

Message #83 of Scripture Beneath The Surface
“Understanding End-time Prophecy - Part 5”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to conclude our series on “Understanding End-time Prophecy.” This is the last part of the five part series. Last week, in part 4, we talked about the concept of water as being the dwelling place of Leviathan, and that Leviathan was the animal term used by the Bible as a symbolic term for Satan. Water, in scripture, represents knowledge. Pure water represents God's word, and contaminated water represents Satan's lies. Leviathan, an animal term for Satan, is the great red dragon of the sea, referred to in Isaiah 27:1. And please remember, if you missed the last four parts of this series, and you would like a free copy of the whole series, or a free copy of any of our messages, please listen at the end of the program and Kim will give you the information. You can contact us in any way that works for you, and we would be happy to send you any of our materials. They are all free. So, please don't hesitate to request copies of anything you find interesting. They come in CD form, and also include the written form so you can follow along with the CD. And, once again I'd like to remind you that you won't be added to a mailing list, and you won't be asked for donations. We just want you to have the materials if you want them.

So now, let's continue with our study. In order to understand end-time prophecy, we have to understand the terminology that the Bible uses. Much of scripture is written in symbolic terms so that only God's people will understand. I'd like to bring you an example of the importance of looking for the Bible knowledge that lies beneath the surface. In 1 Corinthians 10, verses 1-4, we have a directive from the Apostle Paul that tells us not to be ignorant, but that we should try to understand some important things. Then Paul points out a few things that every Christian should

know, but he uses symbolic terminology to explain them. Let's read these verses, and you'll see what I mean. 1 Corinthians 10, starting with verse 1, says, "Also, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And all ate the same spiritual food; 4 And all drank the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

Now, did you notice that in verse one, Paul tells us that we should not be ignorant, and that what we should know is that our fathers were under the cloud, and all of them passed through the sea, being baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. It is quite clear that Paul is speaking in spiritual terms. When he talks about the fathers, he is talking about the people of Israel who were our forefathers who were under the Law of Moses. The baptism unto Moses by passing through the sea is referring to the time when the Red Sea parted and allowed the Israelites to cross over on dry ground when they were being pursued by the Egyptians. Paul is referring to this as a baptism of the Israelites. When we think of baptism, we think of being dipped in water. But Paul isn't referring to the common physical form of water baptism that we know. He is referring to the concept which underlies water baptism of being overwhelmed with the water. Again, when Paul refers to the Israelites being baptized in the cloud he is using a symbolic term which refers to being born again in Spirit. In this way, Paul tells us that the nation of Israel accomplished both the baptism of water and the baptism of the Spirit, just as Jesus spoke in John 3:5, that in order to come into the kingdom of God we must be born both of water and of the Spirit.

The important point here is not the explanation of baptism itself, but Paul's use of symbolic terms to describe spiritual things which are very important for our learning. He said that he did not want us to be ignorant, and then proceeded to teach us these things, but did it by using symbolic terminology to explain himself. Specifically, my point is this. If we, as Christians, do not seek understanding of the Bible's symbolic expressions, but just want it spelled out in plain factual terms, then we will never come into the understanding of God's word that God intends his people to have. Those people who rely on facts and figures are the people who do not look to the Holy Spirit of God for revelation knowledge. But, it is God's people, who have the gift of God's Holy Spirit within themselves, who have the capability to understand what the Bible is really saying. Without understanding the symbolic expressions of scripture, no understanding will be forthcoming.

Now, I happen to be a person who focuses on the explanation of Bible symbolism. That's the ministry that God has laid on my heart. But, I can't explain it to everyone just by giving a definition of each symbolic term. If the Holy Spirit does not guide you into the truth, neither will my explanations help you. Romans 10:14 tells us that in order for a person to believe, they must hear the truth. The scripture then asks the rhetorical question, "how can they hear without a preacher?" Certainly, there is a need for preachers and teachers. Certainly God's word must be expressed. But, unless people seek God for the truth, no truth will be found. Scripture is written in a way that part of it seems to be quite straight forward and simple, and part of it seems to be

totally confusing. However, I might suggest to you that the simple parts of scripture have as much underlying symbolic meaning sometimes as do those portions of scripture which seem to be so difficult. Sometimes when people look at the simple portions of scripture they have a tendency to skim over them, as if there wasn't much there. But, many times, it is these same scriptures which have underlying principles which are not plainly apparent on the surface. If you really want to understand what God has for you, you'll just have to seek fervently for the truth. If you will prayerfully read your Bible, God will do the rest. He may send you a teacher or preacher, but they won't give you understanding. They will only be able to describe their viewpoint. The rest will be accomplished by your prayers and by the answer of the Holy Spirit. And just one word of warning here if I may. There are thousands and thousands of people in the church who think they know all they need to know about the Bible. However, many of these same people have no real knowledge of scripture and are in danger of hellfire. Whether a person truly knows Jesus Christ as Savior or not will depend upon the person's heart. A true heart for God is a heart that fervently seeks after him, and truly seeks how they can please God. As it says in John 4:24, true worshipers must worship God in Spirit and in truth. If you aren't emotionally moved in your desire for God, if you don't have a fervent heart for Jesus Christ, then you are in danger of really knowing nothing when you think you know everything. And, when God's looks upon your heart, he will know what your true love is. You can't be in bed with the things of this world and still be a pure bride of Christ. If you want to come into a close relationship with Jesus, then you will have to be fervent about it. And no one, no matter who they are, can be fervent without getting emotional. Emotions demonstrate the outward signs of love. If you love God, but are not moved emotionally, then you are most likely dead in your spirit.

And, as a simple example, let me leave this portion of today's program with this concept. If you're someone who does not get emotional about God, but you do get excited about a fancy car, new clothes, a football or hockey game, or a secular television program, then what I'm saying is true. You have no heart for God, but have a heart for earthly things. True Christians have a love and an excitement for God, and for the things of God. True Christians can be moved emotionally about the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who do not get moved emotionally about Jesus, but do get excited about some new earthly plaything, are deceived. And, the deceived will not get the reward they are expecting.

Anyway, let's continue with our subject of understanding end-time prophecy. Specifically, I want to point out to you that we are human beings which have been put on this earth in order that God's will might be accomplished. We haven't been put here to fulfill our own destiny, except in the sense of our eternal destiny with Christ. We have been called to reject the nature of sin and to embrace the righteous nature of God. Scripture refers to the sin nature as the beast nature, which causes mankind to act like an animal. It is the animal part of us that caters to the flesh. It is the animal part of us that is base, and it is the animal part of us that fails to recognize the need to be upright. Being upright is the characteristic of righteousness which God calls us to. It is the animal nature within us which prefers to go on all four feet, so to speak. Let me explain this a little more. In scripture we have the term 'upright' used many times. To be upright, according to the Bible, is to be conformed to the righteousness of God. And in scripture, it is the animal that

walks on all four feet, but it is mankind who has the ability to stand upright on his feet. It is mankind which has the ability to walk upright. This is the concept brought out in scripture concerning King Nebuchadnezzar, which we talked about last week. King Nebuchadnezzar's initial claim to being a world ruler was that his position as king of the whole world had been accomplished by his own ability. It was the humbling experience of being turned into an animal which allowed the king to recognize the omnipotent power of God. As we mentioned last week, King Nebuchadnezzar's experience of being turned into an animal caused him to recognize the truth that God is the all powerful force in heaven and earth and not man himself. When Nebuchadnezzar finally became aware of this, it was equivalent to being stood on his feet like a man instead of an animal, and instead of having an animal's heart, a man's heart was given to him.

Mankind has the ability to stand on his two feet. Animals do not walk upright, and therefore the terminology is scripturally used which refers to righteousness as being upright in heart. It is when a man acts uprightly that he finally comes into conformity with the will of God. It is when man's nature turns to sinfulness that he is described as an animal.

The serpent in the Garden of Eden is the animal form used by the Bible because it most accurately describes the complete wickedness of Satan. Not only does the serpent not have the ability to walk uprightly as a man does, but it actually has no legs at all. In Genesis 3:14, it says that God cursed the serpent, and decreed that because of the deceit it had caused to Adam and Eve, it would be condemned to go on it's belly.

It is the animal nature that is opposed to the Holy Spirit nature of God. In Revelation 13, it is the animal nature of Satan which first rose up out of the sea. The sea, in these verses, refers to those waters which are the lies of Satan. The sea is also a symbolic term for the abyss, because the abyss is a reference to that great bottomless chasm of darkness which has no light of God in it. Satan's dwelling place is in the abyss, the great sea of darkness wherein there is no light of God. It is out of this great sea of darkness that Satan first arose in the form of the animal nature. It was this first beast which manifested itself in unrighteousness. It is this beast nature which is in opposition to the upright nature of Godliness.

When Satan fell from God's kingdom, he brought sin into existence. Instead of submitting himself to the ultimate authority of God, the devil rose up in opposition to God, and it was the Apostle John who saw the revelation of this event unfold in the earth. Satan's animal nature was the first beast, and it rose up out of the great sea of darkness, that vast abyss which is the lies that distort the truth of God. It is Leviathan which is the specific reference to Satan as a huge ferocious destroying animal which dwells in this great sea of contaminated doctrine, and which deceives the whole world. And, because of the rising up of this first beast, the deception spread to mankind on the earth. When Adam and Eve gave in to the temptation to disobey God, this animal nature found it's way into the earth. It was at this exact time that the second beast of Revelation rose up. Revelation 13:11, describes this second beast as rising up from the earth. This is a reference to the animal nature arising in mankind through the flesh nature of man.

This same animal nature has the ability to manifest itself in man because mankind has been formed as a flesh and blood human being. It is through the flesh and blood nature of mankind that Satan is empowered to tempt us. Because we are flesh and blood, we have desires of the flesh which we must contend with. Satan can tempt us with all kinds of earthly things, and the flesh part of man succumbs to it. This initial temptation of Eve was a temptation of Eve's flesh side of her. The human side of mankind is subject to the temptations of the flesh. However, when a man is born-again, he becomes born-again as a spirit being and his spirit man is no longer subject to the temptations of the flesh. However, his body is still tempted. It is the flesh of man which is subject to the temptations of earth, but it is the spirit of man which becomes subject to the righteousness of God. This is why 1 Corinthians 15:50, tells us that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The temptations of Satan are only successful through the flesh. God has created man to be subject to temptation in order that his chosen people might choose the righteousness of God. When we reject the temptations of this world and choose rather the heavenly things of God, we destroy the fleshly beast nature of Satan. But the beast nature is strong in mankind. In fact, the book of Job refers to this powerful urge in man as Behemoth. Behemoth, as found in chapter 40 of the book of Job, describes a great land creature which is more powerful than anything on earth. Leviathan is the equivalent of Satan's animal nature which rose up in response to Satan's lies, but, Behemoth is the equivalent of mankind's animal nature which was introduced into the earth by Satan. It is mankind which demonstrates the extreme wickedness which results from temptations of the flesh, and it is Behemoth which describes this wicked animal nature.

In Job 40, Behemoth is described as having a tail which it moves like a cedar tree. This great tail is a reference to the animal nature part of mankind, just as Satan's great power was in his tail, which he used to draw a third of the angels away from God, as described in Revelation 12:4. Behemoth is different from Leviathan in the sense that Leviathan is that great red dragon which dwells in Satan's sea of lies, but the dwelling of Behemoth is on land. This Behemoth is the same beast as the second beast of Revelation which is described as rising up out of the earth rather than out of the sea, and represents mankind, who gives in to the beast nature. Behemoth is like a huge animal which, although it lives on the earth, it still only lives on land in the sense that it lives in the lowland swamps and marshes. It is the swamps, the marshes, or the low river lands which represent a dwelling place on land but a dwelling place that is almost completely covered with the contaminated waters of Satan's lies. As the sea is representative of Satan's lies, the dwelling place of Behemoth is representative of human beings who continually give in to their beast nature. Instead of standing upright on the solid rock of God's word, Jesus Christ, these wicked people of earth make their abode in the swampy contaminated waters bordering the great sea of Satan's lies. It is this lowland swampy concept which most accurately describes the dwelling place of the wicked. They may be creatures of Earth, but they are only one short hop, skip, and a jump from the great sea of Satan's destruction. They live on Earth, but they are almost completely overwhelmed with the contaminated waters of Satan's distorted truth. In short, they know better, but they continue to wallow in sin.

Just imagine, if you will, this concept of the wicked people of earth living on land, but instead of dwelling on the solid rock, they dwell in the swampy ground and the lowland areas which border the sea. It's not too difficult to see a picture of those who revel in sinfulness as being creatures which try to be as close to Satan's temptations as possible while at the same time holding on to their belief that they are going to escape the ravages of hell. These earthlings do not realize how much their souls are in danger. In fact, many people who call themselves Christians are in danger of hellfire because although they claim to be standing on the solid rock of Christ Jesus, yet their feet are stuck in the muck and mire of Earth's sinful temptations. They have not sought out the higher ground. But, it is the higher ground which we are called to. It is the higher ground where we should dwell. We were not made to walk in the muck and mire, but to stand on the solid rock.

This concept of living on the solid rock instead of on the soft soil beside the sea is brought out in scripture in parable form. It is given to us in Matthew 7:24-27, which tells the story of two men, one who built his house on the rock, and one who built his house on the sand. I'm sure we don't have to describe this parable, for it is such a well known Bible story. But the houses which these verses refer to are the eternal houses we build in the sense of our eternal dwelling. If we stay on the solid rock of higher ground, we will have no trouble ensuring our eternal destiny with God. However, if we ignore God's warnings concerning the beast nature within us, and continually dwell in the muck and mire of this world's temptations, then when the time of tempest and storm comes, our house will fall. It is only the solid rock which will supply a foundation which will sustain our eternal dwelling in the final day.

Well, that concludes our five part series on Understanding End-time Prophecy. I hope that in some way it will be beneficial to those of you who desire to understand more of the underlying principles of God's word. And, hopefully, it will encourage you to recognize the beast nature which plagues the people of earth and therefore will help in your escape from Satan's temptations. The two natures which occupy mankind's hearts are the sin nature which rose up through Satan, and the Holy Spirit nature of God which overcomes the world. And remember, it is the overcoming of the world which God wants us all to do. We can overcome the world when we put off the old robe of mankind's sinful nature and put on the new robe of God's righteousness through Jesus Christ.

Do you have to understand the end-time prophecies in order to be saved? No, of course not. But God does not warn his children for no good reason. Once again, I will quote the often repeated phrase of the Bible. "To him that has ears to hear, let him hear." I hope you are developing ears to hear.