

Msg #164 of Scripture Beneath The Surface
“Two Basic Principles For Understanding Prophecy”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about two basic principles for understanding Bible prophecy. Anyone who has ever tried reading the book of Revelation knows that end time prophecy can be extremely confusing. However, there are a couple of basic principles which can greatly enhance your understanding, and these basic principles center around the two concepts of first, the aspect of both God and humans being triune, and second, the concept of the beast nature. So, let's take a look at these two principles, these two concepts, and see if we can lay a foundation which will help you begin to sort out the prophecies of these current end times. And for sure, we are in the end times now. No, the end times are not a completely future event, but are in process right now. But then, that's not our subject for today. Today let's just deal with the triune aspect of God and humans, and also the beast nature in humans. These two principles will give you plenty of things to think about without exploring actual end time current events.

Now, the reason I said that there are basically two principles which establish a foundation for understanding Bible prophecy is that these two concepts of the three part nature of God and humans, and the concept of the beast nature in humans, go hand in hand with each other. The beast nature is of course contrary to God, in that God is a spirit. And, to reject the spirit nature of God is equivalent to accepting the beast nature of Satan. In the beginning, God created the earth. However, we know that God's intention was to create man in his own image. Now, this is where confusion gets a good start. God's own image does not necessarily imply two arms two legs, a body and a head. That's what people first think of though. But we have to remember that at the

time God created man, God had not yet come to earth in the form of Jesus Christ. Generally it is the form of a human body that people think of when imagining the image of God. But God is a spirit, and not flesh. Even Jesus Christ, who is God, and who was with God in the beginning, was not human flesh until he was born of a woman.

Now, stay with me. Just try to concentrate on the concept of God as three persons. But instead of thinking about the actual physical form of God, try to concentrate on the concept of God's triune nature. Try to concentrate on the concept of God being just one God, but still being three individual parts which act totally in concert with each other. God isn't three Gods, but he is three different persons which make him up as one God. The three parts of God are the Father part, the Son part, and the Holy Spirit part. This is actually the image of God, and this is what God meant when he said let us make man in our own image. God was not necessarily referring to the outward form of man, but to the three part makeup of man. Man has been created in the image of God in that he is also made up of three parts.

You see, man is first a living soul. To be a living soul just means that you exist, that you are alive. A soul is something that is alive. It exists. However, just because you have a soul does not make you conform to the image of God. Remember, God is three parts which make up one God. He is Father, he is Son, and he is Holy Spirit. It's the same thing for man. Man is a living soul, but man also has a body. Man's body is his second part. In addition, every human has a spirit. Therefore, humans are made up of a living soul, a body, and a spirit. This three part aspect of humans conforms to the image of God.

However, remember that the two concepts we're talking about today are the triune, or three part principle of God and humans, and also the beast nature which resides in both Satan and humans. But notice that I referred to the beast nature as being in Satan and in humans, but not in God. You see, the beast nature, the animal nature, is contrary to God. The nature of God is far above the nature of animals. Animals have no common sense. Animals do not have the ability to contemplate their future. This is because animals cannot use the principle of reason. They cannot compare their experiences and then determine what the future will be.

Now, I'm sure every single one of you has thought about what the future will bring you. When you're young you wonder what you will be when you grow up. You wonder what kind of a husband or wife you will marry. You contemplate what kind of career you will have, and you also contemplate the possibilities of retirement. In short, you give consideration to the different possibilities for the future, such as will social security be there for you when you grow old. Will you have family or friends to help you. Will you have your house paid for. Will your spouse die before you do. These are things of contemplating the future. These are possibilities you think about, and because you think about these things, you also make decisions concerning them in regard to your future.

Now, think about this. Animals don't look to the future. They don't even know that there is a future. They just go about their lives thinking about what is happening to them each moment.

They live for today, and have no knowledge of things to come, and especially no knowledge of what will happen to them after they die. Animals, therefore, are unable to apply the principle of reason. They cannot properly give consideration to the future, because to them the concept of future is unknown. And because animals don't have the ability to apply reason, they are considered to be brute beasts. Brute, just means not having the ability to apply reason and to contemplate life after death as humans do. However, if you're a human being, then you can apply the principle of reason. You will contemplate your future estate, especially your future estate after death. But animals can't, and animals won't.

Actually, this is the basic concept of the beast nature, the animal nature. Humans have been made higher than the animals, and have been given the ability to contemplate their future after death. Specifically, humans can contemplate their future after their body finally grows old and dies. So the real difference between the nature of animals and the nature of humans is that humans give consideration to the future, and animals do not. And, this very basic concept separates man from the animals.

However, there is an additional part of God's plan of creating man in the image of God. Yes, we are made higher than the animals, but the real question is whether or not we will use the ability to contemplate our future or not. Animals don't contemplate their future, and this separates them from humans. However, think about this. If you don't contemplate your future after death, then what do you think you're acting like? Hmmm? Right, you acting like an animal. If you have been made to be conformed to the image of God, but you reject the ability to contemplate your future after death, and instead you just live for each day, then what you are actually doing is choosing the beast nature instead of the ability to choose eternity with God. Instead of embracing the gift that God has given you to be able to think about your eternal future, and instead of aligning yourself with the eternal nature of God, you are in essence rejecting God and choosing to live for the present. You are rejecting the future in exchange for living today.

You see, God has given you the ability to use reason. He has not made you to be a brute beast. He has given you the ability to contemplate your future estate and to make decisions about it. You can choose a life with God and live forever with him, or you can choose to live for today. And here's the important thing between animals and humans. Smart humans contemplate their eternal future. Dumb animals do not. And please, consider this. What the Bible is trying to show us is that any human who does not ponder life after death, is stupid. People who refuse to think about life after death are acting with poor reasoning abilities. They are acting like brute beasts instead of like God intended them to act. And you see, if you want to be conformed to the image of God, then you're also going to have to make a choice about your future. You're going to have to make a choice about life after death, and ultimately you're going to have to make a decision to be conformed to the image of Christ.

And here's the principle. Humans have been given the power to choose life. Animals refuse to choose life. Animals are content with this present day, but people who are not content with this

present day and who want to live with God forever, make choices which will ensure their eternal life with God.

Of course, what we're talking about is not just the physical and mental differences between beasts and humans, we're talking about the spiritual awakening that takes place in some humans while at the same time other humans reject the spiritual awakening and choose to remain in their current present day frame of mind. In scripture, God uses the concepts of humans and beasts to help us understand what is really happening. It is this nature of the animal which is at the core of God's plan to lift us out of the clutches of death and give us eternal life with him. However, in order to receive eternal life, we will have to think about eternal life, and we will ultimately have to choose to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Jesus is the only way to escape death. Animals will all die, because animals don't think about their eternal future, and therefore will not make decisions to be born again in spirit. They will remain ignorant. They will remain stupid. They will remain brute in their reasoning, for they will live for today instead of planning for their eternal future.

If you really want to live forever with God, then you will have to contemplate your future. And consequently, you will have to reject the nature of Satan, that nature of the animal kingdom, which only focuses on today, which only focuses on this present world, but ignores the world to come. However, people who become children of God only become children of God because they get their minds off of this present world and start thinking about their life after death. This is why Colossians 3:2 says, "Set your affections on things above, not on things of the earth." You see, if you embrace the beast nature and live for the present, you will eventually die the death of all those who refuse to reach out to God. But if you embrace the nature of God, then you will escape death. It's really up to you.

Now, the concept of the beast nature can be seen in Biblical prophecy just about everywhere you look. This animal concept, as opposed to the human concept, begins to take form on the sixth day of creation. God created both man and animals on this same day. However, man was created different from the animals, in order that we humans might come to understand the difference between those who contemplate their future, and those who don't. Now, we also see the animal concept in the names that the Bible uses to describe Satan. He is called the Serpent, the Serpent in the bottom of the sea, the dragon, the great red dragon. And incidently, a dragon is a huge ferocious serpent, and this is in keeping with Satan's Garden of Eden identity. He is further described in Revelation as having a tail.

No, this is not suggesting that Satan has a real physical tail, but this is a symbolic description of Satan which demonstrates the beast nature, the animal nature, being at the heart of his rebellion. Revelation 12:4 describes this, and it just means that what Satan tempted the angels with was to reject the eternal authority of God and instead to live for the present. That's what the beast nature is all about, living for the present instead of investing in the future. It was the animal nature, the beast nature in Satan that the other evil angels accepted. Instead of the evil angels correctly and intelligently choosing to ensure their future with God for eternity, they gave in to

the temptation to think about the present day, their present time, and they chose to reject their eternal future with God and chose to accept the present opportunity to exalt themselves. Their choice to exalt themselves in their present existence instead of contemplating their future with God was a poor choice. It was a choice they made that was stupid. They were acting as animals would act. They were living for the present instead of contemplating their future.

This is what everyone does who rejects God. People who reject God are actually deciding that living for the present day is much more fun than to plan for the future. If you're one of these people who doesn't concentrate on your plans for life after death, but only lives for today, then you are acting like a brute beast. And in the end, brute beasts will be taken and killed. They will die the death of the wicked, and will have demonstrated that they are actually beasts and not worthy to be called sons of God.

So, how does the concept of being a brute beast, of having the beast nature, tie in with being triune, with being created in the image of God? It's like this. God is a spirit, man has been created as flesh and blood. As flesh and blood creatures, we haven't made the complete separation from the animal nature. Remember, the Bible clearly tells us that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God. Therefore, if we truly want to conform to the image of God, then we will have to become like God, finally conforming completely to the image of God. God is a spirit, but we have been initially created as flesh and blood creatures. However, as flesh and blood humans, we have been given something unique. As flesh and blood creatures we have been given the ability to choose between the animal nature and the spirit nature. Therefore, if we are smart, we will choose to reject the nature of the beast and will choose the nature of God. If we do this, then we will become new creatures. We will become born again creatures who are born again spirit beings. We will no longer live for today, because as creatures who have been born again in spirit, we will recognize the value of being a spirit being in God's kingdom.

And this is exactly what Satan did not do. He started out in the kingdom of heaven, but then he rejected the eternal kingdom of God in exchange for this present age. He rejected God's eternal rule in exchange for an opportunity to rule himself. Satan lived for today instead of contemplating his future with God. In this sense, he acted as an animal. He did not use good reason. He did not properly consider his future estate with God, and he embraced the stupidity of the present world instead of embracing God.

Now, what does this concept of the beast nature have to do with the concept of the triune aspect of God? It has everything to do with it. You see, Jesus was also made flesh and blood. However, because Jesus was actually God who came to earth in the form of man, he therefore was able to defeat the beast nature. Jesus did not embrace the present day, but looked for a future with God. When Satan tempted him, he rejected Satan. Satan used the same tactic with Jesus that he had previously used with the evil angels. He tried to influence Jesus' decision by tempting him to look for self exaltation in this present world instead of contemplating his future with God. But Jesus was God in the flesh, not Adam in the flesh. As we are told in 1

Corinthians 15:45, Adam was made a living soul, but Jesus Christ was made a life giving spirit. Jesus overcame the nature of the beast. Jesus overcame the nature of the flesh by rejecting the desires of the flesh and chose to be completely obedient to the Father. Jesus perfectly rejected this present day. He perfectly rejected the temptation to exalt himself. He perfectly rejected the chance to live his own life, and instead he chose to be 100% obedient to God. And, by being 100% obedient to God, the animal nature was rejected. Jesus rejected the nature of the beast, and became the only body that was qualified to enter into the presence of God because he was totally obedient to the Father.

It is by this same principle that we also enter into the presence of God. When we reject the temptation to do our own thing, and instead we think realistically about our eternal future, and then consequently make the decision to put our fleshly life down, this is when we make the change between being a flesh and blood person who will die, into a born again spirit being who will never die. Jesus defeated death, and perfectly demonstrated the triune nature of God who is one in the spirit instead of separated from God by the flesh. Jesus rejected his individuality in order to be one with the Father. And, if we want to live forever with God, then we must also do this. No, we can't be perfect, but we can attain perfection through Jesus Christ. We can reject the nature of the beast that tempts us to live for ourselves for the present day and we can embrace the nature of God. When we embrace the nature of God, we are actually acknowledging the eternal nature of God as Jesus did by totally rejecting this present world and embracing the eternal future.

Jesus refused to speak his own words, or to act according to his own human desires. In every word and in every action he rejected the opportunity of this present world and chose instead to die to self desire. He chose to be a part of the eternal Father, instead of reaching out to the present day. Because of this, Jesus defeated death. And in Jesus Christ, we will also have victory over death, because the only persons who will be subject to death will be those who choose this present world. But life will be given to all those who reject this present world and choose to be obedient to the eternal authority of God.