

Message #81 of Scripture Beneath The Surface
“Understanding End-time Prophecy - Part 3”

With Randy Smith
(269) 763-2114

Preparation Ministries, Inc

PO BOX 475 OLIVET, MI 49076

preparationministries@gmail.com

(Please feel free to call, or send messages)

Web Site: <http://www.preparationministries.net>

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to continue our series on “Understanding End-time Prophecy,” with part 3. Last week we talked about the first beast of Revelation, and how it was equated with the animal nature. If you missed the previous message, or in the near future you miss one of the succeeding messages on this or any other subject, or even if you didn't miss it, and you would like a copy of this series, please feel free to call or write to us. Our material is free for the asking. Just listen at the end of the program and Kim will give you my phone number, and also our mailing address, as well as an e-mail address. You can reach us by any of these means, whether it is calling or writing. We would be glad to hear from you. If you call and I'm not available, please leave a message I will try to get back with you just as soon as possible.

Anyway, in our past discussion, we talked about how Satan is described Biblically as an animal, and how his tail was the instrument of deception which lured a third of the angels away from God. In Genesis, chapter three, the Bible refers to Satan as, the Serpent. It speaks of him as being more subtle than all the other beasts of the field. To be subtle means to be deceptive, from the viewpoint of being so slight, or so insignificant, that it makes something hard to see. Satan is a liar. The Bible makes that fact very clear. But usually his lies are so well presented that it is difficult to recognize them as lies. Satan is especially talented at lying, and can easily twist the truth into a distortion. In fact, the idea of twisting the truth is represented quite plainly in the Biblical reference to Satan by calling him a serpent. The term serpent implies two specific traits. One, the serpent is crooked and not straight. This implies that the words which come from him are not straight forward, but that they turn aside from the truth. This crookedness is also used to

describe the path that wickedness follows. The path to heaven is on the straight and narrow, but the path to hell is easily understood as crooked, winding, and leads downward to destruction. As a serpent, Satan is crooked. That which comes from him is not straight, but twisted out of shape. It is distorted.

The second concept that is recognized by calling Satan a serpent is that the snake has a tail. But it is fairly easy to see that the actual form of a snake gives the impression of more than an animal with a tail, but rather, an animal that is all tail. A serpent looks like a tail with a head attached. Because only animals have tails, the serpent is especially appropriate in representing the animal nature. It certainly does not represent mankind, for only animals have tails. Now, in addition to Satan being described as a serpent, he is also described with other animal terms such as, the serpent in the bottom of the sea, the crooked serpent, the Dragon, a great red dragon, and Leviathan, as well as being referred to symbolically as various beasts with horns and more than one head.

An interesting perspective is that a dragon, although symbolically representing Satan, is not really an existing creature. Dragon is a term which is symbolically descriptive of being an extremely large and ferocious snake. A dragon is a huge snake that breathes fire, has legs, has claws on its feet, and has a gigantic tail, which, incidentally, is pointed. Have you ever noticed the red cartoon figure of the devil being a horned being with a pointed tail? The pointed tail indicates a tail which Satan uses to destroy people. The animal nature can destroy, in that it is opposed to the spiritual nature of God. The animal nature is worldly, and trusts in the physical resources of mankind rather than in the providence of God. The little red devil is symbolic in that the Devil has a tail, and that it destroys, just as if speared to death. Incidentally, the devil's color is red, in recognition that he is completely sinful, just as great sinfulness is Biblically described as scarlet. We get this red or scarlet concept from the scripture of Isaiah 1:18, which says, "Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The dragon of scripture, which represents Satan, is also red, as referred to in Revelation 12:3. It is very important to recognize that it is red, for the color symbolically illustrates that it is very sinful, just as the beast of Revelation 17 is sinfully red, which carries the Great Whore who is called, BABYLON THE GREAT, the Mother of Harlots.

Revelation 12, verses 3 and 4, speak of the great red dragon as being Satan, who drew away a third of the angels from God by using his tail as his power. Of course, we know that sin, as described in the Bible, is referred to as scarlet, or red. However, purple and blue are also symbolically representative of sin, in that they are shades of red. Let me take a minute here and explain something concerning the colors of blue, purple, and scarlet. These three colors can be seen as representing various shades of the color red, which in turn represent various levels of sin. We see the symbolic representation of this in the veil of the temple which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. These three colors, blue, purple, and scarlet were the colors shown in the temple veil, and are symbolic of sin which prohibited mankind from entering in to

the presence of God when he dwelled above the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place of the Temple. The color purple is a deep purplish red, meaning that it is blue with a significant amount of red. Red is, of course, the color scarlet.

Now, it's interesting to notice that when we look at the Old Testament word for blue, as used to describe the colors of the temple veil, we see that blue actually means a bluishness which is tinged with a light shade of red. The word that the King James Version translates as blue is actually a word which describes a very light violet color, similar to the violets we find in our woods. We call these violets, blue violets, for the bluishness is tinged with a light pinkish color, giving them their distinctive shade. The color violet is a very light shade of red, and it is representative as minor sin. Purple describes a greater degree of sin, in that the red tinge is much greater than in the light shade of violet. The scarlet, of course, is solid red, leaving no imagination as to the level of sin. These three shades of the color red were represented on the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place in the Temple of God. It was these shades of red which represented sin, and it was sin that kept us from entering into the presence of God. When Jesus Christ died for our sins, that veil of sin was torn into two parts, from the top to the bottom, symbolizing that the barrier of sin had been removed, allowing us to enter into the presence of God. Because Jesus' blood covers our sins, we have access to God. There is no longer a veil of sin to prevent us from entering into the Most Holy Place where God abides. Also interesting to note here, is that the violet shade of blue was also the coloring of part of the high priest's clothing. Although the high priest wore a white linen garment, signifying complete purity, still the clothing which was overlaid on the linen was the light violet shade of blue which signified minor sin as being present. This symbolic example of Aaron's robes explains that although we pass through the process of washing and cleansing, we are still sinful unless we have the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ to wash away all sin. The white linen garment worn by Aaron the high priest, and overlaid with the symbolism of minor sin, reminds us of the scripture in Jude, verse 23, which speaks of hating even the robe which has been spotted by the flesh. Sin, at any of its various levels, can be erased by the blood of Jesus Christ. The only thing necessary in order to bring a person to that place is for the person to stop acting like a dumb beast, and begin to acknowledge the supreme righteousness and omnipotence of God. It is only by this that the redness of sin can be eradicated. However, this redness of sin is important, in that we can recognize that Satan is that great red dragon, described in Revelation 12, and also as a great red beast, described in Revelation 17. It is the animal concept which continues to be presented in scripture, over and over again.

The beast, the animal concept, is always representative as that which is opposed to God, opposed to his Word, Jesus Christ, and opposed to his Holy Spirit. The animal nature is contrary to God, in that it cannot use good sense in recognizing the supreme righteousness and goodness of God, and cannot recognize these qualities as those which justify God as being the Almighty God. An animal cannot use good reason, and Satan did not use good reason when he rejected the authority of God in exchange for self-centered pride. The animal nature, born of Satan's pride, exalted himself instead of exalting God. Humans fight this same battle of temptation. We are constantly bombarded with the same deception of Satan that the devil used to lure a third of the angels away

from God. We are tempted to give in to the physical flesh and blood nature and to seek after that which stimulates the flesh rather than seeking after heavenly things which stimulate the Holy Spirit nature of God. Satan continually encourages mankind to reject God's supreme authority and supreme provision and tempts us to rely instead on the strength of our own hands. But as Zechariah, chapter four, tells us, we must not look for our hope through might and power, but by the Spirit of God. It is through the supreme power of God that mankind can find eternal hope for the future, not in the might and power of mankind's own abilities. The animal nature is prone to reject the spiritual nature of God, for Satan's lies have twisted the truth, and given the false impression that mankind is a power within themselves. But, we are not a power within ourselves. God is the only power, and without God, there is no hope of an eternal heavenly future with God, but only the expectation of an eternal damnation in the lake of fire and brimstone. It is important to recognize that the animal nature, the beast nature, is strong in the earth. If it wasn't, then this world would be a paradise. But Satan has tarnished the world, and has introduced the base instincts of the beast nature as an alternative to God. His form of truth is twisted, it is crooked. Just as a serpent is crooked, so is the word of Satan.

Another example of the animal nature being in opposition to God is found in the book of Daniel, chapter four, which describes King Nebuchadnezzar as being transformed into a beast. Specifically, he was transformed into what appears to be an eagle. The Bible says that he grew claws, and also that his hair grew out as feathers. He ate grass like oxen, and in a general sense, lived in the wooded wilderness area as an animal for seven years. The reason for this unusual experience is that he had assumed incorrectly that his own might and power had gained him the kingdom of Babylon, and that his own greatness was responsible for the exalted position he held as world ruler. In scripture, eagles are sometimes referred to symbolically as representing individual rulers of kingdoms. This is symbolic of eagles which make their nests in the tops of tall trees. Incidentally, tall trees are also symbolically used in scripture to designate rulership, but the tall tree refers generally to the kingdom itself rather than the actual king of that domain. And, just to complete the picture, hills and mountains are used to symbolically represent powers in the earth which rise up and establish authority over areas. In this sense, a hill might represent a city state, and a mountain might represent a kingdom which rules over the whole earth at one time. Babylon was such a kingdom, and therefore the whole earth kingdom of Babylon could be looked at symbolically in scripture as a mountain. The central kingdom of Babylon could be represented symbolically as a tall tree, and King Nebuchadnezzar himself as an eagle which made his nest in that tall tree. If you keep these symbolic references in mind, it will help you to better understand prophecy in scripture.

Now, this Bible reference to King Nebuchadnezzar being represented as an eagle and having this animal transformation experience is also referred to in Daniel 7:4, where a vision of Daniel's is described. It talks about four beasts. Verse four says, "The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld until the wings of it were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it." In this verse, King Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon, and this first world kingdom was represented as a lion with eagle's wings. King Nebuchadnezzar was the king over a whole world kingdom who had

his wings clipped, in the sense that his self-centered boasting of power was removed. And, as the last part of that verse says, concerning a man's heart being given unto it, King Nebuchadnezzar came to recognize that which a man is supposed to recognize, that God is the supreme power over all things, and that no man has any power except that which God ordains to be so. In that God ordered him to be stood up on his feet, he no longer went on all four feet as an animal does, for he now had the heart of a man instead of an animal, and now had the ability to reason, and therefore could think clearly concerning the knowledge of God. As an animal, his reasoning powers were not sufficient to recognize the supremacy of God, but after being caused to stand on his feet, and having been given the heart of a man, his reason was sufficient to finally see through the instinctual physical realm and to see God through spiritual eyes.

Now, whether you are able to follow this concept or not, it remains clear that it was necessary to change King Nebuchadnezzar into an animal form in order for God to show him that the supreme power on earth is God, who rules all things, whether in heaven or on earth. By transforming him into an animal, the king could finally see through the physical veil which was blinding his spiritual comprehension, and could then see into the spiritual realm. And please think about this. You and I are no different if we only see God through our physical eyes. Unless we pass through the base physical plain of understanding and enter into the realm of God in spirit, we will never understand him, nor come to know him. Those who teach prophecy to Christians in this current day and age must look at scripture in the spiritual sense if they are ever going to properly teach end-time prophecy. Understanding, on the part of Christians, will never come if prophecy is explained as just a physical expression. As I have said before, in prophecy there is both the physical representation as well as the spiritual representation. If you don't have both, then you don't have either one. It takes both the physical and the spiritual perspective to understand scripture, and this is why the Old Testament was first given and then followed with the New Testament. The Old Testament is a history which is God's plan demonstrated in the physical sense. The New Testament is nothing more and nothing less than that same history played out in the spiritual sense, except that the New Testament is more revealing of God's pattern of the heavenlies. How sad when people stay stuck in the Old Testament physical comprehension and never progress into the greater revelation of New Testament knowledge. God has brought mankind through the physical learning of the Law of Moses, and now wants us to enter into the spiritual Holy of Holies as well. God gave us Jesus Christ, his Son, in order that we might come to know God himself in a much greater way. Prophecy is no different. As an example, it is not the Old Testament Temple that God wanted mankind to see, but the New Testament Temple. Just as we understand that we are now the temple of God and that God dwells within us instead of in a physical temple, God also wants us to enter into a spiritual understanding in an even greater way when it comes to prophecy. And, once again, as it says so often in scripture, "He that has ears, let him hear."

Now, for King Nebuchadnezzar, the understanding only came when the king was shown what he was really like. At first he had believed that the power was within himself. But the transformation demonstrated that without the true knowledge of God, and without recognizing the supreme power of God over all things, he, King Nebuchadnezzar, was just an animal at best.

Without the knowledge of God being supreme in everything, he, the king, was as a dumb animal, unable to comprehend what really is truth. When God restored King Nebuchadnezzar's understanding after seven years, and his understanding returned to him, he ceased to see things from the animal's poor ability to reason and finally recognized God as the all important and all powerful ruler of earth, sky, and heaven. The king's statement in Daniel 4:34-37 is no longer animalistic in nature, but is transformed into an intelligent description of spiritual understanding of heavenly things. Let's read it. It says, "And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up my eyes unto heaven, and my understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that lives for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: 35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What do you? 36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and brightness returned unto me; and my counselors and my lords sought me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

This realization, which came to King Nebuchadnezzar after his experience of becoming an animal, is that which God wants all mankind to come to. Yet, Satan has twisted the truth of God and convinced many of Earth's inhabitants to reject the authority of God and to accept the powers of human flesh as a substitute. King Nebuchadnezzar, after returning to the form of a man, called God, the most High God, and also stated that God's dominion is an everlasting dominion, and that God's kingdom lasts from generation to generation. This declaration is exactly opposite to the words of Satan, who does not recognize God as the Most High God. He does not recognize God as having everlasting dominion over everything, nor that God's kingdom is perpetual. On the exact contrary, Satan claims that he himself can be like the Most High God, and that he himself can be placed on the throne of God. He also thinks that he can change the decrees and laws which God has put into motion, and actually believes he himself can take over the kingdom of heaven. This pride of Satan is the same pride that plagued the King of Babylon. And, it is this same pride that also plagues the rest of mankind. Although God taught King Nebuchadnezzar that he was nothing more than an animal without acknowledging God's supremacy, Satan, along with the earth's wicked people, still refuses to recognize this fact. Of course, Satan will not repent, nor will the wicked of the earth repent, for the animal nature is too strong in them. To set reason aside, and to make inappropriate decisions which reject God, is grossly unintelligent. This is the animal nature, as opposed to the spiritual nature which God is calling each individual to recognize and accept.

Now, one of the other animal forms I mentioned previously, is Leviathan. This is an extremely important name in scripture, for it symbolically describes Satan as a great ferocious sea creature. However, we'll have to postpone the explanation of Leviathan until next week. We'll pick up here where we left off. And, once again, please feel free to request any of these messages or this complete series, just by listening to Kim at the end. She will give you the information you need.

There is no charge for our material. It is given freely, just as God gives freely to all men. We pray and trust that God will provide. And, he does.