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Chapter 5 Lured by “*The Pied Piper*”

Introduction. In the 13th century legend, “*The Pied Piper of Hamelin*,” the townspeople had a little problem. Rats! What to do with all those rats? A colorfully dressed chap appeared one day brandishing a funny little musical pipe, claiming that he could deliver the people from their rats! “*We will pay you handsomely for your services*,” the townspeople cried, “*just rid us of these rats*.” The Piper agreed to a fee – *but for only 1/10th of what the people offered him!* The Piper was a “deliverer” not a “rat-catcher.” “*Splendid*,” said the townspeople. And so, the Piper began to play his magical pipe. The rats of Hamelin fell in line, one by one; and off to the River Wiesser the Piper led them, till not a single rat was left in Hamelin! Whereupon, the Piper came to claim his modest fee; *to which the townsfolk reneged on their promise.* One Sunday morning while the good folk of Hamelin churched, the Pied Piper began to blow his magical pipe once again. This time, the *children of Hamelin* fell in line, one by one, until all 130 of them lined the way. The Piper and the lure of his magical pipe led all the way to a hideaway cave, *and lo. . . , the children of Hamelin delightfully danced to be seen no more!* Only two failed to follow, one a crippled child who simply could not keep up, and the other. . . *well, we’re not sure what happened to him.* But we do know this – the Piper *cured the crippled child*; and the child happily returned to tell the townspeople that all their children had *joyfully danced to be seen no more.*¹

Alas, the Pied Piper has blown his magical pipe again. . . . This time, it is not the children of Hamelin who follow the way, but skilled theologians. “*How so?*” *By pointing to the wrong kingdom to dominate the world in the Last Days.* What is the Piper’s “tune” that leads our skilled theologians to *follow the wrong way? Rome.* A *revived Roman Empire* interpreted to rise from the ashes of its former glory to once again dominate the world. This revived Rome is interpreted as the Antichrist and his kingdom! If this solution is correct, then we have a long time to wait for fulfilment of this prophecy. Rome is not a world power in our present day, nor in the foreseeable future. So we can relax just as the good townspeople did as they churched that Sunday morning. But what if the “tune” our theologians are listening to is wrong? *What if a future pope will not be the Antichrist and a revived Rome will not be the kingdom of the Last Days?* Then, perhaps, we should start looking for the Antichrist and his kingdom of the Last Days, *now!*

In this chapter, *we will take the Piper’s pipe away.* We will identify Rome. Rome is not the 4th beast of Daniel 7 nor the 4th part of Nebuchadnezzar’s statue. Rome is the hand of the dragon of Revelation 12 in the very beginning of the Last Days.

If you are a partisan of the traditional “revived Rome” view, will you give me a “blank sheet of paper” for just a few moments? If you’re not a “Rome-ite” or have no presupposition of who the Last Days’ kingdom at enmity with God is, then you can skip the entire section subtitled “*Changing the Tune - Why Rome is not the 4th Beast.*”

Changing the “Tune” - Why Rome is not the 4th Beast. It is the prevailing view of Bible scholars from the earliest days of the Church that the four beasts of Daniel 7 are the same four traditionally interpreted in the

dream of Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel 2 to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.²

St Jerome was one of the early Catholic Church's most prominent scholars. He was the first translator of the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate). His translation was the authorized version of the Catholic Church until Vatican II in the twentieth century.³ St Jerome's commentary on Daniel, written in the early 5th century AD (Jerome died in 420AD, before the complete collapse of the Roman Empire in 476) states what has become the traditional view, even from the earliest of the Church's scholarship:

*"We should therefore concur with the traditional interpretation of all the commentators of the Christian Church, that at the end of the world, when the Roman Empire is to be destroyed, there shall be ten kings who will partition the Roman world amongst themselves."*⁴ (Emphasis added)

Thus, according to St Jerome, "*all the commentators of the Christian Church*" interpreted Rome to be this 4th kingdom that would rise to power at the end of the world, and then be destroyed by the Ancient of Days. This view of Rome as the 4th beast of Daniel 7 is well supported by history. *Rome conquered Greece (146BC) after Greece had conquered Medo-Persia and Babylon (331BC)*. Thus, Rome was the successor empire to Greece in the Middle East, and the 4th in dominion of these four successive empires, beginning with Babylon. Rome was also the kingdom in power when Christianity began, 33AD (Daniel 2:44). Rome continued its dominance of the Middle East until Rome's collapse in 476AD. With the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the Eastern Empire took its place with its capital in Constantinople. The Western Empire was, in some respects, "revived" when, in 800AD, Charlemagne was named Emperor by the Pope. To many theologians, the "Holy Roman Empire" (the revived Western Empire) and the Eastern Roman Empire fit the "divided" characteristic of Nebuchadnezzar's statue of Daniel 2:41; similarly, the melding of politics and religion, fits the characteristic of "feet partly of iron and partly of clay" of Daniel 2:41.⁵

Having started down this path, to depart from it thereafter became near to impossible for interpreters. It was as if the "*Pied Piper*," had lured Biblical interpreters, in step, one after the other, into a theological river whose destiny always ended with Rome as the 4th beast. If one dared turn back from the *Piper's pipe and offer an interpretation other than Rome (or the second minority view, Greece and the successors of Alexander⁶)*, he (or she) was received with a theological obstinance impossible to overcome!

This is in spite of the obvious problems Rome poses from the text itself. First, the 4th beast appears in the text with *all ten horns present*. The horns do not come up one after the other as would be the case if the ten represented ten successive leaders.⁷ This is significant in Daniel 7 because one of the horns is distinguished by its coming up "*after*" the ten. Thus, the text is careful to reflect the "when" of leadership for these ten leaders as well as the "little horn" after them (Daniel 7:7-8). Applying this criteria to Rome's history fails to bring a match; historically, there is *no group* of ten Roman emperors (or leadership council) that reign simultaneously. Rome, past, fails to fulfill this requirement.⁸

Second, Daniel's vision includes a "little horn," pulling out three other horns "by the roots." There is no fulfillment of this criteria in the history of the Roman Empire, either. Lastly, the text states this empire is "different" from the other three. As discussed in our prior chapter, Ancient Rome was a political kingdom much like Greece, Medo-Persia, and Babylon before it. How, then, can Rome be "different"?

The result of these unfulfilled characteristics has caused interpreters to conclude that the text must be referring to a “future” Rome since the prophetic requirements have not been fulfilled in Rome’s historical past. That is, Rome *must be revived* in the Last Days, *and then*, Rome will meet the text’s requirements.

Modern day Bible scholar Steven Miller puts it:

“Thus Daniel predicted that in the last days a powerful empire made up of a confederate of kingdoms or nations will rise out of the ashes of the old Roman Empire. This final empire will have incredible power, for by its force the Antichrist will rule the whole earth (cf. Rev. 13:3, 17:7-8, 12).”⁹

Another modern day Bible scholar, Edward Young, similarly puts it (I could give you many more):

“On the basis of Rev. 13:1-7 and 17:8 Gaebelien concludes that the Roman Empire which “ceased existing in 476AD” will “come into existence again when the time of the Gentiles come to their end.”¹⁰

It is the opinion of this writer that although *Rome does meet some of the prophetic criteria (it was the successor kingdom to Greece, and it was a violent kingdom)*, it fails to fulfill other specific criteria required by the text. To continue to press Rome into the text when it fails to meet specific criteria is to force an error; and, to postulate a future revived Rome in order to meet the unfulfilled criteria does not provide an acceptable solution to the identity of the 4th kingdom.

Changing the “Tune” – so where is Rome? The powerful ancient Roman Empire and her infamous Legions were victorious over the third beast of Daniel 7, the Greeks, the successor kingdom to Babylon and Media-Persia. *Rome seems quite naturally to fulfill the prophecy of the 4th beast of Daniel. After all, Rome was the next in line of succession to Media-Persia. It was the “4th” in that line; so, how can Rome not be in the Biblical texts of the Last Days?* Plus, Rome continued its dominion through the time of Christ’s crucifixion. Pilate, the Roman Governor, actually ordered Christ’s execution. What’s just as important, persecution of both Jews and Christians occurred during Roman dominion. So, Rome must be in prophetic scripture – or, we’ve missed something!

Rome is there; just not where we have been looking. Rome is in the New Testament book of Revelation, 12th chapter, not in Daniel 7, Revelation 13, or 17. As we will see, Revelation 12 is not a prophecy to be fulfilled in the days to come. It has already been fulfilled. It was fulfilled with Rome’s dominion in the 1st - 4th centuries, AD, in the persecution of Jews and Christians subsequent to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This persecution continued until God miraculously delivered Christians from further persecution by a vision in the noon-day sky given to Emperor Constantine and his army in the early 4th century AD. The Battle of Milvian Bridge (312AD) was against Constantine’s rival, Maxentius, outside Rome.¹¹ Constantine and his army saw a cross of light imposed over the sun. Attached to it, in Greek characters, was the saying *“In this sign you shall conquer.”* The sign included the first two letters of the Greek word translated, “Christ.” That night Christ appeared to Constantine in a dream and told him to make a replica of the sign he had seen in the noon-day sky and place it on the armor of each of his soldiers. Constantine’s army placed this sign on their shields prior to their battle with Maxentius, and against all

odds, Constantine's army was successful. The "sign" under which Constantine conquered became the event that resulted in Constantine's own conversion; it was the miracle that revealed the reality of the risen Christ to Constantine. Thus, *this event marked the end of persecution of Christians by the Romans.*

Here is how the Bible prophesies of this time period and of Rome's historical role in the persecutions of Jews and Christians until Constantine's conversion.

Apostle John's Vision. In the 12th chapter of Revelation, the Apostle John has a vision. In his vision, a woman is about to give birth to a male child. Opposing her and ready to devour her newborn son, is a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads (12:3-4). The woman gives birth to her son, but amazingly, the dragon, although standing before the woman to immediately devour the child upon his birth, is unsuccessful. The son is "caught up" to heaven (12:5), whereupon a heavenly conflict immediately begins between the dragon and the angels of God (12:7). The dragon loses the conflict, and, along with his angels, is thrown down to earth (12:8-9). In the meantime, the woman is given divine nourishment "in the wilderness" for "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (12:6). The dragon, seeing that he has "only a short time" (12:12) persecutes the woman (12:13). The "two wings of the great eagle" are given to the woman that she might "fly" to the wilderness where she is nourished from the presence of the dragon, for a "time, times, and half a time" (12:14). The dragon responds by pouring a "river" of water out of his mouth (12:15) to drown the woman in the ensuing "flood"; and, the earth saves the woman by "swallowing" up the river (12:16). Finally, the dragon, enraged with the woman, goes off to make war with the rest of her "offspring" (12:17), i.e., those who "hold to the testimony of Jesus."

Here is what the text means. The "dragon" is satan, the serpent of old (12:9). The "male child" is Jesus Christ as implied in 12:5, and named in 12:11, 12:17. When the text states, "the child is caught up to heaven" (12:5), it is referring to the ascension of Jesus Christ to the right hand of God following his crucifixion and resurrection in A.D. 33. The "woman" is a metaphor of the nation of Israel, the covenant people. Many Bible scholars concur with this view because of an identical description of the nation of Israel in Genesis 37:9.¹² The "offspring of the woman" is Christianity as defined by 12:17, "*those who hold to the testimony of Jesus.*" Our remaining questions are these:

1. Is the dragon a satanic incarnation or is he satan himself?
2. What are the "two wings of the great eagle" given to the woman that she might fly to the wilderness to be nourished from the presence of the dragon for a "time, times, and half a time"?
3. What is the meaning of "wilderness" (to which the woman flees) which occurs in two separate verses (12:6, 12:14) and for two periods of equal time, yet described in two different ways? That is, the *wilderness* to which the woman flees is for "one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (12:6); and, "time, times, and half a time" (12:14) (interpreted by many scholars as 3½ years; time = one year, times = two years, and half a time=one-half year, for a period of 3½ years).
4. Who or what are the "seven heads," "ten horns," and "seven diadems" on the heads of the dragon?
5. What is the "river" of water poured out of the dragon's mouth to drown the woman and how does the earth help the woman by "swallowing" the river of water?

Is the dragon an incarnation of satan or is he satan himself? The dragon symbolizes satan working through the lives of others, i.e, satan incarnate. The text communicates this by using the “dragon” as a metaphor of satan, and then by telling the reader that the dragon is actually satan(12:9). Further, as we saw in an earlier chapter, *satan never operates in “person.”* He always works behind or through another. In this case, satan is working through the heads of an empire, that is, through its emperors, to persecute the woman, Israel, followed by the persecution of the “offspring” of the woman, i.e., Christianity. As we will see, the persecution of the Jews occurred through seven Roman Emperors; and the persecution of Christians occurred over ten separate persecutions, ending with Constantine’s conversion in 312 AD. The persecution of the Jews continues even to the modern day as satan “pours water out of his mouth” to destroy her.

Who is “the great eagle”? *The imperial eagle was the insignia of ancient Rome.* It was carried on standards held by those leading the way for the Roman army.¹³ Eric Cline, Professor of Anthropology at George Washington University, describes the significance of the imperial eagle to the Roman legion:

“The eagle standard was the most important of all those carried by each Roman legion. On the pole of the standard, which bore a golden eagle at its top, was affixed the abbreviation “SPQR,” which stood for “senatus populusque romanus” —in English, “the Senate and the people of Rome.” The ultimate disgrace for any Roman legion was to have its eagle standard captured in battle. That happened only very rarely, and an eagle’s loss usually meant that the legion had been annihilated.¹⁴

Thus, the great eagle represents the imperial insignia of the mighty Roman Empire. When the text states that the “wings of the great eagle” were given to the woman, the text is telling us that God will provide a way of escape from the Romans for the woman. The “wings” are a metaphor of this escape. The great eagle, Rome, will not be successful in his quest to annihilate the woman. We will see this in more detail in the sections following.

An alternate interpretation sees the “two wings of the great eagle” to represent Constantine’s conversion at the Battle of Milvian Bridge just before his battle with Maxentius. As stated, Constantine and his men saw a cross in the noon sky formed by the first two Greek letters of “Christ.” The message “In this sign you shall conquer,” was a part of the noon day vision. That night, Christ appeared to Constantine in a dream and told him to place the two Greek letters as an emblem on the armor of each of his soldiers. He did so. Against all odds, Constantine and his men were successful against Maxentius and his army. From this point forward the persecutions of Christians ended. The two wings of the great eagle might be referring to this event. *The problem with this view, of course, is that the “wings of the eagle” are given to the woman (12:14), not the offspring of the woman.*

What is the “wilderness” (to which the woman flees) found in two separate verses (12:6, 12:14), for two periods of equal time, and each time described in two different ways? History records two separate Jewish rebellions against the Romans. The first rebellion is referred to as the “The Great War with Rome”¹⁵ (66 - 73AD) and the second as the “Second Jewish Revolt” (132 - 135AD) (or, the “Bar Kokhba Revolt”).¹⁶ These two revolts concluded in the “wilderness” outside of Jerusalem in forts which provided protection for the Jews in the separate rebellions.

First Jewish Rebellion - the Great War with Rome. The first rebellion included the siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus (Emperor Vespasian's son), culminating in the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem's complete destruction and fall in AD 70. This rebellion began when Florus, the Roman procurator based in Caesarea, took seventeen talents from the sacred treasury of the Temple in the year 66 AD.¹⁷ The Jews rebelled seeing Florus' action as another in a long list of sacrileges against their faith and specifically their Temple. Conflict ensued and escalated with many Jews being killed by the Roman legion followed by several victories of the Jews over the Romans (the greatest was over the 12th Legion led by Cestius wherein the 12th Legion's eagle standard was lost to the Jews¹⁸). Next, civil war erupted *within the Jewish people* in Jerusalem between those who wanted peace with the Romans regardless of the reason and those who wanted deliverance from the Romans.

The culmination of the First Jewish Rebellion was the arrival of Titus to begin a siege of Jerusalem with his Roman army estimated at 65,000 strong. The detail of the Roman siege of Jerusalem is beyond the scope of this writing, but a quote from Eric Cline's work (who quotes from Josephus) of the final stand in the Temple is worth the read:

*"Josephus reports: "While the Temple blazed, the victors plundered everything that fell in their way and slaughtered wholesale all who were caught. No pity was shown for age, no reverence for rank; children and greybeards, laity and priests alike were massacred" (Josephus Jewish War 6.5.271). Six thousand people died within the Temple complex that day; some hacked to death, others burned alive. At the end, the Roman soldiers brought their military standards into the smoldering ruins of the Temple, set them up near the remnants of the eastern gate, and made sacrifices to them. Nothing could have spoken more eloquently of the defeat of the Jews. It took another month for the Romans to subdue the rest of Jerusalem—mostly the upper city. Titus ordered his soldiers to kill the inhabitants, plunder the entire city, and then set it on fire. . . ."*¹⁹

The date the Temple was consumed with fire was August 28, 70 AD. (The ninth of Abib, Jewish calendar). Interestingly, this was the same date that Solomon's Temple (the first Temple) was burned by the Babylonians six hundred and fifty years earlier (586BC).²⁰

Masada - an extension of time for 3 ½ years. Following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, Jewish zealots known as "Sicarii" fled to the remote and fortified mountain fort of Masada outside Jerusalem where other zealots had previously taken control from Roman soldiers garrisoned there. Emil Schurer describes as follows:

*"The Sicarii, under the leadership of Eleazar, . . . had established themselves in this fortress at the very beginning of the war, and since then controlled it. The siege was extremely difficult, since the rock on which the city was built was so high and precipitous on every side that it was almost impossible to bring up siege instruments. . . . But the Romans managed to overcome this obstacle also by the use of fire. When Eleazar saw that there was no longer any hope of resisting the assault, he addressed the garrison, asking them first to kill their own families, and then one another. This was done. When the Romans entered, they discovered with horror that no work remained for them to do. Thus the last bulwark of the revolt was conquered, in April of probably, A.D. 74."*²¹

The Jewish *holdout* at Masada lasted from shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 until AD 74, a span of 3½ years; or, “one thousand two hundred and sixty days.” *Masada was located in the mountains outside Judea, in the “wilderness.”* According to historian, Josephus, Masada was built by Herod the Great in 37 - 31BC as a refuge for himself in the event of a Jewish revolt against his leadership. Interestingly, the Fort was actually used by the Jews as their fortress having been *prepared by God for them (through the work of Herod) as a place of survival!* Notice the prophecy of Revelation 12:6, “*And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she might be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*” With the fall of Jerusalem in 70AD, the Jewish revolt against Rome all but ended, save for Masada.²² Masada acted as a fortress of protection against the Romans – for “one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”

What did Masada accomplish for the Jews, particularly, since those zealots who sought to extend the Jewish Roman War all died at Masada? The 3½ years served as a distraction to the Roman military stationed in Palestine. It allowed those few Jews who survived the fall of Jerusalem, plus those who lived in surrounding towns and villages, a reprieve. In the process, the promise of God given to His covenant people so many years before was fulfilled: a “*remnant*” was *preserved from annihilation by the Gentiles.* In this case, the second possible annihilation was not from the Babylonians in 586BC, but a successor kingdom to them, the Romans. In any event, God did not save the Jews from the Babylonians only to have them destroyed by the Romans!

Ezekiel 6:8 *"However, I shall leave a remnant, for you will have those who escaped the sword among the nations when you are scattered among the countries."*

Second Jewish Revolt. The Second Jewish Revolt, the “Bar Kokhba Revolt,” occurred 62 years later under Roman Emperor Hadrian. This second revolt resulted from Emperor Hadrian’s acts of “founding a city of his own at Jerusalem on the site of the ruined one, calling it “Aelia Capitolina.”²³ “Aelia” came from Hadrian’s gentile name, “Aelius,” while “Capitolina” came from Hadrian’s dedication and erection of a temple to his god, Zeus.²⁴ This temple was erected by Hadrian on the Temple Mount, amidst the ruins of Herod’s Temple (destroyed by the Romans in 70AD). To Jews, this was considered an “abomination desolation” similar to that occurring when Antiochus IV Epiphanes attempted to replace Judaism with “Hellenism,” the Greek religion, in 167BC. Historian James Vanderkam gives this account of Antiochus’ action:

Apparently in the same year, the year 167 BCE (1 Macc. 1:54), Antiochus IV wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, and that all should give up their particular customs. All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath. And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane sabbaths and festivals, to defile the sanctuary and the priests, to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to sacrifice swine and other unclean animals, and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane, so that they would forget the law and change all the ordinances. . . The sanctuary was renamed the temple of Olympian Zeus (2 Macc. 6:2),

prostitution was practiced there, animals unfit for sacrifice were offered, and the Jews, during the monthly celebration of the king's birthday, were forced to eat the impure sacrifices. . . . An especially noteworthy event, according to the sources, occurred on Chislew (the ninth month) 15, 167 BCE, when "they erected a desolating sacrilege on the altar of burnt offering" (1 Macc. 1:54).²⁵

Antiochus' act is prophesied in Daniel 11:31 some 400 years before it occurred. It was an act to end Judaism, the religion of God's covenant people. Had Antiochus been successful, "Israel" would have ceased to exist; for it is through her religion and her relationship to *Yahweh*, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (renamed "Israel" by God, Genesis 32:28), that distinguished Israel among the nations. The Jews preferred death rather than to allow their faith to cease to exist. The Jewish revolt known as the Maccabee Revolt was the Jewish response. Approximately 3½ years later, the Maccabean Revolt was successful in restoring the Temple to Jewish hands, and the complete defeat of the Seleucid forces led by Antiochus.²⁶ The annual 8-day celebration of "Hanukkah" still commemorates the rededication of the Temple as a result of the Maccabean Revolt.²⁷

Fast forward to the year 132AD: the Jews are once again faced with an "abomination desolation," but this time at the hand of Roman Emperor Hadrian. In addition to building a pagan temple on the ruins of the Temple Mount, Hadrian forbade the practice of circumcision, the celebration of the sabbath, and the study of the Torah by Jews.²⁸ Thus, the issue the Jews faced was the same issue that occurred with Antiochus in 167BC - the continuance of their faith. Although their temple no longer existed, their religion did; circumcision, the study of the Torah, the celebration of the sabbath had all sustained the faith.²⁹ Once again, the Jews, preferred death rather than to allow their faith to cease to exist. They revolted in the Bar Kokhba Revolt, 132-135AD. The Jews were led in their revolt by Simon Ben Kosiba (whose name was changed to "Bar Kokhba" by Rabbi Akiba³⁰) who they acclaimed as their "Messiah," the prophesied "star of Jacob" (Numbers 24:17), who would restore their land taken by the Roman oppressors. But unlike the Maccabean Revolt of 167BC, the Bar Kokhba revolt failed, completely.

In the aftermath of the failed Bar Kokhba Revolt, Jews were no longer allowed to live or even visit Jerusalem until Constantine's conversion in the 4th century. Constantine allowed Jews to visit Jerusalem, once a year, to commemorate the destruction of Herod's Temple in AD 70.³¹ From the time of the failed Bar Kokhba Revolt until Constantine's conversion in the 4th century, any Jew seen in Jerusalem was punishable by death.³²

The Second Jewish Revolt also concluded in a fort in the wilderness. This second fort is not quite as well known as the first, Masada. The second fort was called "Bether." Schurer gives this description:

"The last refuge of Bar Kokhba and his supporters was the strong mountain fort of Bether, not very far from Jerusalem according to Eusebius, and in all probability on the site of present-day Bettir, 10 km south-west of Jerusalem. . . . After long and stubborn resistance, this bulwark too was taken in the 18th year of Hadrian = A.D. 134/135 on the 9th Ab, according to rabbinical tradition. . . . With the fall of Bether, the three and a half years of war (A.D. 132- 135) were at an end."³³ (Emphasis supplied)

The 2nd Jewish Revolt lasted the same length of time as the holdout at Masada sixty-two years earlier:

three and a half years! This is the same time period as that identified in Rev 12:6, 14. The reason why the scripture uses two different ways to refer to the same duration of time, i.e., 3 ½ years, is because it is referring to two separate historical events.

But what is the point? Both Jewish revolts ended differently than the successful Maccabean Revolt. The zealots were defeated at both Masada and Bether; *yet, Israel survived and Judaism continued.* Even though both of the 3½ year revolts ended in defeat, the woman, Israel, nor her covenant relationship with Jehovah God, was ended, and the religion of the Jewish people continued! This is in spite of the fact that the Temple, destroyed in 70AD by the Romans, was no more.

This is the point: *Israel was spared from annihilation; against all odds, the Romans were unable to destroy her; the remnant was protected by the very hand of God.*

Who are the seven heads and the ten horns of the dragon? The text gives us two more important hints to identify the Empire Satan has incarnated: the dragon has *seven heads and ten horns.* The seven heads have been identified by David Haggith in his book *Prophets of the Apocalypse.* Haggith identifies seven Roman emperors who persecuted Jews from the time of Christ up through Masada, 74AD. Haggith states,

“The first head probably represented Caesar Augustus, who was the first man to be declared emperor of Rome. Augustus reigned at the birth of Christ, and the dragon is first mentioned as being alive and waiting at the birth of the woman’s child. Vespasian would have been the seventh emperor, and he reigned in the time John is describing when Jerusalem was destroyed. Technically, Vespasian is the ninth to actually sit on the throne, but the two who preceded him reigned less than a year between them. . . . Meanwhile, none of the Eastern half of the empire recognized either . . . They chose Vespasian, who was busy with his war in the East against the Jews. . . . Vespasian was the next in succession who was recognized by the entire empire. . . .”³⁴

Vespasian’s persecution of Jews ended in 70AD with the destruction of Jerusalem and Herod’s Temple (extended by 3½ years at Masada). The seven heads of the dragon symbolize these seven emperors who persecuted the woman, Israel. These seven are Satan incarnate. They are the enraged dragon who persecutes the “woman” who gave birth to the child, Jesus.

After the destruction of the Jews (70AD), the satanically incarnate Roman Empire turned its persecution on Christians. This persecution began with Nero, whose reign as Emperor began in 64AD. This is precisely what the text tells us will happen. The dragon’s persecution began with the woman (Jews) who gave birth to the child (Jesus). Then the dragon turns on the “offspring of the woman,” Christians. It is this next persecution that identifies the ten horns of the dragon.

Ten Horns. In Foxe’s *Christian Martyrs of the World*, author John Foxe names ten separate persecutions from the ascension of Christ (AD 33) to the conversion of Constantine in the 4th century AD.³⁵ The persecutions were not successive persecutions under successive Roman emperors; rather, they total ten persecutions in number. In those ten persecutions of Christians, the words of the Revelation were fulfilled:

Revelation 12:10 *"And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death." (Emphasis supplied)*

The seven heads with seven diadems are the seven Roman Emperors who persecuted the Jews until the time of Nero and the fall of Jerusalem, 70AD. This is the reason why the seven heads have "diadems," i.e., crowns, signifying the individual emperors that ruled Rome during this period. The ten horns are the ten separate persecutions listed by Foxe until Constantine's conversion in the 4th century AD. The horns do not represent the emperors of this period as much as they represent the individual, separate, and sporadic persecutions of Christians during this 250 year time period beginning with Nero and ending with Diocletian, AD 303.

The dragon pours water out its mouth and the earth swallowed up the water. The text gives us another clue:

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

Here is what the text means. The woman is Israel, the covenant people of God. The dragon is satan. The "water poured out of the dragon's mouth" symbolizes satan's persecutions of the Jewish people from the conversion of Roman Emperor Constantine (312AD) through the present day. The "water" is a metaphor for the "spirits of demons" that act as satan's instruments of persecution within humanity against the Jews. Here is a similar passage which describes "spirits of demons" coming out of the mouth of the dragon:

Revelation 16:13 *"And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; 14 for they are spirits of demons, . . ." (Emphasis supplied)*

These "spirits of demons" (coming out of the "mouth of the dragon") are the "spirits" which have persecuted the "woman," Israel, for almost 2000 years. Having lost her homeland, Jerusalem, to the Romans in 70AD (and then again in 135AD), the Jews were "scattered to the nations" in what Bible scholars have come to describe as the "2nd diaspora."³⁶ That is, from the time of the 2nd Jewish-Roman war, the Bar Kokhba Revolt, 135AD, the Jewish people were permanently banished from Jerusalem. They were scattered throughout Asia, Europe, and the entire world. Everywhere the Jews went, satan "poured water out of his mouth after them." Yet, the people and their religion survived satan's persecutions. The survival of the Jews and Judaism is what the text is referring to when it states the "earth opened its mouth and drank up the river the dragon poured out of its mouth" (12:16). The survival of the Jewish people is by the hand of God in the same way that God saved a remnant of the Jews when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586BC. God was their "sanctuary" then; and He was, and is, her sanctuary in the 2nd diaspora among the nations:

Ezekiel 6:8 "However, I shall leave a remnant, for you will have those who escaped the sword among the nations when you are scattered among the countries."

Ezekiel 11:16 "Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Though I had removed them far away among the nations and though I had scattered them among the countries, yet I was a sanctuary for them a little while in the countries where they had gone."'

This is precisely what God promised to do for his covenant people, Israel, since the time of Abraham. God always saved the remnant in times of national crisis; and promised that He would one day bring them back to Jerusalem from their scattered places.

Isaiah 11:11 "Then it will happen on that day that the Lord will again recover the second time with His hand the remnant of His people, who will remain, From Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, And from the islands of the sea. 12 And He will lift up a standard for the nations, And will assemble the banished ones of Israel, And will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

This prophecy was fulfilled in the 20th century, when Israel was granted status as a "homeland for the Jewish people" by the United Nations. The concept was codified in the "Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel" on 14 May, 1948, by the United Nations.³⁷ The Jews later enacted the "Law of Return" which provided "a solution to the Jewish people's "problem"--to reestablish a home for the entire Jewish people in *Eretz Yisrael*, the Land of Israel." Thus, from the Bar Kokhba Revolt, 135AD to May 14, 1948, the Jewish people were scattered among the nations; and, the "earth," swallowed up the dragon's "river" of persecution. The prophecy of Ezekiel written almost 2600 years before was fulfilled:

Ezekiel 34:11 "For thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 "As a shepherd cares for his herd in the day when he is among his scattered sheep, so I will care for My sheep and will deliver them from all the places to which they were scattered on a cloudy and gloomy day. 13 "I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them to their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, and in all the inhabited places of the land." (Emphasis supplied)

Satan's Continued Persecution of Jews. Remember our "thread" in Last Days' Bible prophecies? Holy war. Holy war waged against the children of God, i.e, Jews and Christians, by a kingdom at enmity with God. Find holy war and you have found satan's kingdom. Rome was satan's instrument in the days following the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ; but now, we have found another thread: *anti-Semitism*, i.e., any act against the religion, the culture, the ethnicity of Jews, including an action to eliminate Israel's right to exist.

We saw the thread of anti-Semitism when Antiochus attempted to replace Judaism with Hellenism in 167BC; again, when Rome destroyed the Temple and all of Jerusalem in 70AD; and lastly in 135AD, when Emperor Hadrian built a pagan temple on the ruins of the Temple Mount, including his prohibition against circumcision, sabbath observance, and the study of the Torah. All of these efforts were an attempt to

destroy the Jewish people and the Jewish religion; and all were unsuccessful.

We see the exact same effort taking place in the modern time by Islam's never ending struggle to destroy Israel. As an example of Islam's anti-Semitism, here is the summary from the book flap of, *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism*, written by Andrew Bostom:

*"This comprehensive, meticulously documented collection of scholarly articles presents indisputable evidence that a readily discernible, uniquely Islamic antisemitism—a specific Muslim hatred of Jews—has been expressed continuously since the advent of Islam. Debunking the conventional wisdom, which continues to assert that Muslim animosity toward Jews is entirely a 20th-century phenomenon fueled mainly by the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict, leading scholars provide example after example of antisemitic motifs in Muslim documents reaching back to the beginnings of Islam. The contributors show that the Koran itself is a significant source of hostility toward Jews. . . . Numerous complementary historical accounts illustrate the resulting plight of Jewish communities in the Muslim world across space and time, culminating in the genocidal threat posed to the Jews of Israel today. . . ."*³⁸

Author Andrew Bostom quotes from the Qur'an of Islam's hatred of Jews.

"They are those whom Allah has cast aside and on whom His wrath has fallen and of whom He has made some as apes and swine" (5:60); "You have surely known the end of those from amongst you who transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath, in consequence of which we condemned them: Be ye like apes, despised" (2:65); and, "when, instead of amending, they became more persistent in the pursuit of that which they were forbidden, we condemned them: Be ye as apes, despised" (7:166).³⁹ (Emphasis supplied)

Does that sound like anti-Semitism to you? Jews are the "descendants of apes and pigs"! Finally, just one quote from Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (I could fill the entire book with similar quotes):

"Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. (Reuters) Ahmadinejad tells West: Accept Israel's 'imminent collapse' By DPA and Haaretz Services, Friday, July 18, 2008.

"Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called on the West Wednesday to acknowledge Israel's "imminent collapse." Speaking to a crowd on a visit to the southern port of Bushehr, where Iran's first light-water nuclear power plant is being built by Russia, Ahmadinejad further incited his listeners to "stop supporting the Zionists, as [their] regime reached its final stage." "Accept that the life of Zionists will sooner or later come to an end," the Iranian president said in a televised speech. He added, "What we have right now is the last chapter [of Israeli atrocities] which the Palestinians and regional nations will confront and eventually turn in Palestine's favor." Iran does not acknowledge Israel and Ahmadinejad has in the past sparked international outcry by referring to the systematic murder of six million Jews in World War II as a "myth" and calling for Israel to be "wiped off the map."⁴⁰

The Iranian president's commitment to "wipe Israel off the map" is not a 20th century phenomena. Its been

going on for thousands of years. The sons of Ishmael have been conspiring against God's "treasured ones" since before the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586BC. Here is how King David put it in the 83rd Psalm (all the other nations included as "enemies of God" are Muslim nations today):

Psalm 83:1 "O God, do not remain quiet; Do not be silent and, O God, do not be still. 2 For, behold, Thine enemies make an uproar; And those who hate Thee have exalted themselves. 3 They make shrewd plans against Thy people, And conspire together against Thy treasured ones. 4 They have said, "Come, and let us wipe them out as a nation, That the name of Israel be remembered no more." 5 For they have conspired together with one mind; Against Thee do they make a covenant: 6 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites; Moab, and the Hagrites; 7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre; 8 Assyria also has joined with them; They have become a help to the children of Lot." (Emphasis supplied)

The point? *Find a nation advocating the end of Israel's existence and you have just found the hand of satan.* It's not a revived Rome we are looking for. Rome was one of satan's early "hands;" his first "cloak" after satan's fall from heaven. God removed satan's Roman cloak when Roman Emperor Constantine was converted to Christianity. *Satan has now cloaked himself in another, in Islam, the ancient sons of Ishmael.* God will remove that cloak as well, but not as he did with Rome's cloak. The cloak of Islam will eventually be removed by its roots; *satan will be judged.* Satan, the beast, and the false prophet, will all be thrown into the Lake of Fire, eternally.

Conclusion. Rome is satan incarnate in the dragon of Revelation 12. The seven heads and seven diadems symbolize the seven emperors who persecuted Jews through the fall of Jerusalem, 70AD. The ten horns symbolize the persecution of Christians from the time of Nero, 64AD, until the time of Constantine's conversion, AD 312. The two wilderness "nourishments" of the woman for approximately 3 ½ years, each, symbolize the continuation of "life" given to Israel during two specific historical revolts necessitated by a threat to its national and spiritual existence. The "water" poured out of the "mouth of the dragon" symbolizes the demonic persecution of Jews which scattered them to the nations. Yet, the "earth" swallowed up the "water"; the Jews were sustained as God became their "sanctuary." The prophecy of the returning scattered peoples of Ezekiel 34:11-13 and Isaiah 11:11 was fulfilled when in 1948, Israel, once again, became a state, and Jews from all over the world returned to Jerusalem.

The dragon is still "pouring out water" to drown the Jews; *he just has a different spigot – Islam!*

Forget Rome. Rome will not be "rising from her ashes" to dominate the world in the End of Days. *The Piper's tune lures no more.*

Summary of Key Points in this Chapter	
Point 1	Rome fails to fulfill key prophetic characteristics to enable it to be the Last Days' Kingdom at enmity with God.

Point 2	Rome is the “great eagle” found in Revelation 12:14 that persecuted the “woman,” Israel. The “great wings” of the eagle are a metaphor for the wings of God that saved the woman from Roman persecution.
Point 3	The “wilderness” which allowed the “woman,” Israel, to be nourished in two separate periods of 3½ years each symbolizes two separate Jewish revolts against Rome, each of which threatened Israel's right to exist. God acted on both occasions to spare Israel from destruction.
Point 4	The “seven heads” of the dragon symbolize seven Roman Emperors who persecuted the Jews, beginning with Caesar Augustus (at birth of Christ) and concluding with Emperor Vespasian (70AD).
Point 5	The “ten horns” of the dragon symbolize ten persecutions of Christians beginning with Roman Emperor Nero (64AD) and ending with Roman Emperor Diocletian (303AD). Constantine’s conversion to Christianity in 312AD brought the persecutions to an end.
Point 6	The “water” poured out of the dragon’s mouth symbolizes satan’s persecutions of the Jews since the time of Constantine to the present day. The “earth” that swallowed the water symbolizes the act of God to protect the scattered Jews throughout the nations, until their return to their homeland in 1948.
Point 7	Islam’s anti-Semitism can be seen in Old Testament scripture of the sons of Edom and Ishmael who sought to eliminate Israel. The sons of Edom and Ishmael are the forerunners of the Muslims, today.
Point 8	The return of the Jews to Israel in 1948 and the establishment of the Nation of Israel by act of the United Nations is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah 11:11-12, Ezekiel 34:11-13, God recovered the remnant of His people a second time.

Endnotes

- 1.The opening story has been penned from a summary of *The Piped Piper of Hamelin* taken from wikipedia. Available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pied_Piper_of_Hamelin at May 3, 2008. The story was clarified by my wife, a 2nd grade teacher, who quite adamantly refused to allow the Piped Piper to be scripted as the “bad guy.”
- 2.Stephen R. Miller, p. 196f.
- 3.Haggith, p. 334, and, available at, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate>, at May 8, 2008.
- 4.St Jerome, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel translated by Gleason L. Archer, Jr.*, p. 77.
- 5.David Haggith, *Prophets of the Apocalypse*, pp. 316-318.
- 6.Edward J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 147-148.
- 7.Stephen R. Miller, p. 201.
- 8.David Haggith, *Prophets of the Apocalypse*, p. 267.
- 9.Miller, pp. 202-203.
- 10.Young, p 160.
- 11.Available at, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constantine_I_of_the_Roman_Empire#cite_note-150, at June 10, 2008.
- 12.Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, p. 120; Garland Ladd, *A Commentary on the Revelation*, p. 167.
- 13.David Haggith, *Prophets of the Apocalypse*, p. 246.
- 14.Eric H. Cline, *Jerusalem Besieged, From Ancient Canaan to Modern Israel*, p 116.
- 15.Emil Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ, Vol 1*, p. 485.
- 16.Eric H. Cline, p. 97.
- 17.Eric H. Cline, p. 112.
- 18.Eric H. Cline, p. 117f.
- 19.Eric H. Cline, p. 127.
- 20.Eric H. Cline, p. 127.
- 21.Schurer, vol 1, pp. 511-512.
- 22.James C. Vanderkam, *An Introduction to Early Judaism*, p 44, states that there were actually three separate holdouts of the Jews, all of which were forts. Herodium and Macherus were two other fortresses, but both of these fell quickly to the Romans.
- 23.Schurer, vol 1, p. 537.
- 24.Available at, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aelia_Capitolina, at May 24, 2008.

25. James C. Vanderkam, p. 20.
26. Schurer, vol 1, p. 540, 537, 555.
27. James C. Vanderkam, p. 20.
28. Schurer, vol 1, p. 555.
29. James C. Vanderkam, p. 45.
30. Schurer, vol 1, p. 543.
31. Schurer, vol 1, p. 556.
32. Schurer, vol 1, p. 553.
33. Schurer, vol 1, pp. 551-552.
34. David Haggith, *Prophets of the Apocalypse*, p. 256-257.
35. John Foxe, *Foxe's Christian Martyr's of the World*, pp. 8 - 21.
36. The 1st Diaspora was when Jerusalem was destroyed at the hands of the Babylonians in 586BC, and those surviving were scattered to the nations or taken into exile in Babylon.
37. Available at, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeland_for_the_Jewish_people, at June 23, 2008.
38. Available at, <http://www.andrewbostom.org/content/view/28/53/>, at July 25, 2008.
39. Andrew G. Bostom, Editor, *The Legacy of Islamic Anti-Semitism, from Sacred Texts to Solemn History*, p. 634.
40. Available at, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/949628.html>, at July 26, 2008.