19–22 deal with the Church, the bride of the Lamb (the third woman).

The second sign in chapter 12 that John saw was a male child, whom he describes in various Greek terms.<sup>60</sup> George E. Ladd is sure that this child is the Messiah when he writes that the dragon wants "to destroy both the woman and the Messiah."<sup>61</sup> John Walvoord shares this same idea saying that the phrase "the man-child" refers "to Christ."<sup>62</sup> Evidence that this child is the Messiah is provided by several factors associated with his description in chapter 12. First, this child will "rule all nations with a rod of iron" (12:5). Second, he has a specific relationship with God (12:5). Third, he is associated with the throne of God (12:5). Fourth, the use of terminology in this chapter is associated with the person of the Messiah: "Christ" (12:10), "the Lamb" (12:11), "Jesus" (12:17).

Besides the woman and her child, chapter 12 also points to another target of persecution. John saw people "who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (12:17), against whom the dragon declared war (in Greek, "went away to make a war" ἀπῆλθεν ποιῆσαι πόλεμον). In this text, the phrase "who ... hold to the testimony of Jesus" refers to those who belong to Christ. Walvoord writes

<sup>57</sup> (1) "her" (five times), (2) "she" (five times), (3) "who" (two times), (4) "her" (seven times).

<sup>58</sup> Many commentators believe that this woman represents the Church. Ladd, *The Revelation of John*, 166, writes that "the woman represents the ideal people of God – the church." Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Revelation*, *The Bible Speaks Today* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1975), 119, also shares this idea when he says that this woman "is in fact the church." James L. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 171, writes: "The woman is an image of the church, persecuted by the dragon." Robert Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 236, says: "It is out of faithful Israel that Messiah will come. It should cause no trouble that within the same chapter the woman comes to signify the church (v. 17)."

<sup>59</sup> John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago: Moody, 1998), 187, is confident that "the woman" represents "Israel." For evidence that the woman in Revelation 12 is Israel, see Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 187–88; G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, NCBC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 197–98; Alan Johnson, "Revelation," *EBC*, rev. ed. 13:693–96.

<sup>60</sup> In the NASB in 12:2 there is a word "child" but in Greek there is another word (τεκεῖν "to bear children," "birth"), in verse 4 "child" ("child" τὸ τέκνον), in verse 5 "child" ("son," "man" υἰόν, ἀρσεν, also "child" τὸ τέκνον), in verse 13 "child" ("male," "man" τὸν ἀρσενά).

<sup>61</sup> Ladd, *The Revelation of John*, 166.

<sup>62</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 187.

that these are “Israel, the remnant of the seed of the woman,”<sup>63</sup> about whom the context of chapter 12 speaks.

#### The Second Scene: The Initiator of the Persecution

The second sign (12:3–17) that John saw not only demonstrates the dragon's war with God, but also consists of several phases, each of which points to specific actions of the dragon. (1) The dragon wants to devour the child (12:4). (2) The dragon pursues the woman (12:6, 13, 14). (3) The dragon “poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away by the flood” (12:15, 16). (4) The dragon is “enraged at the woman” (12:17). (5) The dragon “went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus” (12:17). In order to better describe the personality of this evil spirit, John uses various epithets. He uses the word “dragon” (δράκων) in its different variations eight times.<sup>64</sup> Thus John shows that the initiator of the targeted attack on Israel is not a man, but an evil spirit<sup>65</sup> – the enemy of God (12:5, 6, 10, 17).<sup>66</sup>

#### (4) Allusions

In chapter 12 John does not make any clear allusions to other passages in Revelation. In 12:5 there is an indirect allusion to Revelation 2:27. Although both passages use similar phrases: “who is going to rule all the nations with a rod of iron” (12:5) and “he shall rule them with a rod of iron” (2:27), the difference is that 12:5 is talking about the authority of Christ, while 2:27 is talking about the authority of Christ's followers (see 2:26).

#### (5) Theology

Revelation 12 depicts the satanic hatred of God's people through the two signs in the sky that John saw. These two signs paint a picture of the dragon's war with God, which is expressed in an attack on Israel, Israel's Messiah, and Israel's faithful remnant.

#### Revelation 16:12–16

If in Revelation 12:1–17 John saw a visual aid as to where disdain for the people of Israel originates and how it works, then in 16:12–16 John points to how this

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<sup>63</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 187.

<sup>64</sup> 12:3, 4, 7 (twice), 9, 13, 16, 17. Additionally, chapter 12 uses 5 other descriptions for the enemy of God: (1) the phrase “the serpent of old” (ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος, 12:9), (2) “the devil” (Διάβολος, twice, 12:9, 12), (3) “Satan” (ὁ Σατανᾶς, once, 12:9), (4) “accuser” (ὁ κατήγορ, once, 12:10), and (5) “serpent” (ὄφις, three times, 12:9, 14, 15).

<sup>65</sup> Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 187, writes directly that “the dragon” represents “Satan.” So also Ladd, *The Revelation of John*, 166.

<sup>66</sup> Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 234, writes that antisemitism represents “the age-long conflict between God and Satan which accounts for the persecution the church is to experience.” In the context of this chapter, there is another picture that represents the war of the dragon and his angels with Michael, “one of the chief princes” of Israel (Dan 10:13), and his angels (Rev 12:7–10), which indirectly refers to the war of the dragon with God.

mechanism will manifest itself in earthly conditions at the end of the Great Tribulation. I define the boundaries of 16:12–16 by two literary formulas, the first of which is “the sixth angel poured out his bowl” (16:12), and the second, “the seventh angel poured out his bowl” (16:17), between which John placed this text.

(1) *Structure*

John marked the structure of 16:12–16 by several short phrases, which he begins with the conjunction “and” (καί), following the literary formula: “The sixth angel poured out his bowl” (16:12a).

- (1) “and its water was dried up” (16:12)
- (2) “And I saw” (16:13)
- (3) “And they gathered them together” (16:16)

This structure indicates three stages in the development of targeted attacks on Israel at the end of the Great Tribulation, the main part of which John begins with the phrase: “And I saw” (16:13)

- (1) The creation of conditions for war (16:12).
- (2) The appearance and activity of demonic spirits (16:13–15).
- (3) The attack on Israel (16:16).

(2) *Context*

Revelation 15 begins with the phrase, “Then I saw another sign in heaven” (15:1), followed by the phrase, “seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished” (15:1; see also 15:6, 7). Chapter 17 begins with the announcement of the judgment of Babylon, which will be brought by one of the seven angels having the seven bowls (17:1), using the phrase “I will show you” (17:1), as well as “and I saw” (17:3). Situated between these chapters, chapter 16 begins with the command of the seven angels to “pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God” (16:1), followed by seven literary formulas that define the structure of the chapter.

- (1) “the first *angel* went and poured out his bowl” (16:2)
- (2) “the second *angel* went and poured out his bowl” (16:3)
- (3) “the third *angel* went and poured out his bowl” (16:4)
- (4) “the fourth *angel* went and poured out his bowl” (16:8)
- (5) “the fifth *angel* went and poured out his bowl” (16:10)
- (6) “the sixth *angel* went and poured out his bowl” (16:12)
- (7) “the seventh *angel* went and poured out his bowl” (16:17)<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Johnson, “Revelation,” 593, divides this chapter into seven parts, each of which begins with an angel pouring out a bowl of wrath. In the same way F. F. Bruce, 1986, “Revelation,” *IBC*, 1596, divides this chapter into seven parts.



The structure of chapter 16 not only reveals a unified theme but also identifies the place of 16:12–16 to be between the fifth (16:10) and seventh (16:17) formulas, which is the penultimate literary location in the series of God's judgments.<sup>68</sup> The placement of this text makes it clear that the outbreak of animosity toward God and Israel at the end of the Great Tribulation will occur after the beast's kingdom "became darkened" (16:10–11), and its final stage will begin after "the seventh angel pours out his bowl upon the air" (16:17).

### (3) *Literary Analysis*

An analysis of the text of 16:12–16 points to four factors that reflect the demonic anti-God and anti-Israel activity during the Great Tribulation.

#### *The First Factor: The Demonic Nature of the Animosity toward Israel and God*

Revelation 16:13 demonstrates the demonic nature of the animosity toward Israel and God, where John uses several key phrases. The first: "out of the mouth of the dragon." The second: "out of the mouth of the beast." The third: "out of the mouth of the false prophet." The fourth: "three unclean spirits." Thus, these words clearly indicate the demonic nature of this phenomenon: "dragon" (τοῦ δράκοντος), "beast" (τοῦ θηρίου), "false prophet" (τοῦ ψευδοπροφήτου),<sup>69</sup> and "three unclean spirits" (πνεύματα τρία ἀκάθαρτα).

#### *The Second Factor: The Demonic Source of the Animosity toward Israel and God*

The phrase "out of the mouth" (ἐκ τοῦ στόματος), which John repeats three times in 16:13, plays an important role in identifying the source of this animosity. One of the meanings of the preposition ἐκ (out of, from, with) refers to a movement from within to the outside, clearly demonstrating the trajectory of evil that originates from within the unclean trinity (the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet).

#### *The Third Factor: The Role of Demons in the Animosity toward Israel and God*

John saw three spirits "unclean, like frogs" (16:13) (ὡς βάτραχοι) coming out of the mouth of the unclean trinity,<sup>70</sup> which "are considered unclean animals by the Jews (Lev 11:10, 41)."<sup>71</sup> In addition, the apostle uses another phrase to describe these

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<sup>68</sup> (1) Judgment of the wicked men (v. 2); (2) Judgment of the inhabitants of the sea (v. 3); (3) Judgment of the murderers of the saints (vv. 4–7); (4) Judgment of the wicked (vv. 8–9); (5) Judgment of the throne of the beast (vv. 10–11); (6) Judgment of the wicked trinity and their coalition (vv. 12–16); (7) Judgment of the cities, islands, and wicked men (vv. 17–21).

<sup>69</sup> G. B. Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 206, says that this text (16:13) contains the first mention "of the false prophet, but it is not hard to identify him with the monster from the land which made all men worship the first monster (xiii. 11–18). It is a title which recalls Jesus's prophecy of the coming of false messiahs and false prophets (Mark xiii. 22), and it is strongly suggesting that the first monster is to be regarded as the false messiah or Antichrist."

<sup>70</sup> Caird, *A Commentary on the Revelation*, 206, says that "In all the Old Testament prophecies about an enemy from beyond, who is to gather for a last decisive battle, there is no mention of frogs."

<sup>71</sup> Johnson, "Revelation," 734.

unclean spirits: “spirits of demons” (πνεύματα δαιμονίων) (16:14). Beasley-Murray writes that these spirits are “the malignant forces of the spiritual world.”<sup>72</sup> They are “demonic powers,” “the three evil spirits,” and “the unholy trinity.”<sup>73</sup> Verse 14 indicates the role of these spirits in gathering the enemies to oppose God and Israel. First, they will perform signs (“miraculous signs”).<sup>74</sup> Second, they will go out “to the kings of the entire world” (see also 16:16). Third, they will gather these kings together. Fourth, on God’s appointed day, they will lead these kings to war against Israel (see also 16:16).

*The Fourth Factor: The Goal of the Coalition of Animosity toward Israel and God*

In 16:16 John uses the phrase “and he gathered them together” and also the word “Armageddon” (Ἀρμαγεδών).<sup>75</sup> John MacArthur clarifies the connection of 16:16 with the land of Israel when he writes: “Since there is no specific mountain by that name, and Har can refer to the hill country, it is probably a reference to the hill country surrounding the Plain of Megiddo, some sixty miles north of Jerusalem.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, in this text, John the apostle points to the purpose of the anti-Israel and anti-God coalition at the end of the Great Tribulation: war (16:14) against Israel (16:16).

*(4) Allusions*

At the outset, we will point out two rules we use when working with allusions in this article.<sup>77</sup> First, despite the fact that the book of Revelation contains many references to the Old and New Testaments,<sup>78</sup> most of which “come not in explicit quotations but in allusions and conceptual borrowings,”<sup>79</sup> we will refer only to the texts of the book of Revelation. Second, despite the fact that the references we will deal with are not direct quotations or even paraphrases, they are united by common vocabulary and similar context, which is an important condition for the legitimacy of the references.

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<sup>72</sup> Beasley-Murray, *Revelation*, 224.

<sup>73</sup> Bruce, 1986, “Revelation,” 1620.

<sup>74</sup> Mark Wilson, “Revelation,” *ZIBBC*, 4:341. We want to add that in 16:15 John uses the following two phrases: “blessed is he who watches” and “he who keeps his garments,” which refer to the saints who will not be deceived by demonic spirits and therefore not join the ranks of the wicked coalition.

<sup>75</sup> See discussion on Armageddon by Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 301–302; and Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8–22: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1995), 268–71.

<sup>76</sup> John MacArthur, *Because the Time is Near* (Chicago: Moody, 2007), 255–56.

<sup>77</sup> Jeffery Leonard, “Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case,” *JBL* 127, no. 2 (2008): 245, writes that when evidence of the dependence of one text on another emerges, it is necessary to define a standard by which the reliability of the evidence can be assessed. He further speaks of two types of intertextual links: (1) clear links and (2) lesser clear links, while emphasizing that each type of these links implies the use of different standards for assessing the strength of that evidence.

<sup>78</sup> D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 477, write that some scholars think that John used certain New Testament sources (“Matthew, Luke, 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Colossians and Ephesians) to write the book of Revelation.”

<sup>79</sup> Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 477.

Upon a close examination of Revelation, one can find a number of allusions from 16:12–16 to Revelation 13,<sup>80</sup> 14,<sup>81</sup> 17, and 19.<sup>82</sup> These allusions further expound the foundation of the hatred of the people of Israel by pointing out that such sentiment is the foundation of Satan's war against God, expressed in an attack not only on Israel, but also on Christ and the late-tribulation saints. However, 16:12–16, above all, has a close connection with chapter 12. In 16:13, the first person listed in the unclean trinity is the dragon (δράκων), the key figure who will lead the military campaign against Israel at the end of the tribulation. In Revelation 12, the key figure who leads the attack on Israel, its Messiah, and the faithful remnant is the same dragon (δράκων) (12:3, 4, 7 [twice], 9, 12, 13, 16, 17). Furthermore, in chapter 16 (key verses being 13, 14, 16) and chapter 12 (key verses being 4, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17) the same context is evident: the dragon's war against Israel and God.

### (5) Theology

Built upon this analysis, it can be concluded that the global surge in animosity toward Israel and God that will occur at the end of the Great Tribulation will be a

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<sup>80</sup> In Revelation 13, John uses the same words as in 16:12–16. The first word is “beast,” which sometimes appears in phrases such as “the first beast,” “the other beast,” and “the image of the beast” (13:1, 2, 3, 4 [three times], 11, 12 [two times], 14 [two times], 15 [three times], 17, 18). In addition, the pronouns “him,” “he,” “his” refer to the beast (verses 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8), regarding which R. C. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 182 writes: “Nowhere in Scripture do we get such a graphic picture of a wicked eschatological figure as the Apocalypse provides of ‘the beast.’” Koester, “The Book of Revelation,” 176 connects the beast that came out of the sea with the Antichrist, the opponent “of God and Christ” (Rev 13:1–10). He [Koester, “The Book of Revelation,” 175] writes that the beast appeared on the world arena “in the end times.” Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 299, writes that the beast that came out of the earth (13:11–17) represents “The false prophet (appearing by that name for the first time).” Besides the word “beast,” in chapter 13 we find the word “dragon” (vv. 2, 4, 11), as well as “war” (πόλεμος) (vv. 4, 7), which John places in the context of the war of the first beast (Antichrist) with the saints (v. 7). See Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus*, 182–86. Sproul, *The Last Days According to Jesus*, 178 writes that the Antichrist has more than one meaning. It depends on its prefix: “The prefix normally means ‘against’ and suggests someone who is in opposition to something. In this sense *antichrist* refers to someone who stands in opposition to Christ and who is his very antithesis”; and he adds that, “In Greek the prefix *anti-* can also be translated ‘in place of.’ Theologians call this the imitation motif. So we might view the Antichrist as a false Christ, or as one who seeks to usurp the rightful place of Christ”; and he then adds that, however, “It is possible, if not probable, that the concept of antichrist contains both elements.” Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 299 writes that “The dragon is without doubt the seven-headed dragon of chapter 12 (specifically identified as Satan in 12:9).”

<sup>81</sup> In Revelation 14:9–12 (as in chapter 13), the word “beast” is found (vv. 9, 11), which John uses in the context of the judgment (vv. 9–11) of those who worship the beast (v. 11), which God will perform “in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb” (v. 10).

<sup>82</sup> There are several key words that connect 16:12–16 with chapter 17, such as “beast” (verses 3, 7, 8 [two times], 11, 12, 13, 16, 17), “kings” (verses 2, 10, 12 [two times]), “kingdom” (verses 12, 17), “reigns” (v. 18), and “war” (v. 14). Not only do these references share the vocabulary with 16:12–16, but they are also in the context of the war of the beast and his coalition (17:12–14), no longer with Israel as in 16:12–16, but with the saints (v. 6) and the Lamb who “will overcome them” (v. 14). Furthermore, 16:12–16 has an important connection with 19:17–21, where John uses the same vocabulary as in 16:12–16: “kings” (19:18, 19), “beast” (vv. 19, 20 [twice]), “armies” (v. 19), and “false prophet” (v. 20). All of these words are placed in the context of the beast and the false prophet's war, not with ethnic Israel in the valley of Armageddon (16:16), but, as in chapter 17, with Christ and His saints, whereby the beast and the false prophet will be “thrown alive into the lake of fire” (19:20) and their coalition will be destroyed by Christ (19:21).

planned action, which will include preparation, the identification of the leaders of this coalition, the creation of the coalition itself, and the setting of the coalition's goals. This analysis also indicates that opposition to the people of Israel and God (including modern-day antisemitism) is not a human initiative. It is a spiritual phenomenon of demonic origin, which has impetus given by the dragon together with the beast and the false prophet, using unclean spirits who will gather the kings of the earth with the purpose of destroying not only Israel, but also attacking the Messiah of Israel and the faithful remnant of the Great Tribulation period.

#### Revelation 20:4–10

Revelation 20:4–10 refers to the ultimate global attack on Israel and the Messiah at the end of the Millennium (see vv. 7–10). In chapter 12, John saw a picture of the structure of this attack, and in chapter 20 he gives a description of the operation of this mechanism in the final part of human history. If we follow the literary approach to defining the boundaries of 20:4–10, we observe that this text is located between two identical phrases that define its boundaries: “Then I saw” (καί εἶδον, 20:4, 11).

#### (1) Structure

Unlike commentators who approach the construction of the text structure thematically, we, as in the previous sections of this article (12:1–17; 16:12–16), draw attention to the literary markers of 20:4–10. In this text, after the phrase “Then I saw” (20:4a), the phrase “a thousand years” (χίλια ἔτη) is repeated four times in 20:4, 20:5, 20:6, and 20:7. The first three parts of this structure relate to the entire period of the 1000-year kingdom, during which one category of people (the saints) will reign (20:4, 6), and at the end of which the other (the wicked) will be judged (20:5). And the fourth part of the structure is connected with the culmination of this kingdom: the final attack against Israel and the Messiah, expressing yet another concerted attack on God's people Israel (20:7–10).

#### (2) Context

Chapter 19 ends with the defeat of the beast and the false prophet (19:20) and the final destruction of this demonic coalition (19:21), the story of which begins with the phrase “Then I saw” (19:11). Chapter 21 opens a new period of history – a new heaven and a new earth – which also begins with the phrase “Then I saw” (21:1). Thus, chapter 20 is located between the final phase of the Great Tribulation and the beginning of eternity. Various commentators divide chapter 20 thematically.<sup>83</sup> But,

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<sup>83</sup> For example, Craig S. Keener, *Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 813–15, divides the chapter into three parts: (1) The Thousand-Year Kingdom (20:1–6); (2) The Folly of Gog and Magog (20:7–10); (3) The final Judgment (20:11–15). Johnson, “Revelation,” 593, divides it into three parts: (1) The Binding of Satan and the Millennium (20:1–6); (2) The Release and End of Satan (20:7–10); (3) The Great White Throne of Judgment (20:11–15). Bruce, 1986, “Revelation,” 1597, divides it into the same parts as Johnson, but titles its sections differently: (1) The Binding of Satan and the Reign of the Martyrs (20:1–6); (2) Gog and Magog (20:7–10); (3) The Last Assize (20:11–15).

upon closer analysis, one can notice that the structure of chapter 20 is determined not so much by the subject matter as by one literary formula, “Then I saw,” which is repeated four times.<sup>84</sup> Thus, the place of 20:4–10 points to the action of the dragon (Satan) between his first imprisonment for one thousand years and his second, eternal imprisonment.<sup>85</sup>

### (3) Literary Analysis

In the section dealing with the structure of 20:4–10, we showed that this text begins with the formula “Then I saw” (20:4), followed by four sections, each of which is defined by the phrase “a thousand years.” The first section (20:4) deals with the saints who did not worship the beast, the second (20:5) with the wicked dead, and the third (20:6) with the state and condition of the saints.<sup>86</sup> The fourth section (20:7–10) has a number of key words and phrases to clarify the essence of Satan’s attack on Israel. It begins with the phrase: “When the thousand years are completed” (20:7). Here John indicates the actions of Satan after he is released from prison, using such phrases and words as: “Satan will be released” (λυθήσεται ὁ Σατανᾶς) (20:7), “will come out to deceive [πλανῆσαι] the nations” (20:8),<sup>87</sup> “to gather them together for the war” (20:8), “they came up” (20:9), “surrounded” (20:9).

James L. Resseguie says that in 20:7, “The passive voice (‘will be released’) is a passive of divine activity – a pardon granted by God.”<sup>88</sup> Despite his release, which was initiated by God, Satan, together with his coalition, will surround Jerusalem (20:9), which in this verse is described in the form of “the two-step progression – ‘the camp of the saints’ and ‘the beloved city.’”<sup>89</sup> Here, “the actual strategy and method of Satan’s deception is not revealed, but it will succeed in duping the unregenerate people of the world into revolting against the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>90</sup> Thus, the fourth section clearly demonstrates that Satan will be at the head of the

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<sup>84</sup> (1) “Then I saw” (v. 1); (2) “Then I saw” (v. 4); (3) “Then I saw” (v. 11); (4) “And I saw” (v. 12).

<sup>85</sup> From this structure it is clear that the text of 20:4–10 is located between its first section and the third section. The first section deals with the dragon’s imprisonment in the abyss for a thousand years (vv. 1–3). The second section with the development of events after the end of his thousand-year Kingdom (vv. 4–10). The third section with God the Judge sitting on a white throne (v. 11). The fourth section with the final judgment of the wicked (vv. 12–15).

<sup>86</sup> The first section (20:4), which is defined by the phrase “reigned with Christ a thousand years,” contains several key phrases and words: “the souls of those who had been beheaded,” “who had not worshiped the beast,” “had not received the mark,” “came to life,” and “reigned.” Thus, in this part of the verse, John points out the characteristics and functions of the saints who defeated the beast and were resurrected before or at the beginning of the thousand-year Kingdom. See more information on the reign of the saints in MacArthur, *Because the Time is Near*, 298–300. The second section (v. 5), which John the Apostle introduces with the phrase “until the thousand years were completed,” contains the key phrase “the rest of the dead did not come to life,” which points to a class of people who will not come to life until after the thousand years have been completed. The third section (v. 6), which John introduces with the phrase “will reign with him for a thousand years,” contains three key phrases: “blessed and holy,” “they will be priests of God and of Christ,” and “they will reign.” In this section, John deepens the idea of 20:4, pointing to the blessed state and condition of the resurrected saints during the millennial kingdom.

<sup>87</sup> Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 372, says that “Both Satan and the false prophet are portrayed in Revelation as deceivers (12:9; 20:3; 13:14; 19:20).”

<sup>88</sup> Resseguie, *The Revelation of John*, 248.

<sup>89</sup> Resseguie, 248.

<sup>90</sup> MacArthur, *Because the Time is Near*, 301.

coalition at the end of the thousand-year kingdom, which will move its armies against Jerusalem. And the phrases and words: “fire came down,” “devoured them” (20:9), “the devil,” “who deceived,” “was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone,” “the beast,” “the false prophet,” “they will be tormented” (20:10) describe God’s response to those who oppose Israel and the Messiah, which will be expressed in the judgment of this anti-Israel and anti-God coalition (20:9) and the devil (20:10).

#### (4) *Allusions*

Revelation 20:4–10 and 16:12–16 have a clear intertextual connection. These texts are linked by a phrase with identical vocabulary: “to gather them together for the war” (20:7) and “to gather them together for the war” (16:14). In both chapters, 16 and 20, this battle is led by Satan (the dragon). The context in both texts is the same – animosity toward Israel and God – which will take a tangible form when Satan goes to war “against God’s people.”<sup>91</sup> Revelation 20:4–10 also has an intertextual connection with 12:1–17, which speaks of the dragon’s attack on the woman, child, and faithful remnant. Both texts share common vocabulary that is associated with the initiator who wages war against Israel and God.<sup>92</sup> All these texts (12:1–17; 16:12–16; 20:4–10) have one context in common: the persecution of Israel, which, according to 12:1–17, includes an attack on Israel’s Messiah and the faithful remnant of Israel.

#### (5) *Theology*

The results of the study of Revelation 20:4–10 indicate that the formation of a new anti-Israel coalition will be led by Satan at the end of the thousand-year kingdom. Although the first coalition was destroyed by God, and the beast and the false prophet were thrown into the lake of fire (19:20; 20:10), after a thousand years Satan will again gather an army consisting of deceived nations, “which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog” (20:8).<sup>93</sup> This campaign, just like the first (16:12–16), will be directed toward war with God, in which the dragon will lead his armies against Israel (20:7–8), Israel’s Messiah, and the faithful remnant of Israel (12:1–17).

### Summary

Carson and Moo correctly state that the book of Revelation “makes significant contributions to a number of areas of New Testament theology,”<sup>94</sup> such as the

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<sup>91</sup> Keener, *Bible Background Commentary*, 814

<sup>92</sup> In chapter 20, John uses the words “Satan” (v. 7), “devil” (v. 10), who is also called “dragon” (v. 2), “serpent” (v. 2). In chapter 12, John also uses the same words: “dragon” (vv. 3, 4, 7 [twice], 9, 12, 13, 16, 17), “devil” (verses 9, 12), “Satan” (v. 9), “serpent” (vv. 9, 14, 15).

<sup>93</sup> Johnson, “Revelation,” 772, says that “In Ezekiel 38–39, Gog refers to the prince of a host of pagan invaders from the North, especially the Scythian hordes from the distant land of Magog. In Revelation, however, the names are symbolic of the final enemies of Christ duped by Satan into attacking the community of the saints.”

<sup>94</sup> Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 483.

sovereignty of God, Christology, “the end of the history,” and “the reality of God’s judgment.”<sup>95</sup> In addition, analysis of the three texts above (12:1–17; 16:12–16; 20:4–10) demonstrates that the book of Revelation sheds light on and contributes to the biblical perspective on the hatred of Israel. Based on the intertextual analysis, literary analysis of these texts and literary analysis of their context, we suggest three elements that explain the hatred of Israel from a biblical perspective: (1) the model concerning the hatred of Israel, (2) the schema concerning the hatred of Israel, and (3) the characteristics concerning the hatred of Israel.

#### The Model Concerning the Hatred of Israel

As a result of the analysis, we have identified a model concerning the hatred of Israel that is a triangle marked by three texts (12:1–17; 16:12–16; 20:4–10) that are united not only by common vocabulary but also by a common context: the dragon’s war with Israel and God. The first text (12:1–17) refers to two signs in heaven. Here, the mechanism expressing the hatred of Israel is demonstrated in metaphorical form, where the dragon’s war with God is expressed in an attack on Israel, the Messiah of Israel, and the faithful remnant of Israel. The second text (16:12–16) refers to the dragon’s war with God at the end of the Great Tribulation, when the dragon will lead his armies against Israel. And intertextual analysis makes it clear that this war includes an attack on the Messiah of Israel and the faithful remnant of Israel. The third text (20:4–10) is concerned with the dragon’s war with God at the end of the thousand-year kingdom, when the dragon will again lead his armies against Israel, but, as in 16:12–16, intertextual analysis makes it clear that the dragon’s war includes an attack on Israel’s Messiah and the faithful remnant of Israel.

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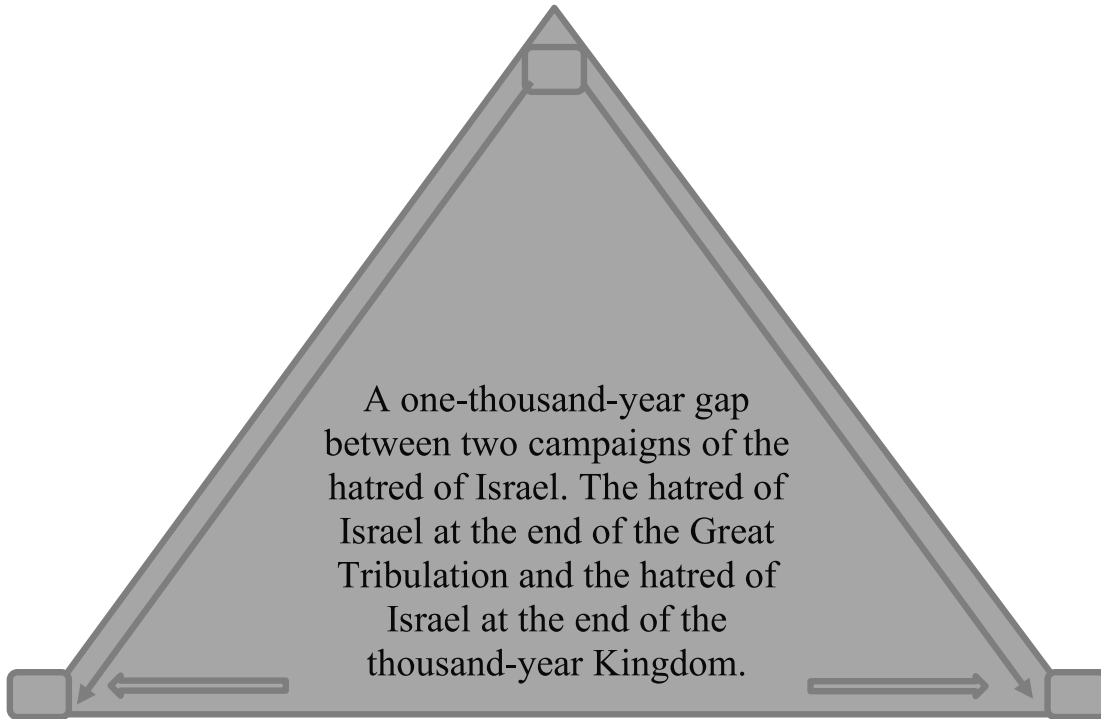
<sup>95</sup> Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 483–84.

1. The Sign in Heaven (Rev 12:1–17)

Israel

Israel's Messiah

Israel's Faithful Remnant



2. The Great Tribulation (Rev 16:12–16)

Israel

Israel's Messiah

Israel's Faithful Remnant

3. The Thousand-Year Kingdom (Rev 20:4–10)

Israel

Israel's Messiah

Israel's Faithful Remnant

The Schema Concerning the Hatred of Israel

We built the schema of the biblical perspective concerning the hatred of Israel on six key words, the equivalent of which we discovered in these three texts. The first word is *dragon*. The second is *God*. The third is *war*. The fourth is *Israel*. The fifth is *Messiah*. The sixth is *remnant*.<sup>96</sup>

First: The dragon is at war with God.

Second: The dragon's war with God is expressed in an attack on three objects: Israel, the Messiah of Israel, and the faithful remnant of Israel.

<sup>96</sup> In 12:1–17; 16:12–16; 20:4–10 and their literary contexts, John uses different epithets of six words, the meaning of which I have indicated by one word that conveys the idea of their equivalents.



## The Characteristics Concerning the Hatred of Israel

In addition to the model and schema concerning the hatred of Israel, a literary analysis of the three texts in the book of Revelation (12:1–17; 16:12–16; 20:4–10) points to several characteristics concerning the hatred of Israel. First, hatred of Israel is not based on human ambitions or convictions. It is the work of demonic forces (Satan, the Antichrist, the false prophet, and demonic spirits). Second, the creation of a coalition that hates Israel implies a specific goal: to war against Israel, the Messiah of Israel, and the faithful remnant of Israel. Third, hatred of Israel is not bound by time, space, or human status, but will continue until the end of human history (the time of the Great Tribulation or the thousand-year kingdom), it will extend to the farthest territorial boundaries (“the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog,” 20:8), and it will include the highest status of human authorities (“the kings of the whole world,” 16:14 or “nations,” 20:8). Fourth, hatred of Israel is a system of thought that includes animosity toward the nation of Israel, the Messiah of Israel, and the faithful remnant of Israel (“great wrath,” 12:12; “enraged,” 12:17). Fifth, hatred of Israel is irrational, since the influence of demonic forces on the human mind (20:8) deprives a person of the ability to think soberly and righteously (cf. Rom 1:18–32).

## Conclusion

The Biblical story about enemies of God hating Israel “is the old story of Satanic hatred to God, and man’s frailty told out again...”<sup>97</sup> Today, like previous generations of Christians, we see that “Satan rages about the earth, persecuting the people of God (12:7–12).”<sup>98</sup> We know that Satan’s attacks will never cease. Satan and his followers will continually invent new methods by which they will seek to destroy Israel, wage war against Israel’s Messiah, and attack the faithful remnant of Israel. Despite this, God will judge the devil and destroy the demonic system behind all forms of hatred toward God’s chosen people, including modern-day antisemitism.<sup>99</sup> The dragon’s battering machines will fail, and the sharp spears of his coalition will break. The time will come when the people of God, covered by the shadow of the Almighty Lord, will stand on the ashes of the fallen idol of the hatred of Israel.

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<sup>97</sup> Harry Ironside, *Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1950), 343.

<sup>98</sup> Koester, “Book of Revelation,” 176. Craig Koester, “Book of Revelation,” *NIDB*, 4:793, says that “The people of God include biblical Israel and the followers of Jesus.” G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, NCB (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 293, writes that the Church of Jesus Christ “is distinguished by its rejection of allegiance to the beast.”

<sup>99</sup> Although Ladd, *The Revelation of John*, 270, says that in Revelation 20 “as in the battle of Armageddon, the emphasis in the divine victory is not on the defeat of the hosts of men who have fought against the Messiah and his people, but upon the destruction of the powers which have stood behind them,” Revelation 20:9 clearly indicates that the fire of God that came down from heaven also destroyed the people who were part of the anti-Israel coalition.