

Msg #135 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

"Sight of the Beast"

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to bring a thought to you concerning prophecy. We always think of prophecy as telling us what the future holds, of that which will soon come to pass. But today I'd like you to take a look at prophecy from a different perspective. What I would like you to do is to consider prophecy, not from a future perspective, but from the current, or present, perspective.

As Christians, we look at prophecy in two general ways. One way is as promises which God gives to us that will one day come to pass. Promises create hope, which is our expectation of things we want to see happen. As Christians we need to have our hope in Christ, because it is by expecting the blessings of God that we have strength to continue day after day. An example of this is God's promise to us that one day he will return in the clouds of heaven and we will rise to meet him in the air and will then forever be with the Lord. This is prophecy, because it says what God wants to say, and it also foretells a future event. The other way that we look at prophecy is as a warning message. In the Bible, the prophets would not only foretell the future, but they would prophesy from a warning perspective. Many of the prophecies in the Bible are warning messages, and are meant to not only give expectation of a future event but to warn us of things to come that are extremely hazardous to our spiritual welfare.

However, we also know that warnings can be ignored, even by those people who are the most endangered. In Scripture we have evidence of prophets giving warning messages to the nation of Israel, and the nation, as a whole, would ignore the warning. Now, why do you suppose someone

would ignore a warning message? Of course, the answer is fairly simple. When someone ignores a warning message it's because they don't see any evidence to prove that the warning message is valid. And, if there is no evidence to prove that the warning message is valid, then there really isn't any reason to heed the message. After all, if someone says, "the sky is falling, the sky is falling," we would first look up at the sky, determined that the sky is not falling, also realizing that the sky cannot fall, and then we would ignore the warning. But then, we can't ignore all the warning messages, and it's important to determine whether a warning message is valid or not before we decide to ignore it. If the warning message turns out to be valid, and we have ignored the warning, we could be in a great deal of trouble.

We know that the Bible tells us a lot of things. Some of the things we understand, and some things we clearly do not understand. But the Bible never tells us anything without a reason. Whatever God's Word says, there is a reason God said it in the first place. Many times the word God speaks is clouded in symbolism, but this does not mean that it's not important. Symbolism is very difficult to understand, but there's a reason for this. God puts things into symbolic perspective when he wants certain people to understand, but doesn't want certain other people to understand. God uses the symbolism of scripture so that only his children, those that have the Holy Spirit, will understand. After all, as it says in John 16:13, it is the Holy Spirit of God which guides us into the understanding of his word. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand truth. Now, of course, not everyone has the Holy Spirit of God. It's only God's people, those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who receive the Holy Spirit. So therefore, when God wants his people to receive a warning message, but, he also wants to withhold the understanding of that warning message from the wicked, then he cloaks the warning message in symbolism. This keeps the wicked from understanding, but allows us, his children, to comprehend the warning message. And, because we have the Holy Spirit which helps us to understand the symbolic meaning, then we can take precautions in order to escape the approaching danger. The wicked do not have the Holy Spirit, and therefore, they will not understand the symbolism, and, therefore, they will not escape. God does not intend that the wicked people of earth will escape the destruction. He only intends you and I to escape if we believe his word. If we believe in him, and in his son, Jesus Christ, he will give us the understanding we need to prevent Satan from deceiving us to the point of destruction. The wicked will not understand, and therefore they will not heed the warning message, and therefore they will be deceived by Satan and will ultimately perish.

Now, with this in mind, let's take a look at a warning message of prophecy which is definitely hidden in the symbolism of end time prophecy. This portion of Scripture is found in Revelation 13, and it refers to an Image of the Beast. Let me read it. Revelation 13:11-15 says, "And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercised all the power of the first beast before him, and caused the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he does great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14 And deceives those who dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to those who dwell on the earth, that they should

make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and yet lived. 15 And he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.”

Now, the first three verses I read, verses 11 through 13, explain that there is a second beast. The first beast is said to rise up out of the sea. This is representative of the animal nature that Satan works through. It is the flesh and blood nature instead of God’s spirit nature. This first beast rose up out of the sea, meaning that it was Satan’s diabolical sea of lies, his water of destruction, that was responsible for the creation of this first beast. Now, the second beast, rises up after the first beast, but this second beast rises up out of the earth, which means that the diabolical deception of Satan’s lies have been transferred to those who dwell on the earth, and these lies of Satan cause earth’s people to become part of the rebellion against the spirit realm of God.

So, taking a look at this second beast, notice that this second beast is said to be able to do great wonders, including the specific miracle of bringing fire down from heaven onto the earth. It says that he also deceives those who dwell on the earth by those miracles that he had power to do in the sight of the first beast. Now, first, I’d like you to focus on verse 14, which says that the second beast causes the people who dwell on the earth to make an image to the first beast, and also, that verse 15 says that this second beast had power to give life to the image of the beast, and that the image of the beast should be able to speak and that the image of the beast would be able to cause the people of Earth to worship the first beast.

This is Scripture with a very high degree of symbolism, but let’s see if we can gain some understanding. Notice, if you will, that these verses are concentrating on the actions of the second beast. There are two beasts described in this chapter, but it is the second beast that we’re focusing our attention on today. The first point to consider is that the second beast is very powerful. However, this second beast only has power to work within the sight of the first beast.

So, stop here for a moment and consider what the Bible is telling us. In verse 14, it says that the second beast can only work miracles, now, get this, the second beast can only work miracles, - according to the sight of the first beast. This means that the second beast does signs and wonders from the same perspective as that of the first beast. This perspective, this sight of the beast, is according to the physical realm instead of the spiritual realm. The sight of the beast is through physical eyesight, rather than from spiritual eyesight. This verse is not telling us that the second beast has to be within eyesight of the first beast in order to do anything, but that the second beast’s power lies in the same realm of sight that the first beast sees in. These two beasts do not look at things from the heavenly perspective, but they look at things from the earthly perspective.

Let me explain. God is a spirit. We know that God sees in spiritual ways, and that as humans, we see in the natural. We see in physical ways. In fact, it is only when we become born-again in spirit as Christians that we begin to see things in the spirit. When we are born again, God puts his Holy Spirit into us and from that point on we begin to think and understand things in the spiritual realm. We are still in these flesh and blood bodies, so we still act and think much of the

time in the physical sense. However, we have the added advantage of being able to become spiritual beings, and therefore we begin to recognize the power of God from a spiritual perspective instead of looking at everything from a strictly physical or logical perspective.

As every Christian knows, God is powerful. In fact, he is the only power that exists. There is no power that exists unless God gives the power. No one, not even Satan, has power within their own self. Power only exists as it comes from God. However, most humans don't know this. At least, they don't know this until they come to recognize God's truth, and come to believe on Jesus Christ. When humans do this, and become born again in spirit, then they finally come to the conclusion that there is no strength within their own physical form. They realize that their physical abilities are nothing compared with God. However, when people reject God, then they continue to trust in the strength of their own might and power. And this, is the deception of Satan. He has deceived the people of earth into thinking that they can have enough power within themselves just from the physical, or carnal, state of being, and that they no longer need God or need his strength.

And this is exactly where the world population stands at this very time. Those who are not Christians, those who reject the knowledge of God, and those who do not trust in God for their strength and for their provision, are deceived. They have not gained the ability to apply reason to their lives in any realistic fashion.

The first beast of Revelation 13 refers to Satan in his animal nature. He is a beast. He is brute. The word, brute, means to think without reason, to think as an animal thinks. When people believe God, and begin to trust him for everything, then they are no longer acting like brute beasts, they are then acting like God's children. But the world continues to be deceived by the lies of Satan, which convinces them that might and power can be attained by physical means. People of this world think that computers, or gene manipulation, or micro-biology, or logic can replace the power of God, and that mankind can exalt themselves in their own physical strength and overcome the threat of death. They believe that if they can just work hard enough, they can overcome all things.

This was the stupidity of Satan. He believed in his own power. It is also stupid if humans believe in their own power. But then, that's the way Satan looks at it, and that is the way the wicked people of this earth look at it. They see things from a physical perspective instead of from the spiritual perspective of God Almighty. They have eyesight, but their eyesight is that which is corrupted. They have sight to see the things of the scientific world, and sight to see the possibilities of science and technology, and sight to see what can be created on earth with their own might and power, but they can't seem to recognize that the real power is God. They can't seem to recognize that all of man's power is nothing, just a drop in the bucket, compared with God's power. But Satan has deceived mankind into trusting in that which is human, that which is carnal, that which is physical. Satan has deceived mankind in thinking that seeing in the natural is equivalent with seeing in the spiritual.

But the sight by which humans see is unreasonable compared with the way God sees things. Mankind builds skyscrapers with machinery, and accomplishes feats of science with computers and chemicals. But, it is God who is the power. When you finally recognize this, then you can be said to have eyesight that can see the things of God. The eyesight of unregenerated man is animalistic in nature. Man's sight is physical, it is carnal. And this is why the Bible tells us that the second beast of Revelation 13 can work miracles, but that he can only do these miracles from the perspective of sight which trusts in the physical might and power of earth rather than in the all powerful word of God.

The first beast is representative of the beast nature. It is the animal nature that King Nebuchadnezzar experienced. The sight of the first beast is from a carnal viewpoint, therefore, the sight of the first beast is animalistic. The second beast, because it is also representative of Satan, the Great Red Dragon, also operates in the same sight mode in which the first beast operates.

The reason the Bible uses the symbolism of beasts, or animals, in Revelation 13, is to emphasize to Christians that there is an evil intent by Satan to cause the people of earth to rely on physical strength and ingenuity instead of relying on the power of God. Zechariah 4:6 tells us that the way to overcome any problem is not through the might and power of man, but by the Holy Spirit of God. But the second beast of Revelation 13 is a power that relies on physical might. It can only do miracles within the realm of the beast nature. It can only do miracles within the realm of Satan's deceptive lies. The miracles can only be seen, they can only be recognized, from the standpoint of physical man's sight. They can only be seen from the perspective of the natural man.

Now, the second beast can do signs and wonders, but those signs and wonders can only be accomplished from a physical standpoint. However, when God wants something, he just speaks the word, and whatever he wants to come to pass comes to pass. When God created the world, he just spoke the word. The world came into existence because of God's word, not by a logical orderly sequence of manipulation or manufacture. Where no matter exists, God creates matter with just his word. Where no universe exists, a universe appears. God does not rely on manipulation of animal, vegetable, or mineral matter in order to create something. God speaks, and it is done.

But Satan has deceived the nations. He has suggested that the sight of mankind is sufficient, and that just by manipulation of earth's resources, mankind can overcome the threat of death and live forever. This is nothing more or less than the beast nature. This is the mentality of an animal. This in no way approaches the possibilities of God, yet mankind has been deceived into seeing things through carnal eyes instead of through God's spiritual eyes. Mankind has been duped into thinking like a beast. They have been led down the pathway of destruction by the lies of Satan that say the sight of physical man is the proper way to see things. But, blindness is the result, not sight. Jesus Christ came to give sight to the blind. Satan comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

The second beast of Revelation 13 does miracles, but the miracles are only those things that are seen with the eyes of flesh and blood humans. As humans, we first entertain the temptation to operate within the realm of our own earthly strength. The Tower of Babel was our initial significant symbolic portrayal of this. In this book of Genesis depiction, mankind attempted to exalt themselves up to heaven by building a physical structure. We now know, of course, that this is impossible. However, at that time the people of earth did not know that it was impossible, so they ignored God's command to spread out over the earth and subdue it, and instead they attempted to stay together and build a name for themselves. They wanted to create something in their own way, and they rejected God's ways.

Now, the Tower of Babel is not just a separate part of history. In fact, the Tower of Babel is only representative of the larger plan of earth's people today. Humans, as a whole, have rejected God's word, and they are now attempting to establish themselves in the earth as a people who will rise up to the height of God's throne. No, not rise up to God's throne in a physical sense, but to rise up to be equal with God in the sense of finding eternal life, of living forever. Mankind is at this very time attempting to build the Great Tower of Babel, which is a modern attempt to gain immortality. They are not looking to the Almighty God for this immortality, but they are relying on the ability of their own flesh and blood powers, their own mental strength, their own science and technology. The world is, at this very time, approaching the summit of their power, and they believe that at some time in the very near future they will create a breakthrough in science and will be able to overcome the threat of disease and the threat of the aging process. Cloning is not just science fiction, but is actually being pursued as a hopeful reality by earth's scientists. The people of earth are hopefully awaiting this event, and the hope and expectation for the return of Jesus Christ is waning. And, just for the record, what do you think would happen to all those Christians who are straddling the religious fence if science invented a cure for disease and for aging? I think you know the answer to that as well as me.

The second beast of Revelation 13 is at work in the earth, and the signs and wonders are many. However, the signs and wonders which the second beast is performing are from the physical perspective of man's eyesight, which is the sight of the beast nature, and they are not from the divine perspective of Almighty God. Don't be fooled by the sight of the beast, and by those seemingly miraculous accomplishments. Set your eyes on things above, not on things of the earth.