

Christian Educational Ministries

The Abomination of Desolation

by: Ronald L. Dart

I want to talk about prophecy today; a specific area or prophecy that's always been of some interest to people. Is it really possible, do you suppose, that Old Testament prophecies have end-time applications? A lot of people, I think, sometimes wonder about that. They say, "Well, you know, I can sort of see a comparison between the things that Isaiah said and the 20th-century United States. I can see some types of comparisons with Ezekiel and the end time. And, of course, there's Daniel. But maybe all those were all fulfilled in the past. Maybe only Revelation has end-time relevance, or perhaps the Olivet Prophecy." Are the end-time applications of Old Testament prophecy deliberate or just coincidental, as, for example, if you had a history repeating itself.

Well, Jesus, in his Olivet Prophecy, made a very curious statement. And I'd like you to turn to the account of it found in the 24th chapter of Matthew—to take a look at this statement, to analyze what it was that Jesus was saying and how it might answer that question I just asked: Are these end-time applications of Old Testament prophecy accidental or are they deliberate?

Matthew, the 24th chapter. The entire chapter—in fact, 24 and 25—all constitute what is called the "Olivet Prophecy". And all the statements were given in answer to a very simple question.

Matthew 24

KJ2000

¹ And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple.

² And Jesus said unto them, "See you not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the world?

Just as far as my own personal experience, I don't recall hearing any subject from the Bible discussed *more* in my lifetime—by people I might overhear on an airplane talking or someone that I might happen to run into who wants to discuss—I don't recall having heard anything ever discussed *more* than the Olivet Prophecy; the particular points relevant to it. Even though the people concerned may not have had any idea that it was the Olivet Prophecy, they just heard that there would be "wars and rumors of wars" and they've heard of diseases and pestilence. The disciples asked the question that almost any of us would want to ask Jesus if we had half a chance. "What is the sign of your coming and of the end of the world? How are we going to know when these things are going on?"

Now, Jesus proceeded to generalize really; to give a lot of, sort of, "signs of the times". And, for

the most part, most of these things that he talks about have been going on for the last 100-plus years. There have been wars and rumors of wars. There's been a diseased epidemic here, and there's been a famine there, there's been an earthquake there. and they just go on and on and on and you ask yourself, "How can these be signs of the end of the world? What can I get hold of in this to make me realize that that I'm getting close to the end, because these things have *always* been?"

Jesus' disciples who sat there listening to him talk could have said, "But master, these things have *always* been. There have always been either a war or rumor of war in my lifetime and I've heard it from my grandparents from time immemorial and even the pages of the scriptures are replete with it. How are we to learn anything from all of this?" And, of course, early on Jesus said:

Matthew 24

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⁶ [...S]ee that you be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Basically he tells them all these things are just the *beginning* of sorrows. You haven't seen anything yet, he said, whenever *these* things take place. It's down in verse 14 when he begins to become specific, with some things that you can get a handle on. He first says:

Matthew 24

KJ2000

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

That's fascinating because there is, right now, not a nation under heaven where the name of "Jesus Christ" is not known. There's nowhere where the essential core of Jesus' message has not been preached. It isn't there. The Bible has been translated into every known language on the face of the earth. But the true Gospel, apparently, has not been preached; this requirement has not been met. Because he doesn't say that that has to happen *before* the end comes. He says it *will* happen and *then* the end will come. So this particular requirement, somehow, is yet ahead of us. But the peculiar statement is in verse 15:

Matthew 24

KJ2000

¹⁵ When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand:)

¹⁶ Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains[.]

Why is that peculiar? Why am I surprised that, somehow or another, Jesus would bring in the question of the abomination of desolation. Well, primarily because his listeners and the people sitting before him who had heard this (and any other Jewish audience to which he would have spoken) knew the term "abomination of desolation". It was a term that had been used commonly among them. They even knew who the person was who had placed the abomination of desolation and they knew precisely *what* the abomination was. To their mind, it was one Antiochus Epiphanes who entered into the temple of God, desecrated the altar by offering swine's flesh

upon the altar, and then placed a statue of Jupiter Olympus in that place. And it had been known by the Jews as the “abomination that made desolate” from that time.

But now here is Jesus, reaching back into the Book of Daniel, taking a prophecy that his listeners would have *assumed* had been fulfilled in history and telling them:

Matthew 24

KJ2000

¹⁵ When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoever reads, let him understand:)

¹⁶ Then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains[.]

Jesus took an Old Testament prophecy and placed it squarely into the future. How far out? His disciples had no way of knowing, but he definitely placed that scripture into a *future* time reference. So I answered my first question. These end-time applications of Old Testament prophecies were deliberate on God’s part right from the very beginning. Jesus did not even allow for a previous fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy . He didn’t indicate that this was kind of a secondary or a repetition. He said “the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel”. I think that’s a very important thing for us to understand: that he understood Daniel’s prophecy to deal not with Antiochus Epiphanes, but with the future somewhere downstream. So he goes on to say:

Matthew 24

KJ2000

¹⁷ Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house:

¹⁸ Neither let him who is in the field return back to take his clothes.

¹⁹ And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that nurse a child in those days!

²⁰ But pray you that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

²¹ For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

That’s a fascinating scripture. One thing that’s fascinating is: Why should you pray that your flight be not on the Sabbath day if the Sabbath day is not binding upon Christians? Now, the arguments that have been advanced are, “Well, for those living in or around Jerusalem, they could get stoned by a bunch of Orthodox Jews if they were to be seen leaving the city on the Sabbath day.” But wait, wait, wait, wait. The people who are leaving are people without even an extra change of clothes. They are carrying *no bags*. They have just laid down or stopped whatever they were doing. If they happened to be on a rooftop, they did not go back down into their house. They went right across the top of the roofs to the easiest way down and out of the city. There was no question of getting into difficulty.

Then, *or today*, if you go down to Jerusalem right now, today, and on the Sabbath day, you’ll see cars going to and from, hither and yon, throughout the city. There’s nothing unusual about people moving around except in a very narrow, little part of that city on the Sabbath day where some very Orthodox Jews live. and this doesn’t say “just in Jerusalem”, it says “in Judea”, which would include the whole countryside—the whole province round about Jerusalem—that *all* of those people are to flee in the mountains. Just the very idea of the gates being shut on the Sabbath; is that where the problem is? The gates being shut on the Sabbath would not prohibit you from getting out of the city. And it wasn’t just the city that was at stake. It seems very

evident that there's something more than that with this flight not being on the Sabbath.

So, they were warned that their flight should not be on the winter. That's easy to understand. It can be very miserable out, trying to make your way up or down the countryside without having taken any extra shelter—no tent that you've been able to carry, no preparations. You just had to get yourself together and *get out* of that place. He says:

Matthew 24

KJ2000

²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Let's go over to Mark's account of this, in the 13th chapter of Mark and see what comparison we can find here. Beginning in verse nine of Mark 13:

Mark 13

KJ2000

⁹ But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues you shall be beaten: and you shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached among all nations.

¹¹ But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what you shall speak, neither do you premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak you: for it is not you that speak, but the Holy Spirit.

He then spoke of the same thing that was recorded in Matthew's Gospel. That brother shall deliver up brother, that they'd be betraying one another, that they'd be hated by all men for Jesus' name's sake. Then comes verse 14:

Mark 13

KJ2000

¹⁴ But when you shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that reads understand,) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains:

Now, the reason I wanted to read Mark's account was both that he underlined the point about the Gospel having been preached in all nations, but primarily because of his reference or use of the same expression, "let him that readeth understand". The question I had when I read this the first time in Matthew was, "Does this refer to the person that reads the Gospel account—to *him* understanding." Well Jesus wasn't writing when he made the statement, he was *talking*. The question I had was, "Well, then, is this Matthew's edit?" But Mark has it, as well. No, I think that Jesus made the statement, orally, to a group of people who were listening to him. And he said, "Let him that read it..." Read what? Read *Daniel*, not the Gospel account—Daniel. "Let the one that reads Daniel understand."

That's a rather cryptic warning. It's a little difficult to understand precisely why Jesus would have said that—except that, apparently, it's not obvious. Apparently the significance of this abomination of desolation is not just really all that obvious to the reader. He might reach a wrong

conclusion. Turn back to Luke, the 21st chapter where there is a slight variance on this account. It gives us a little bit more of an understanding. Luke 21 and verse 20:

Luke 21

KJ2000

²⁰ And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

Now, he doesn't use the term "abomination" he just uses "desolation". And he uses a different thing. He doesn't say when you see the abomination of desolation—when you see Jerusalem *compassed about with armies*. This is when you do what?

Luke 21

KJV

²¹ Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

²² For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

²³ But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

²⁴ And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Now, there are several things that come together at the same time, according to what Jesus said. First, the true Gospel *finally* reaches all nations. Secondly, Jerusalem is surrounded. Thirdly, Daniel's abomination of desolation (whatever that is) is set up. There is still one short moment in this time—a very brief moment—in which to flee. So brief, in fact, that the difference in time of simply walking across from the roof of your house to your neighbor's and on out of the city and out—as opposed to going down in your house, collecting a few clothes or some warmer garments, going out your front door, and making your way out. That short period of time, that short delay, can make the difference in whether you're *out* or whether you're *in*.

So it's that close and it's just prior, also, as you'll read in these accounts, to the heavenly sign. That is, suddenly the sun and moon beginning to change; all sorts of dramatic things taking place in the environment that signal to you that the Day of the Lord is at hand.

Now, the question is: Just what did Jesus mean by the "abomination of desolation"? What did Daniel mean by the "abomination of desolation" and what is this cryptic warning, "Whoso reads, let him understand."? As I've already pointed out, I think it was stated in Christ's words because both Matthew and Luke record that particular expression. "Read", then, I think refers to Daniel and not the Gospel accounts. I want you to turn back with me now to the particular account in Daniel that Christ referred to. Daniel, chapter 11 and verse 31:

Daniel 11

KJV

³⁰ For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

³¹ And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

Simple. What was it? Well, first of all, I've already explained to some small extent as to what it was. But to give the historical context and a little feeling for what we're dealing with here in the 11th chapter of Daniel. Daniel's prophecies essentially focus on one governmental system—that of Babylon. We've kind of referred to it as a great world-ruling kingdom. But that's not really true because Babylon was not a world-ruling kingdom because there were great dynasties in the world in other places at this period of time—great, powerful kingdoms that were established—that had nothing whatsoever to do with Babylon. What we *are* dealing with in Babylon is the specific gentile system of government that dominated this part of the world and of a particular system that *would* dominate it from the time of Daniel's prophecies until the return of Christ and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom.

Now, Daniel 2 has been one of the most fascinating prophecies, and one that has always taken a great deal of attention, and it is really a very simple prophecy. It requires very little in the way of interpretation; the interpretation is given by Daniel. And I don't know of a single commentary that differs on the overall interpretation of the second chapter of the Book of Daniel.

Daniel, for those of you who might not recall, in the second chapter describes a great image. It had a head of gold. It had a breast of silver. It goes all the way down to brass and iron and finally iron mingled with clay at its feet. Daniel, in his interpretation of this vision, divides this image into four separate systems. And, actually, some people have called it a "Vision of Five Kingdoms". Not four, but five. Because it also includes in that vision the return of Christ, the establishment of Christ's kingdom by the Stone which is Christ smiting this great image on its feet, breaking its feet, destroying the whole image.

But one of the most important things about this image to bear in mind is that the vision that was given to, and interpreted by, Daniel is not a vision of four images: one of gold, one of silver, one of brass, and one of iron. It is a vision of *one* great image with different metals in descending order or decaying order as you make your way down the image. I think this is very important. We tend, when we're interpreting Daniels' prophecies, especially when you look later on at some of the other interpretations that he uses—where he describes them as four different kinds of beasts: a lion, a bear, a leopard, and then finally this strange beast which encompasses certain characteristics of all three of them that were before him. The point in Daniel of the latter visions of the beasts is to give you a different perspective on this great world system.

But the point of Daniel 2 is to help you to understand that this system which we see in Babylon, followed by the Medo-Persian Empire, followed by Alexander's empire, followed by the Roman Empire—this system is one, not four. And that Babylon, as the head, and Nebuchadnezzar as the leader of Babylon as the head, is the substance, the reality, of this image down through all of its years.

Babylon fell long ago. We read these prophecies that Babylon would be desolate, that the Arab would not pitch his tent there, that the place would be desolate forevermore. And we all know that Babylon was destroyed by the Medes and the Persians, that it actually was left as an absolute, desolate wilderness. You can get on an airplane, go there today, and wander around the ruins if you would like. Why is it, then that there are so many prophecies given *long* after Babylon was destroyed about the "destruction of Babylon", about the "corruption of Babylon"?

The answer is that the Roman Empire was *still* the Babylonian system. Now, how could this be? The answer is surprisingly simple: that even though the Medes and the Persians came in and conquered Babylon, they *themselves* were conquered by the Babylonian *religion*. Although Alexander came in and conquered the Medes and the Persians he himself was conquered by the Babylonian *religion*. Alexander's custom, basically, was to worship *all* the gods of the nations that he that he conquered. And by the time you come to Rome, Rome *still* is conquered by the Babylonian system—the Babylonian religious system. So the religion of Babylon, even though the nation was destroyed, even though the city was demolished, even though their people were taken into captivity, the *religion* survived. And there we have this unity—this unifying spirit, if you will—that follows all the way through Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire, Alexander's empire, and finally the Roman Empire—which finally will be destroyed at the return of Christ.

That is why, when you get to the end of Revelation, you see this angel crying in the midst of heaven:

Revelation 18

KJV

² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

That *that* return of Christ is when the ultimate, final destruction of Babylon takes place. And finally, at that time, and *only* at that time is the Babylonian system finally destroyed.

So we have successive, degenerate phases of the same system that go on. And this is what Daniel's prophecies are all about. He doesn't really concern itself with Egypt. Egypt is just on the fringes of Daniel's prophecy. He doesn't concern himself with the eastern empires of India and China. They are completely outside of the pale of his problems. He concerns himself not at all with any other part of what we would call the "New World". Whether he even *knew* of it or not is irrelevant. For he *is* concerned with the Babylonian Empire and all of the successors, or all the continuations, or all the resurrections of that empire in new forms down through all generations and their effect—*its* effect—on God's people down through those generations which does finally culminate in Christ's Kingdom.

Now, later prophecies of the beasts use different metaphors. They actually show us all these different kinds of beasts, but again we are dealing with the same thing. The abomination of desolation in Daniel 11 takes place, in type, at the very end of the third phase of these kingdoms. First of all, as I said, we deal with—both in the image of Daniel and also in the beasts of Daniel—the Babylonian Empire, symbolized by a great lion. It's destroyed and is replaced by another great beast, which is a bear: Medo-Persia. Then it's destroyed and replaced by another one: a leopard.

Now, the prophecies (and it would be much too time consuming to go into all of them today about Alexander) show how Alexander was to conquer and how he was to destroy, and how he was to reach out. (And, in fact, *did* conquer the entirety of the Babylonian Empire and reach out, I think, into areas that Babylon had not really taken because he did encompass and take in Egypt, as well.) Alexander was cut off early in life he was succeeded by his four generals, who divided his empires into four parts. These are all foretold the Daniel, generations before it actually took place.

Finally, in the process of time, two of these particular kingdoms or generals become dominant. They become referred to in Daniel 11, and Daniel 11 gets into great detail about the activities of those two particular kingdoms—those two descendants of Alexander the Great. (They were not his physical descendants they were really his descendants in a moral sense or political sense.) They begin to refer to them as the King of the North and the King of the South.

Syria, which was to the north of Palestine and much, much larger and much more encompassing than Syria is today, was the northern power. The dynasty of kings were called the Seleucidæ. The group of kings that were the last group to rule in that area were called Antiochus: Antiochus I, Antiochus II, and so forth. You have the Ptolemies in series, in Egypt, in the south.

Now, you probably have heard the old expression:

Daniel 11

KJV

⁴⁰ And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him[.]

I remember from the time I was a little boy, hearing people talk about being end times and the signs of the times. And one of the earliest things I can recall is the King of the South pushing at him. And I can recall my relatives sitting around a hot, summer night. This is long before television was a factor, and they had to talk about something, and the Bible was always stimulating. They say, “Well, you know the King of the South is going to push the King of the North.” “Who do you think the king of the South is?” “Well, I don’t know.” “I think it’s Egypt.” And so on, so many different things were advanced and it *is* a fascinating study to go into.

Well, the King of the North and the King of the South are intimately involved in this abomination of desolation because it is the King of the North—a King of the North who sets up the abomination of desolation. We had several of them. As I mentioned before, the last dynasty of this northern Syrian Kingdom were all called “Antiochus.” Antiochus IV called himself “Epiphanes” or “the illustrious one” and some sources say that that’s actually a title of divinity. You know, the very term “epiphany” actually applied to Christ has to do with his return or his appearance (the meaning of the Greek word escapes me).

Antiochus, of course, was a man very devoted to the Greek way of things. I’m not sure whether he was a Syrian or whether he was indeed a Greek. I think he was Greek. But certainly he was a Hellenist and was very much concerned about spreading the Greek culture and the Greek religion by whatever means were at his disposal. As we read along to Daniel 11, we come down to verse 21. I’m breaking in the middle of things at this point because we have had some Antiochus go before. We’ve had a tax-raiser (verse 20) go before. And finally he was cut off and destroyed.

Daniel 11

KJV

²¹ And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

Now, I won’t bore you with a great deal of historical references to this because as far as I know every historical source is in agreement with the identity of the vile person with Antiochus Epiphanes. The descriptions of the way that he obtained these things are all recorded in history—

where you could read in 1 and 2 Maccabees and other historical sources, Josephus and others, who tell you more specifically what this man did. And you find remarkable correlation between the way he did things. That instead of necessarily overcoming people by force, that he at first moves in and begins to win converts to himself *personally* and by flattery and by bribery and by cajoling people and by causing business and craft to prosper he increases his power—gradually and steadily—until he comes into ascendancy in this kingdom.

It's all described historically which Daniel describes here. Daniel is so accurate, in fact, that many of the critics *insist* on placing the time of the writing of Daniel in 175 BC. Now, in case you're not a historical buff and dates don't mean anything to you, that's during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes. That's during the time that was on the scene performing the very things that Daniel wrote here. Whereas, in fact, Daniel tells us that he wrote when Nebuchadnezzar still lived. Now, this makes Daniel, of course, (or the writer of Daniel) some sort of an absolute, out-and-out fraud if that's the case. And we are still left with a problem, even if we place him in 175 BC, of explaining how it was that he was able to foretell everything from *175 BC on*—including the establishment of the Roman Empire.

But, anyway, that's when the critics date Daniel. Why do they put him there? Because of internal evidence or because of external evidence? For one reason: he is *too accurate*. If you search it out they will say it is impossible for a Hebrew in Nebuchadnezzar's court to have described in detail the doings of Antiochus Epiphanes with such accuracy. That's kind of a little lame excuse, but it's the same reason that was given for dividing Isaiah into 1st and 2nd Isaiah (and, as some have done later on, into 3rd and 4th and 5th Isaiah) is because they say certain concepts that were in Isaiah lay *beyond the horizons* of the seventh-century prophet. What are you going to say when someone says that? When the whole point of Isaiah is that he wrote under the inspiration of God. He was not a historian, he was a prophet. And the difficulty with Isaiah is that, unlike Daniel, you can't just pick up Isaiah and put him later because he knew *too much* about things that went before. And so they have to split them up to where he is actually two different people writing at two whole different times, because he is too accurate about two times. And somebody else came along and saw what the others had missed, he is too accurate about *still more* times and so now we have to consider there might not have been just two Isaiahs, but three or four or more! But the prophets were incredible. It did, of course, create all sorts of problems for people. But let's get back to Antiochus, as to what he did.

Daniel 11

KJV

²² And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant.

Which is a reference to the high priest and he caused one of the high priests to be deposed and replaced by a man named Jason who was loyal to him personally. And Jason, of course, had bribed him and other people to try to obtain the high priesthood, as well. He not only succeeded in persecuting the Jewish religion he actually *corrupted* it—which is, in some ways, a much more serious crime in the sense that much more damage can be done, by the way, when you get into a religious system and corrupt it then you can do from outside by attacking it. Think about it. If you persecute a religious group of people, if you put some of them to the death, what do you do? You drive them together. You make them stronger. You actually give them a reason for fighting you. It is much more effective, Antiochus found, to get inside by hiring and by bribery to corrupt *even* the high priest of this time. He did so quite successfully.

Daniel 11*KJV*

²⁵ And he shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the south with a great army; and the king of the south shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand: for they shall forecast devices against him.

I don't know exactly what they mean by that but apparently Antiochus was able to deceive the king of the South and, by trickery, was able to defeat him quite handily.

Daniel 11*KJV*

²⁶ Yea, they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow: and many shall fall down slain.

In other words: internal dissension in Egypt was a part of the reason why the King of the South was defeated.

Daniel 11*KJV*

²⁷ And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table[...]

Apparently in some sort of peace conference, lying to one another through their teeth.

Daniel 11*KJV*

²⁷ [...] but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed. ²⁸Then shall he return into his land with great riches; [that is Antiochus Epiphanes, or the king of the north] and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

Now, as I said before, Antiochus was a Hellenizer. One of his great missions in life was to spread the Greek culture and Greek religion far and wide. Consequently, there was an attempt on his part to suppress the Jewish religion. He actually at one point forbade any type of Jewish worship of any sort. Circumcision was forbidden. He encouraged the participation in athletics, which was an interesting little ploy because at this point in time the athletics that went on the Greek stadium were all conducted in the nude—totally naked. And so, consequently, there wasn't any question of hiding your identity. If you were going to participate in that, then you had better be uncircumcised or else it would be immediately evident to everyone that you were a Jew. This was a part of the approach of Antiochus Epiphanes. And it was during this time, we are told, that some young Jewish man even submitted to skin grafts in order to try to pretend or appear to be uncircumcised when they had been circumcised. So he actually is against the government.

Daniel 11*KJV*

²⁸ Then shall he return into his land with great riches; and his heart shall be against the holy covenant; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

²⁹ At the time appointed he shall return, and come toward the south [...]

Now, here it comes again in another campaign.

Daniel 11

KJV

²⁹ [...] but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter.

Obscure expressions. This is apparently some sort of “middle” campaign and we’re not told what it means.

Daniel 11

KJV

³⁰ For the ships of Chittim shall come against him [...]

Now, the commentaries tell us that what this is talking about is the Roman ambassadors coming into Egypt in ships of Chittim/Kittim (apparently a reference to Cyprus). Why Cyprus particularly, I’m not entirely sure. But it does have to do with the Romans who, historically we know, at this time came in and did participate in turning him back.

We’re hanging now on the ragged edge, as a matter of fact, of the end of the remnants of Alexander’s kingdom and the ascendancy of the Roman Empire as the logical, or the illegitimate maybe I should say, successor of the Babylonian Kingdom.

Daniel 11

KJV

³⁰ For the ships of Chittim shall come against him: therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant: so shall he do; he shall even return, and have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant.

In other words, with those Jews who had forsaken the Covenant of God, he actually enters into intelligence or covert operations with them again corrupting those that are involved in the worship of God.

Daniel 11

KJV

³¹ And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength [...]

It was at this time that he offered swine’s flesh on the altar in God’s temple.

Daniel 11

KJV

³¹ [...] and shall take away the daily *sacrifice*, and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.

Some translations say “that astonishes everyone”. It’s difficult to know how that is to be taken.

The Greek is “desolation”. We have this word in Hebrew, but the point is that this was, apparently, the statue of Jupiter Olympus—a carved statuary or image of a pagan god that was placed right in the Holy Place.

Daniel 11

KJV

³² And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do *exploits*.

Historically, that obviously would refer to the Maccabees who organized rebellion against Antiochus. He came down to try to defeat them and was unsuccessful.

Daniel 11

KJV

³³ And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, *many* days.

³⁴ Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

³⁵ And *some* of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make *them* white, *even* to the time of the end: because *it is* yet for a time appointed.

I want to pause here just for a moment because, you see, what we’re looking at here in the abomination of desolation that he is speaking of here—I’ve been giving this to you as though everything going on here was talking about Antiochus Epiphanes. But Jesus said it wasn’t. What Antiochus Epiphanes is, is a historical model of that vile person who will, at some future time, place the abomination of desolation. Now that’s very clear from Christ’s statement because the wording and the way he went about it shows Christ looking *entirely* in the future, having to do with the abomination—not looking back.

And so, at most, Antiochus Epiphanes and that statue of Jupiter Olympus and that offering of swine’s flesh in the Holy Place can only be a type or a historical model of what is to take place at some time in the future. Continuing now, when we understand that Jesus told us that as we read this we better understand it. And so he said. “When you see the abomination of desolation. Get out of Jerusalem. Get out of Judea.”

Daniel 11

KJV

³³ And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, *many* days.

Jesus in the Olivet Prophecy told us that the saints would be persecuted, that they would fall, that they would betray one another—didn’t he? It’s all there.

Daniel 11

KJV

³⁴ Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

The implication almost is that they *themselves*, that is, the children who know and who understand—the children of the covenant—can be corrupted by flatteries when the time comes and not understand what is taking place before their very eyes.

Daniel 11

KJV

³⁵ And *some* of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make *them* white, *even* to the time of the end: because *it is* yet for a time appointed.

³⁶ And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

Fascinating. We're dealing here not with Antiochus. For Antiochus was nothing more than a historical model of this one that is to come at the end time. He is referred to elsewhere in the Bible as the "man of sin". He is loosely referred to as the "anti-Christ". He is referred to as the "beast" in Revelation. This one is going to do the things that he's talking about here. He says in verse 37:

Daniel 11

KJV

³⁷ Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women [Apparently, he is celibate.], nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.

This man is identified in 2 Thessalonians 2 and in Revelation 13.

Daniel 11

KJV

³⁸ But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

When we get into this area here, a lot of the commentaries say that, at this point, Daniel began to drift off because nobody knew what happened to Antiochus after this point in his career. But Daniel goes on, and tell us much more:

Daniel 11

KJV

³⁹ Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge *and* increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.

⁴⁰ And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

⁴¹ He shall enter also into the glorious land [That's obviously Palestine.], and many *countries* shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, *even* Edom [that's Turkey, probably, today], and Moab [the other side, Transjordan south], and the chief of the children of Ammon [Transjordan north].

⁴² He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. [This would have been the King of the South.]

⁴³ But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians *shall* be at his steps.

⁴⁴ But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many.

We're looking down to the end times [***tape break***] how these things can start out dealing purely with a historical model. And at some indefinable point in the prophecy, it drifts into the antitype. That is, the ultimate end-time fulfillment of all these things. Jesus makes it clear to us that by the time we get to the abomination of desolation, we have gone well beyond Antiochus Epiphanes at this time.

Daniel 11–12

KJV

⁴⁵ And he [that is, the King of the North] shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.

¹ And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

This is identified elsewhere in the Bible. There is a time unique in all human history that will take place. It is a time of great trouble, of great tribulation. There has never been any before it nor will there ever be again. It makes it totally unique. This is to take place at that time.

Daniel 12

KJV

² And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake [...]

Where are we in prophecy? Where are we in the scheme of things? Without any warning, without any change from way back here dealing with history, we are now at the time of the resurrection of the dead.

Daniel 12

KJV

² [...] some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.

³ And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

⁴ But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

⁵ Then I Daniel looked, and, behold, there stood other two, the one on this side of the bank of the river, and the other on that side of the bank of the river.

⁶ And *one* said to the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, How long *shall it be to* the end of these wonders?

Now, that's a good question. Almost anyone would say, "When is this going to take place?"

Daniel 12

KJV

⁷ And I heard the man clothed in linen, which *was* upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that *it shall be* for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these *things* shall be finished.

You ever heard that before? You ever heard that expression, "a times and times and half a time" before? Sure, you have. We seem to keep focusing in, somehow, in prophecy on some three-and-a-half year period. At least one. Some argue that there are two, but it's a little hard to maintain. It seems more likely that there is one and all comes together on these things. So the time of this vision is right up at the beginning of a three-and-a-half year period.

Daniel 12

KJV

⁸ And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things*?

⁹ And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

¹⁰ Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

It's interesting, the wicked can *try*. They certainly will *try* to understand, but they won't. It's going to be the wise who understand.

Daniel 12

KJV

¹¹ And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up [...]

The *same* time—and Antiochus did both of them at the same time.

Daniel 12

KJV

¹¹ [...] there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

And so when Jesus described the abomination of desolation, was he talking about the desolation of the temple in AD 69 when Titus took Jerusalem? No, the context of the abomination of desolation in Daniel is the time of the end—the time of the resurrection. Just a matter of days, actually a very short period of time, prior to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So when you begin to see these things and put them together—now what's fascinating is, it doesn't tell you what's at the end of that 1,290 days it just says from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away and the abomination of desolation is set up there will be this many days. Then it gives you another set of days:

Daniel 12

KJV

¹² Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

A totally different number of days. Here we seem to be talking about a set of days that have an end but no beginning. We know that you have the beginning of the 1,290 days with the abomination of desolation. We know the other one has an end. But we don't know the beginning of the one and the end of the other. It is a strange thing that we, at this point in time, can put together.

Daniel 12

KJV

¹³ But go thou thy way till the end *be*: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.

Okay, the abomination of desolation we've seen, in type, was a statue of Jupiter Olympus placed on an altar of God in the temple after it had been polluted with swine's flesh. Jesus offered it as a sign of future events at the time of his coming and the end of the age.

I want to turn back briefly to Isaiah, the 41st chapter. Isaiah 41:22.

[***tape break***]

A challenge is thrown out by God to the false gods. He says:

Isaiah 41

KJV

²² Let them [that is, the false gods or prophets] bring *them* forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they *be*, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

I remember once riding along in a car with some students and someone was saying, "How do you go about proving that prophecy is dual." And one of them said, "I don't know. I guess you just have to accept it on faith." No, you don't have to accept it on faith. Isaiah here categorically tells us that it is in studying, or considering carefully, the former aspect of a prophecy that you're going to understand the latter end thereof. And so Jesus said, "Let him that reads Daniel, understand." So there is something in that original event dealing with this abomination of desolation and all that was around it that would help us to understand.

Question: Does it seem likely to you, as important as the abomination of desolation is, and this vile person, and the abomination of desolation as a sign to God's people for flight or whatever. Does it seem likely that it would go unmentioned in the Book of Revelation? Seems strange, doesn't it? Revelation is an awfully comprehensive prophecy of the end time, and it's hard to imagine anything so pivotal as the abomination of desolation. We know that the "man of sin" or the "vile person" does find an image in Revelation. What about the abomination of desolation? Well, if it's going to be anywhere in Revelation, it's going to have to be in the 13th chapter. Let's go back and take a look at it, because this is where the man of sin is, this is where the beast is, where the antichrist comes on the scene. If we're going to find it, it's most likely going to be

there. The term “abomination of desolation” isn’t found in the Book of Revelation, but there are some interesting things in here, and questions that are very commonly raised by Christians and students of the Bible.

Revelation 13

KJV

¹ And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns [...]

That’s very important, by the way, because this “seven heads and ten horns” crops up in two or three places and it helps you to identify just exactly what beast you’re dealing with.

Revelation 13

KJV

¹ [...] and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.
² And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard [...]

Now, a leopard in Daniel’s prophecy was Alexander’s kingdom.

Revelation 13

KJV

² [...] and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear [...]

The bear, in Daniel’s prophecy was the Medo-Persian Empire.

Revelation 13

KJV

² [...] and his mouth as the mouth of a lion [...]

That was the Babylonian Empire. So we find in this strange beast, one encompassing the characteristics of all of the image (that Nebuchadnezzar saw and Daniel interpreted) that had to do with the Babylonian Kingdom in all of the successive revivals or resurrections.

Revelation 13

KJV

² [...] and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

Now, we all understand, do we not, that in the Book of Revelation the dragon symbolizes Satan, the Devil. There’s too many references and cross-references you can get—it’s easy to identify that.

Revelation 13

KJV

³ And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.
⁴ And they worshipped the dragon [They actually worshiped Satan!] which gave power

unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

⁵ And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

Now, 42 months works out to be a time, times, and half a time. So we have three and a half years there we are back to that time element that Daniel mentioned again.

Revelation 13

KJV

⁶ And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

This was characteristic of Antiochus who fulfilled this, in type.

Revelation 13

KJV

⁷ And it was given unto him to make war with the saints [...]

Antiochus made war with, and overcame for a time, the Jews.

Revelation 13

KJV

⁷ [...] and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

⁸ And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

What is the defense that keeps a person from worshiping the beast? It is the fact that they actually have received the Spirit of God and have their name written down in the Book of Life.

Revelation 13

KJV

⁹ If any man have an ear, let him hear.

Here's this sort of cryptic warning again; about listening, about hearing. Like Jesus said, "He that reads let him understand." Here he says that if you have an ear to hear, hear.

Revelation 13

KJV

¹⁰ He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

¹¹ And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

What have we got? Any student of the Bible understands that when you start talking about a lamb you are dealing with a symbol of Christ—the Lamb of God. When you talk about the dragon you’re dealing with Satan, the Devil. So here you have something that *looks like* or *pretends to be* Christ and yet speaks with the mouth of the devil. Strange combination, isn’t it? You have a demonic religious system.

Revelation 13

KJV

¹² And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

¹³ And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

Of course, that was one of the characteristics that Daniel mentioned—the miraculous powers involved.

Revelation 13

KJV

¹⁴ And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

¹⁵ And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

What in the world is that? Now, it’s been suggested... In fact, there was an article entitled *Who is the Image of the Beast?* by Herman Hoeh, some time ago. And he made a really interesting case that the image of the beast, that the beast itself, was really the Babylonian (and yet at this point in time Roman) Civil Government. It was the government of Rome, and the whole structure of the Roman government from Emperor to the Senate to the all the way down. All of these things found a pattern in the government of a religious system—which was the image of the beast. In other words, the basic form of the government—with a papacy followed by your cardinals and bishops all out into synods and dioceses and so forth—was an image or a model of the Roman Civil Government.

It was, really, kind of an interesting article. And you read through it you could find a certain amount of credence in it. It does raise a very large question in your mind: If, at some point in time, the Church of God then begins to adopt that system of church government—if they are then reaching out and adopting the image of the beast... There are certain problems though, I feel, with that traditional idea. It seems weak to me and I have difficulty in being able to put it together. And yet, the imagery that we’re given here... it’s difficult to imagine that this icon of the beast (which is what the Greek word is, icon) is actually a statue that this false prophet goes “hocus pocus” and suddenly this statue steps down off his pedestal and begins to speak. The imagery does not lead itself to the image of the beast being nothing more than a statue or an idol, does it? It seems that it would have more to do, or *something* to do, with form or shape or something else. Fact of the matter is, at this point in time, I don’t think we *know* what this is.

One of the problems (and there’s a very real danger in both this and in the Mark of the Beast)... We also, years ago, published a little booklet called *The Mark of the Beast*. And, in the sense that

a “mark” is a “sign”, it went back in the Old Testament and showed how the Sabbath was a sign that you were God’s people, and drew the comparison of God’s sign and Satan’s sign. And so, consequently, Sunday became a mark of the beast. There is a problem here, though. When you believe that you have found something you have a natural tendency to stop looking for it. That’s simple, isn’t it. You lose a cufflink, you go rummaging around the floor, you find it, you stop looking don’t you? Simple. When you believe that you have found the *one true answer* to a puzzle or an enigma or some obscure thing in the Scriptures, you have a very strong tendency to stop looking. And I’m afraid what all of us did was: we read the booklet, we sort of believed it, we thought, “That made sense.” It may have touched a nerve where we thought, “I think I can understand that.” We tucked it away in our little folder of booklets or we put it away in our little box of booklets, and we thought that question is *resolved*.

There’s a very grave danger in that particular situation. Let me go on record as saying a couple of things: We do not know but the image of the beast is. Secondly, we do not know what the *mark* of the beast is. *Yet*. It is necessary for us to keep on looking. But the danger is, when you say, “We know!” you stop looking and it’s possible that you *don’t* know what you thought you know.

Now, the ideas on the mark of the beast—which perhaps we should go just a little further here in Revelation 13 and see what it says about it. He says in verse 16:

Revelation 13

KJV

¹⁶ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

¹⁷ And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Note: It is not the “number of the beast” it is the “number of his name”.

Revelation 13

KJV

¹⁸ Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six.

Now, as I said the ideas on this have gone all the way from the mark of the beast is Sunday to the mark of the beast is the Sabbath. (Believe it or not, it has been suggested.) It has been suggested it might be some sort of a tattoo that is placed in the right hand and in the forehead. It’s even been suggested most recently that it is in credit cards. That you get this little— I think J.C. Penney had the misfortune of winding up with a 6-6-6 on a credit card. I read this recently, got all my cards out to look at it very carefully to be sure there were no 6-6-6s on any of them. Sure enough, there weren’t. However, it was suggested in one of these articles that if you take out a credit card and look at it and flip it over you will notice a little strip of magnetic tape on the back and they’re saying what they’re going to do is put the 6-6-6 on that magnetic tape on the back which can only be read by infrared scanners and you won’t know it’s there, but it’s there.

What’s wrong with what I just said? How many of heard something wrong with what I just said. You don’t read magnetic tape with infrared scanners. You read it with a magnetic scanner. I don’t know what in the world the person who wrote that was talking about, or what they were

doing besides displaying your ignorance. The problem is that all these people (including ourselves in years gone by) have been crying, “Wolf! Wolf! Wolf!” And we’re like the little boy that kept crying, “Wolf! Wolf!” And the people would all get mobilized, and the men would come out with staves and pitchforks to fend off the wolf—and there was no wolf there. And in the process of time, the real wolf came and the boy cried, “Wolf! Wolf!” No one came to help him. No one came to see. They just believed the little boy was crying, “Wolf!” again. These people are all crying, “Wolf!” But the problem is that, when the real wolf comes, nobody is going to listen to them.

Now, there are some things to understand about the mark of the beast, though. For example, where are you supposed to receive it? On the right hand, and in the forehead, right? Well, what does that mean? What is supposed to be on the right hand and in the forehead? I want you to turn back with me to the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy. You know, if you’re going to get symbolism of something—to try to understand what something means—you need to look around a little bit for it in the Bible.

Deuteronomy 6

KJV

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD:

⁵ And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

⁶ And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

⁷ And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

⁸ And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

Where’s that? Right up here on your forehead. So here is something that’s on your hand and on your forehead. What does this mean? If you go down to the Wailing Wall, you will see Jews with a leather thong and a little square type of a block of things bound on their right hand, and some of them will bind it up here their head. A phylactery, that’s what its called. And that harkens back to all this. There’s a lot of interesting discussion about what that meant and what it was supposed to signify. Those Jews took it as a literal thing that you’re supposed to do. What *does* it mean? Turn back to Exodus, the 13th chapter and beginning in verse six. Try to grasp this thing a little more firmly.

Exodus 13

KJV

⁶ Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day *shall be* a feast to the LORD.

⁷ Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

⁸ And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.

⁹ And it [What? The Days of Unleavened Bread.] shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, [Why?] that the LORD’S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

We're not dealing merely with the Ten Commandments, brethren, when we're talking about that thing. It wasn't enough to take ten commandments and write them on the parchment, roll them up into some little block or square, and tie it on your hand or on your forehead. That wasn't what God was talking about. These holy days, as is the Sabbath, he says, are a sign. And it's not very far between "sign" and "mark", is it? As far as being able to get the idea of the distinguishment. What is it that's supposed to be on your right hand and your forehead? It is the law of God—and, in this case, specifically the Days of Unleavened Bread, where you eat unleavened bread for seven days as a sign upon your right hand and in your forehead. What was the sign? A tattoo, a mark, a card? No, the sign was the outward observance of something. You know, it doesn't take any imagination to understand what he meant by that. By "hand" he meant the things that you do. By "your forehead" he meant the things that you think, you believe, and you decide.

Now, that is, admittedly, my own interpretation. But let's see if we can support it. Turn back to Proverbs, chapter seven, verse one.

Proverbs 7

KJV

- ¹ My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee.
- ² Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye.
- ³ Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart.

The "mind" and "the heart of the forehead" are used interchangeably in this sense. It just simply means your mind, your will, your conscious intent. And the hand, the fingers of the hand obviously means what you *do*. Whatever the sign, then, of the mark of the beast is, it is something you *believe* and it is something you *practice*. And I think it's something you need to take a look at—that it is something you believe in something you practice *in place of* what *should* be on your right hand and on your forehead; what should be on the fingers of your hand and what should be in your heart. What should be reflected in the way you do, and the way you think, in your belief, and in your faith. Well, if you look at what *should* be there you find it is the Law of God. You find the Days of Unleavened Bread are one of those signs that are supposed to be in your hand in your forehead.

I'm not talking about some kind of an outward mark. Had the mark of the beast intended to be a mark in the sense of a tattoo, or some imprimatur, or some type of implant or something like that. It would use the word *skopos* [σκοπός] or *stigma* [στίγμα] which are used elsewhere for that type of thing. You've heard of "stigmata" have you not. Stigmata is the idea of people who have a little mark in the palms of their hands that are supposedly the reproductions of the nail-prints of Jesus' crucifixion nails. This has happened to some people in the past. So they would have used the word *skopos* or *stigma*. The word, however, for the mark of the beast is *charagma* [χάραγμα]. Now, the word is only used one other place apart from these references in the Book of Revelation, and that's in Acts. But it is used elsewhere in Greek writings. And, basically, it means a sculpture. It doesn't really mean a mark in your hand or something you can put on a blackboard or "mark" in the sense of something you put up and shoot at. It's not that. Paul used the expression, "I press toward the mark of the high calling." I believe that is *skopos* in the Greek. It's a different approach. It is the word which means an image or a sculpture and would be used for an idol.

Now, what is fascinating about this is that we then go back here to Revelation 13 again (which I think we should) to take another quick look at it and what he's saying here is that there is a definite relationship between this image or icon of the beast and the mark of the beast being *in*

itself an image or a sculpture or an idol in this sense.

Revelation 13

KJV

¹⁶ And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark : [*charagma*] in their right hand, or in their foreheads[.]

Now, again, let's keep in mind we're not receiving this in terms of some outward, physical mark, like a tattoo, anymore than when we keep the Days of Unleavened Bread we get a mark like that. We actually *show* it by what we *do* and by what we *believe*—that they actually believe in and worship or serve an idol. There has been so much conversation about the number 6-6-6 and people worry about getting on the license plate of their car, they worry about having in on a credit card. The fact of the matter is the number 6-6-6 doesn't mean a thing unless it is attached to an idolatrous observance. That the fact of the matter is, when it comes down to it, that those people who have the Spirit of God and whose names are written in the Book of Life, *will not* receive the mark of the beast *even if they didn't know what it was*. And I'll tell you, for sure, receiving it in magnetic tape on the back of a credit card is a far cry from having it in your forehead—in your consciousness. There's a great danger, I feel, of being blindsided when a lot of this comes. And, I said, part of the danger comes from having cried, "Wolf!" one time too many on some of these things. I want to turn back to 2 Thessalonians, where we find out what our defense is in this particular thing. 2 Thessalonians, chapter two. It will maybe tie some of this together.

2 Thessalonians 2

KJV

¹ Now we beseech you, brethren, *by* the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

² That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

⁵ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

⁶ And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.

⁷ For the mystery of iniquity doth already work [...]

And elsewhere the mysteries are identified as connected, again, with Babylon—the Babylonian mysteries.

2 Thessalonians 2

KJV

⁷ [...] only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way.

⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

⁹ *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

What is righteousness? As they are identified elsewhere in the Bible:

Psalm 119

KJV

¹⁷² My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness.

The law of God describes what righteousness is. It's the law of God that's supposed to be reflected in our right hand and our forehead—that is, in the way we believe, the things we feel, the things we hold in our minds, and the things we do with our hands are supposed to be reflected in that way.

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¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish [...]

How do you know you won't be deceived by this one? It goes on to say that it will happen:

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¹⁰ [...] because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

There is that word again.

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¹³ But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

¹⁴ Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

You know, when Paul was writing here—and I would almost get from what he writes here, as I do from elsewhere—there doesn't seem to be that great a danger of the people of God—who are obeying his law and keeping his Sabbath and observing his holy days. There seems to be very, very little danger of them believing in or following or accepting the mark of the beast. Why is it important, then? It's very important that you and I never be found guilty of crying, "Wolf!" So that when the *real wolf* does appear, somebody might believe us.

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