

MESSIANIC PROPHECY

Jon Kehrer | 8 Sessions

**NEXT
LEVEL**  **ONLINE**

OZARK CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Session 1: Rethinking Messianic Prophecy

- What is the first Messianic Prophecy in Scripture? Discuss.
 - * I ask this question in class; inevitably, we come up with a variety, but we land at this one.
 - * Read **Genesis 3:15**.
 - * James Smith, in his book *What the Bible Says about the Promised Messiah*, claims: *"All subsequent Messianic promises are but amplifications of that which is implicit here...Genesis 3:15 is the seed from which the Old Testament promise of a coming Savior grew like a mighty tree....Here is the mother prophecy which gave birth to all the rest."*
 - * I have a couple of questions....First, **how do we know this is Messianic?** Who gets to decide?
 - * Second, **what do we mean by "Messianic"?**
 - I want to look at another passage, one that I think highlights the struggle for us. Luke 24, the road to Emmaus....
 - * Jesus calls them foolish and slow of heart to believe! All because they were so consumed with their interpretation of the OT that they missed how Jesus fulfilled it.
 - * Read Luke 24:44-45...Jesus opened their minds to understand.
- So, then, there are two important principles I think we need to walk away with from this text. #1: They knew the Scriptures but they missed the Messiah. #2: They only got it when Jesus himself opened up their minds to understand it.
 - * We will always start in the NT. We will let the NT be our guide, our 'guard rails' as we seek to understand Messianic Prophecy. Second, we will pay careful attention to how the NT authors are using it so that we can understand what is meant.
 - * To apply this to Gen 3:15: where is this passage quoted elsewhere in Scripture?
 - * Romans 16:20...a common song used in kids church years ago.
 - * So, if this is a MP, there are a few puzzling features of this text. A couple of things are really interesting about this.
 - * First, God is doing the crushing, not the "seed of the woman."
 - * Second, it is in future tense; it is not past, accomplished fact.
 - * Third, Satan is crushed underneath *our* feet.
 - * Perhaps we need to go back to the OT to really understand the text.

Discussion of Gen 3:15

- Perhaps it would help to actually analyze this passage.

- * First, there is **good/evil**.
- * This is the first curse given, and it is given to the serpent. We aren't yet told who this serpent is; later tradition attributes the identity of the serpent to Satan.
- * **Hostility**
- * **Crush**

- Notice the changing of the wording: crush vs. strike. Which sounds more ominous? Crush. But actually, they are the same thing in Hebrew, with the only difference being in who actually does the action to whom. So why the differences in translation? Well, because they both represent potentially fatal blows...a human struck on the heel by a snake may in fact die from the venom; a snake struck on the head by a person may in fact die from the blow.

-So, then, whatever we want to classify Gen 3:15 as, we have to agree that this prophecy is fulfilled, in some way, by our ongoing battle against the evil one. We even see this battle play out in Adam and Eve's own sons.

- * When we arrive at **Rom 16:19-20**, what do we find? Be excellent at what is good and innocent of evil. It is the battle between **good/evil**, stemming from a knowledge of good and evil (think of the tree in the garden), and now God's people are to be concerned that they don't violate what God wants.
- * That which was once hostility now is **Peace**, because the God of Peace will soon **Crush** Satan.
- * What Jesus has done has now opened the way for victory. Because of his death and resurrection, we can indeed trust God to crush the enemy underneath our feet. It is a picture of God's victory, because of Jesus, as we move out to do God's work in the world. We fulfill Gen 3:15.
- This, then, is our focus in these lessons. We will always start with the New Testament and ask, "what does the text say?"
 - * We will be much less interested in mining the Old Testament for Messianic foregleams, to borrow Smith's phrase, and will rather concern ourselves with mining the New Testament for Messianic fulfillments.
 - * In the process, it is my hope that we can come to a point where we realize the beauty of what happens in Scripture...the majestic unfolding of God's plan in unexpected ways for his glory.

Session 2: Typology

- Typology is a big deal, and it is something we have to constantly guard against. We use this term rather flippantly, and I'm not sure we really know what we're saying when we use it.
- First, some **definitions**:
 - * **Allegory**: "A narrative which uses symbolic figures and actions to suggest hidden meanings behind the literal words of the text." ¹
 - * Example from Augustine.
 - * Surely this is an abuse of the text...not something we'd want to emulate. Why? Because this is suggesting that this was part of the author's intention, which the NT does not seem to suggest.
 - * **Symbol**: a historical event or fact that can be seen as a source of moral, spiritual or theological truth. Thus, the Statue of Liberty is a symbol of freedom.
 - * **Typology**: people, moments, or offices within the Old Testament that correspond to people, moments or offices later in the Old Testament or New Testament which, when looking back, seem to suggest that they are both prophetic and pointing forward in some way.
 - * So, if we suspect something is a type, we run it through our criteria. The type must:
 - * **Occur in history.**
 - * **Look forward.**
 - * **Develop in later revelation.**

A Test Case: John 19:36

- Now, let's take a look at John 19:36. Where is this from? Exod 12:46. Let's talk through this. At first, it seems to be blatant disregard for context, right?
 - * Now, does John 19:36 fit our criteria? Remember, we are using OLD as our characteristics.
 - * Occur in history? Yes; Exodus is a key piece in history.
 - * Look forward? Yes; this very celebration became a yearly feast.
 - * Develop in later revelation? Ps 34:20 seems to prove that. Also, John clearly saw this as a type.
- So then, Jesus dies as the Passover sacrifice (John 19:14 may be a reference to preparation for a Jewish public Passover, different from the one he ate with his disciples), and John is saying that he represents the innocent suffering of God's people, even of Israel, throughout history. *And*, the whole Passover celebration throughout history looked toward this moment, when God would use an unblemished lamb as a sacrifice on behalf of the others.

¹ D.N. Freedman, ed., *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 43.

- So, then, the picture we get here is one of indirect fulfillment...it is not a direct correspondence, but there is definitely a sense in which what happens in the past points forward to the future.

Session 3: The New Testament Authors' Guiding Principles

One person can represent many, so Jesus is true Israel.

- Here is the basic idea: in the OT, you could speak of one person in representing all. In some sense, we have a bit of this in our culture, such as if we say, "The White House issued a statement." We mean, a group of America's highest political leaders, surrounding the president, agree on this...
 - * However, in the OT, it was more pervasive, and it was often connected to a person. So Judges 1:3-4: 3 *"And Judah said to Simeon his brother, 'Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites. And I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you.'" So Simeon went with him.*
 - * But these guys have been dead for hundreds of years! Well, not really. We're actually speaking of the individuals, who now represent tribes, who are now actually thousands of people each.
 - * *4 Then Judah went up and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand, and they defeated 10,000 of them at Bezek."*
 - * Later in history, the King comes to represent all of Israel.
 - * Thus, it stands that then Jesus finds himself representing all of Israel. This will be clearer later on.
- This really helps us make sense of the OT in the NT, especially when it comes to historical texts used as Messianic Prophecies and also texts applied to Israel.
 - * In addition, it helps us understand how what is true of the Messiah can be true of us.

Earlier history corresponds to later history.

- People operated under the general assumption that God was sovereign. Since he was, there was a basic idea that history was cyclical, and that things which happened before also would happen again later.

The end times have begun in Jesus, so Jesus is the "goal" of history.

- By "end times," we really mean "the age of eschatological fulfillment." The reality is that the NT authors see with apocalyptic imagery things God is doing in their midst. That begins with Jesus.
 - * i. This is not necessarily a **Christocentric** hermeneutic, where Jesus is the center of every OT passage, but a **Christotelic** one. This means the designs of the OT in its patterns and narratives points to Christ.

Hos 11:1 / Matt 2:15: MP Workshop

1. **NT Context:** Examples.

2. **OT Context:** Some people hear this and say, there Matthew goes again! Ripping passages out of context just because he wanted to find something that fit his idea. But I think there is much more to it than that.

3. **Biblical development:** This doesn't seem to be repeated or used as a refrain in the OT, because Hosea is pretty late. What we do see, though, is Hosea's typological usage of the Exodus to point to the reality of what God will do, indicating the probability that he intended his text to even be read typologically.

4. **NT Author's Use:** So what is Matthew doing here? Well, I don't think he's ripping Hosea 11:1 out of context. In fact, I think he is actually inferring the *whole context*, suggesting that Jesus is, in fact, a new Israel. We would call this **typology**.

- In a stunning turn of events, Jesus becomes the new Israel and is, by his going to Egypt, going to represent the ways of Israel, but perfectly.
 - * **Occur in history?** Yes, this is actually a description of the Exodus.
 - * **Look forward?** Yes, I think the very nature of the passage is prophetic.
 - * **Developed?** Matthew certainly thinks it does; Hosea even saw a development of the Exodus.
- So what does this say about Jesus? Well, he is the Messiah, who represents his people. It also suggests that God is on the move, and he will bring his people back. God is on the move, and that is good news for the people all over the world.

Extra Notes:

In my opinion, these guiding principles, and especially this last one of Jesus being the "goal" of history, help us understand much of the NT. Especially when we read the Gospels, we may find ourselves confused...how did the people miss Jesus so royally when he was right in front of them? What's more, how can we see someone like Paul doing a complete and total 180 once he encounters this same Jesus? N.T. Wright, in his massive tome, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, pgs. 692-93: *What I am suggesting is that the **resurrection**, demonstrating the truth of **Jesus's pre-crucifixion messianic claim**, joined up with **the expectation of YHWH's return** on the one hand and **the presence of the spirit of Jesus** on the other to generate a fresh reading of 'messianic' texts which enabled a full christological awareness to dawn on the disciples.*"

- In other words, it was the combination of all of these things which presented an undeniably clear picture for the early church: Jesus was God's man, and he was the goal of history.
 - * So, while the people *were* expecting God to return and rescue his people, they weren't really expecting a dead Messiah. However, once confronted with the reality of Jesus' resurrection *and* the power of Jesus poured out in the Spirit

upon the church, Wright explains: "texts which had been there all along but never seen in this way (except, perhaps, in sayings of Jesus himself!) sprang into life."

Session 4: A Method for Interpretation

Steps to Walk Through

1. What does the NT say?
2. What does the OT say?
3. Where else does this idea occur in Scripture?
4. How is the NT author using the OT?

Deut 6:13, 16, 8:3 / Matthew 4:1-11

- This is a series of passages we are looking at to understand *why Jesus would quote from these, of all places, in his interaction with Satan.*

-1. NT

- We've seen quite a bit of Matthew already, but now we've witnessed the preaching of John and the baptism of Jesus.
 - * Notice: he was led by the HS. This is not a rogue operation into the desert but rather a calculated, spirit-led movement as he sought to honor God.
- Many people think Jesus was tempted at the end of his forty days because he was at his weakest. But Dallas Willard notes: Jesus' fasting was spiritual preparation. At the end of 40 days, he may have been the *most ready, the most prepared* to face the attacks of the devil.

2. OT: Block's commentary (NIVAC) has an excellent outline of Deuteronomy called, "The Gospel According to Moses."

- First, we have the *Shema*, the call to Exclusive Covenant Commitment (6:4–9)
- But then, we have a series of tests the people *have* faced and *will* face.
 - * (a) The Trial of Faith, Part I: The Internal and External Tests of Covenant Commitment (6:10–25)
 - * • The Nature of the Tests (6:10–19): *Encountered in the future, when you are tempted to go after other gods, or keep your enemies around*
 - * • The Response to the Tests (6:20–25): *remember what God did in Egypt and his faithfulness to us in the desert!*
 - * (b) The Trial of Faith, Part II: The External Test of Covenant Commitment (7:1–26)
 - * • The Nature of the Test (7:1–16): *Encountered in the future, when you are tempted to make peace with pagans and thus accept their gods*
 - * • The Response to the Test (7:17–26): *remember how God dealt with Egypt and trust him to take care of the nations before you*

- * (c) The Trial of Faith, Part III: The Internal Test of Covenant Commitment (8:1–20)
 - * • The Nature of the Test (8:1–10, **I think it is actually through v. 17**):
Encountered in the past, when you were tested time and again by the harsh environment of the desert and yet God sustained you, and encountered in the future when, in dwelling in homes of plenty, you may be tempted to think you are the ones who delivered yourselves
 - * • The Response to the Test (8:11–20, **I think it is actually 8:18-20**):
remember: God made you what you are!

3. Biblical Development:

- These verses, in many ways, set the ground rules for how the people understand themselves and their history in relation to Yahweh. They are unpacked, to a degree, in the rest of Israel's history and in the works of the Psalms.
 - * These actually become the main ways Israel fails. They can't see what God is doing, and they fail the tests miserably.

4. NT Author

- When we approach the NT, then, we need to realize how Jesus is fulfilling all of this.

Theological Use

- * Think about our Guiding Principles:
 - * Jesus is the true Israel. He is succeeding where Israel has failed. Even though Israel had already failed, she would continue to fail once she moved into the land.
 - * Notice how this fits, though, into the narrative of Matthew. Jesus' birth circumstances are less than ideal, being a child who manages to escape the genocide inflicted by a maniac king. He comes out of Egypt, just like Israel did. He passes through the waters, just like Israel passed through the Red Sea, and he makes his way out into the desert. We can't even get to the end of Exodus 15, the chapter that began with Moses and Miriam's song, without the people grumbling and complaining. Will Jesus do the same? No...we find Jesus seeking God, fulfilling God's plans for Israel in a powerful way.
 - * And then, after having defeated the enemy so decisively, Jesus goes up onto a mountain, just like Moses went on the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments. But in Matthew 5, Jesus sits down and opens *his* mouth, and we begin to wonder....*who is this who presumes to speak a new Law, new Torah, as if he was God himself?*

Session 5

Dan 7:13-14 / Mark 10:45

- This section is really important for understanding *why people in the NT seemed to miss Jesus' prophetic descriptions*. The fact that he was using the OT ironically and even interpreting Daniel 7 through the lens of Isa 53 has a lot to do with his Messianic identity and, I think, why they were so slow of heart to believe. They were so entrenched in their own understanding that they couldn't see what Jesus was saying and doing, and essentially, how he was reinterpreting the texts around himself.

Introduction

- Every now and then, we'll come across something in Scripture that doesn't look like a quotation. That's what we find here.
 - * Explain differences between a quotation and an allusion.
 - * How, then, do we know it is an allusion?
- Well, this actually fits several different criteria for an allusion. We won't walk through all of these specifically, but here's a list of ideas, all adapted from Richard B. Hays, in his book, *Echoes of Scripture in the letters of Paul*.
- We can usually verify an **allusion** if the connection has: (Write on bottom)
 - * **Similar Wording**: There is significant overlap between words and/or phrases.
 - * **Similar Themes**: are there other references to the theme of the OT, and does it seem to fit in?

NT:

- In the immediate context, Jesus has predicted his death a third time. This is difficult for the disciples to understand.

OT:

- I think there are a couple of passages in mind here.
 - * **Daniel 7:13-14** (TOP LEFT). Discuss context.
 - * Does it meet the criteria? I think yes, but we have some questions.
 - * **Isaiah 53:10-12** (TOP RIGHT). Read text.
 - * Does it meet the criteria? I think yes, but we have some questions.

Biblical Development: Daniel is so late, there is little here. However, we do see this image elsewhere of a suffering Messianic figure. Texts like Psalm 22, especially, seem to detail the pain and agony of the Messiah for the sake of the many.

NT Author:

- If this is legitimate, Jesus is doing a couple of things. First, he is expressing **Ironic Usage** (The Old Testament is used ironically for the New Testament author's rhetorical purposes). This is because it does not happen in a way that is expected.
 - * *Notice: in Daniel 7, the Son of Man rules, and when one rules one is associated with the people. So, if the people suffer, it can be assumed that the Son of Man will also vicariously suffer with them. In this way, the Son of Man could be said to suffer.*
 - * This, however, seems to fit the Messianic reality. Do we serve Jesus, like the Son of Man is served in Daniel 7? Of course. However, we don't assume that means that Jesus doesn't serve us. *Rather, he is turning their expectations on their head.*
- He is also doing **Direct Prophetic Fulfillment**. In this way, he is helping his audience see that this is coming true in him but not totally in a way that they would expect, and it will continue to be fulfilled in his death and resurrection.
- Notice how tightly this is connected to the context of Mark 10...
 - * We can't miss the connection to the context of rulers, kings and kingdoms. This is the context of Daniel 7, and Jesus steps into the midst of that description of Gentile rulers (which, by the way, are the beasts of Dan 7) to purport that he is the one bringing a new world order.
- If Jesus is the Son of Man from Daniel 7, and the Suffering Servant from Isa 53, then he is the servant. But he also becomes the Messiah, and the final, end-times age is being brought in his person, even in his death and resurrection. And *that reality changes everything*.

Session 6

Psalm 118:22-23 / Mark 12:10-11

- One of the most popular parables, and one that is crucial for understanding the way the leaders rejected Jesus.

NT Context

- Mark 12 comes towards the end of Mark's presentation of Jesus.
 - * The parable itself probably alludes to Isaiah 5 and the parable of God's vineyard.
 - * However, the focus this time is not on the wicked vineyard, like in Isa 5, but on the wicked tenants who keep it.
 - * So, Jesus says, what will the owner do? He will cast out those tenants and give the vineyard to others.
 - * Of course, the leaders don't like this, and within just a few short days, they have Jesus arrested, tried and crucified.

OT Context

- In order to understand the quote, I think we need to understand Ps 118.
 - * Falls at the end of Hallel Psalms sung as part of Jewish festivals.
 - * Probably a Psalm written by a royal leader, though we don't know if it was David.
- The structure moves back and forth between lament and praise.
 - * Verses 5-9 detail the distress of the Psalmist.
 - * However, even in the midst of this, God's presence was with him. So, God's presence is better.
 - * Verses 10-12 return to the topic of his complaint, how the nations even have surrounded him like bees.
 - * Verses 19-21, then, mark an entrance of the King into the temple. We will later see the Psalmist at the altar, so it makes sense that this is where he is when he is speaking these words.
 - * Verse 22, then, is the Psalmist's summarizing experience.

What does this "cornerstone" mean, though?

- * Woodenly, the original language reads "head of the corner."
 - * Perhaps we'd best translate it as "prominent corner."
 - * It is a stone used in a building process. But, we can only guess, it is misshaped or deformed or just unfit. So, it is rejected.

- * Now, however, later in the project, it is found to be essential...in fact, it comes to a prominent corner. Probably, this would be like a capstone used at the top of a building, on a corner, on display for all to see.

Biblical Development

- Isaiah 28:16 develops this idea. There, it reads "Therefore, thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, I am he who has founded a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious stone of a prominent corner of a sure foundation.'" Basically, God is laying a stone, that of a prominent corner, in Zion.
 - * But it is described as "precious," the same word used to describe many of the stones used to build the temple. If this is the case, Isaiah might be saying that God is going to one day rebuild his temple *his* way, and he'll use a stone of a prominent corner to do it.
- One other passage, from late in Israel's history, also speaks to this. Zechariah, one of the last prophets in Israel, spoke often of the coming Messiah.
 - * It seems, then, that Zechariah is reading passages like Ps 118:22 and Isa 28:16 typologically. That is, he is saying, these speak of a coming Messiah! He will be the stone of a prominent corner!

NT Usage

- So, then, how does all this fit into Mark 12? Well, at first, the quote from Ps 118 doesn't seem to connect to the parable. We were talking about tenants and then builders, a son and now a stone.
 - * Jewish writings in the first century often referred to religious leaders as "builders." So, perhaps there is a connection there.
 - * In addition, the Hebrew for "son" is *ben*, while the Hebrew for "stone" is *eben*. Surely there is a little bit of a play on words here...the *ben* is the *eben*.
- So what is Jesus doing? Well, I think he is applying Ps 118 to himself through typology. It meets our criteria:
 - * Occur in history? Yes.
 - * Looking forward? Yes, it seems to be true of the Psalmist's life, even into the future.
 - * Developed later? Yes, totally, in Isa and Zech.
- If then, Jesus is the "stone" of Ps 118, then this means several things.
 - * First, he is the royal, divinely appointed heir. That's bad news for the religious elite who don't like him.
 - * If the "son" is the "stone," and God is the owner of the vineyard, then he is God's divine son. This is even worse news for the religious leaders.
 - * But even more, since it seems that Jesus delivers this parable inside the temple, it suggests he is saying that he is the "prominent corner" by which God will

rebuild his temple. Jesus himself is the one announcing, and even bringing in, this new temple God is building.

* You can imagine, then, why the religious leaders wanted to kill this guy.

- If this is all the case, then God's end-time plans have started to unfold in Jesus.

* And we are left, as the original hearers of this parable were, with a choice.
What will we do with God's cornerstone?

Session 7

Joel 2:28-32 / Acts 2:17-21

- This will help us understand how the NT church understood what Jesus came to do.

NT Context

- Now, the apostles are filled with the Spirit and stand up on the Day of Pentecost in order to proclaim truth.
- The sermon, like any good sermon, starts off with a disclaimer that the preacher is not drunk. Then, Peter launches straight into Joel 2.
 - * The text immediately moves then to talk about Jesus.
- After describing Jesus' work, Peter proclaims that he is the Messiah: "God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."
 - * They repent and are baptized; 3,000 added to the church on that day.

3. OT Context

- The OT book of Joel moves back and forth between judgment and blessing.
 - * The first chapter or two include this call for both mourning and repentance, because God's judgment will soon come.
 - * Starting in Chapter 2 and going through Chapter 3, though, we find God promising blessing for Israel but judgment for the nations.
- Analysis of 2:28-32
 - * 28 seems to be the action, and 29 is the result.
 - * Then, 30 and 31 specify what else will happen along with that.
 - * Basically, this provides two progressive - and supernatural - events (or series of events) that will occur.
 - * 32ab describe a reality, but the only reason is because of 32cd.
 - * The whole thing, then, connects as 28-31 being an Action, and 32 being the Result.
- The main point of this text seems to focus on the cause/effect or action/result of what will happen when God's Spirit is poured out.

Biblical Development

- This idea of the pouring out of the Spirit is actually developed all throughout the OT. Two specific places...
 - * Jer 31:33-34 speaks of the democratization of the knowledge of God. This passage in Joel makes clear how that might happen...through the Spirit of God.
 - * Ezek 36:24-28. God will put his spirit within his people.

- God will also save for himself some, but they will only be able to be saved because of God's gracious actions.

NT Usage

- This seems to me to be Direct Prophetic Fulfillment. This is what Joel prophesied...it is literally coming true as they prophesy.
 - * Notice: we don't have all of the details of Joel 2 coming to pass here. Peter and the 11 are speaking in tongues, and he says, "this fulfills Joel 2." This helps us, then, perhaps understand how the later part of Joel 2, the sun to darkness and the moon to blood, could have been fulfilled already as well.
- Remember our guiding principles? Several are at play here.
 - * **The end times have begun in Jesus, so Jesus is the "goal" of history.** This text, perhaps more than any others we have looked at together, highlights his work.
- Notice, however, how Peter uses it. He quotes from all of Joel, but he leaves out the very last part. Why? Well, because he saves it for the end of his sermon. It is the punchline....even though you crucified Jesus, remember that the Joel 2 promise is for you because God is good, not because you are.
 - * Interestingly enough, Jews interpreted this only to refer to Israel. What was shocking to them was when this same reality happened to Gentiles in Acts 10. Only then did they begin to realize that Joel 2:32 applied to all people, not just to Israel itself.

Conclusion

- This occurs during the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost. This was a time when they observed and celebrated God's faithfulness in harvest.

Sessions 8: Reading Revelation Messianically

Revelation 12:1-6

The book of Revelation has perhaps the fewest OT references of all the NT. G.K. Beale goes so far as to say there are *no* direct quotations in the entire book! However, almost every single verse contains allusions and echoes of Old Testament texts.

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

- Probably, the background for this comes from Gen 37:9. There, Joseph has a dream about what will happen to him in the future; the sun, moon and eleven stars bow down to Joseph. There obviously isn't a one-to-one correspondence, but it probably represents a stock-in-trade usage where the idea has been assimilated into the thinking of John's world.
- Later Rabbinic sources (Midr. Rab. Num 2:13) tied the sun to Abraham, the moon to Isaac and the stars to Jacob and his sons.

Rev 12:2: She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.

- This surely echoes some of the prophets, with this imagery of Israel being in birth pangs before it is delivered from foreign oppression.
 - * Isa 26:17-18:
 - * Isa 66:7-9:
 - * Micah 4:9-10:
 - * Therefore, the people of God are giving birth.

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

- CNTOT: "God is spoken of as defeating Pharaoh as a sea dragon at the exodus deliverance and at later points in Egypt's history (Ps. 74:13–14; 89:10; Isa. 30:7; 51:9; Ezek. 29:3; 32:2–3; Hab. 3:8–15; Pss. Sol. 2:29–30; see Ps. 87:4, where "Rahab" is a synonym for Egypt; cf. Jer. 51:34, where Babylon is the subject; see also Amos 9:3)."
- See specifically Ezek 29:3, where Pharaoh is compared to a great dragon.
- Ps Sol identifies the dragon as Rome, especially Pompey.

Rev 12:4: His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

- This is taken from the idea of Dan 8:10, where the little horn grows up and causes some of the stars to fall to earth, trampling them down in the process.

- * Probably, this word in Daniel applied to Antiochus Epiphanes, the "little horn" he spoke of often. However, this is now applied by John in a greater way to the power behind Antiochus: that of the devil himself.
- * The LXX translated this to apply to the captivity.
- Why a third? Perhaps because it was only a partial attack on the community. However, this is the community of God under attack.

Rev 12:5: She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,

- The verse alludes to Ps 2:7-9.
 - * Note: Rev 12:5 says the child is a "male," emphasizing the "son" aspect.
 - * Rev 19:15a confirms Jesus' fulfillment.
 - * In fact, even Rev 2:26-27 confirmed that Jesus had been given that authority.
- Interestingly, the entire life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus is abbreviated here. The focus is on his victory and ascension to God.
 - * But why skip the life/ministry/death of Jesus? Perhaps because oftentimes, especially in the ANE, a ruler's birthday was the day he began to rule. Thus, since Psalm 2 speaks of the "begotten" son of God who would rule the nations, this is the emphasis here: the woman gave birth to a child who would rule.
- In essence, this passage is reminiscent of Isa 7:14, where the woman is with child. But perhaps the clearer reference is to Isa 66:7, which we just saw above.
- It's possible that even the use of the neuter adjective (male) with "child/son" in the masculine (Rev reads καὶ ἔτεκεν υἱὸν ἄρσεν,) is itself an allusion to Isa 66:7 (where it reads "ἔτεκεν ἄρσεν"), an irregular grammatical construction intended "to jolt the reader, so that attention will be directed back more readily to Isaiah."

Rev 12:6: and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

- The woman represents the people of God. She flees to a place prepared by God, or derived from God, Beale suggests, for 1,260 days. This is the church in the wilderness.
- However, notice the Exodus imagery here. Moses was in the wilderness; the people of Israel were in the wilderness; Elijah was in the wilderness. Jesus' parents fled to Egypt, and Matthew links this to the Exodus. Thus, it seems we have a set theme here of the people of God going out into the wilderness after a victory. Thus, Jesus has opened the way for a new Exodus of the people of God.
 - * Note the connection in Rev 12:14 to "wings of the great eagle," just like Exodus 19.4.
- Note also the connection to Hos. 2:14–15.
 - * Thus, since Jesus had already fulfilled all of these things himself, being tempted in the wilderness and even conducting his ministry there, he is the ideal Israelite after which the rest come. Beale notes on the protection piece: "They

are protected because they are represented by their divine hero, with whose death and resurrection they are identified (cf. Rom. 6:3–11; 2 Cor. 5:14–15). Therefore, “in Christ,” though their outer bodies could be hurt by persecution (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16; 12:7; 1 Thess. 2:18), their inner spiritual persons are “hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3).” The time - 3.5 years - is this "time, times and half a time" mentioned in Dan 7:25, Dan 9, Dan 12, etc.