



A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES

Week 20: Understanding the Rise of the Antichrist, Part 2

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Review:

- Last week, we began to study The Rise of the Antichrist. As I said then, this will likely take several weeks.
- Our main text was **Daniel 9:24-27**, and it is there we learn that we are in that period of history now which lies between Daniel's 69th and 70th weeks.
- Here in this text, Gabriel is explaining something to Daniel:
 - He tells Daniel that 490 years of future history – future to the time he is talking to Daniel, are set aside by God to give specific attention to Daniel's people and their holy city.
 - These weeks are blocks of 7 years each. They all began with the *"issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem"*
 - The first 69 of those weeks ended with Jesus Christ's triumphal and prophetic entry into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday.
 - Now, there is a gap of time before the final block of seven years starts. We are in that gap now. It is also known as the church age, and it will come to an end soon.
- Last week, we looked at the various passages which present the case that the antichrist will rise from that territory which was the Eastern Empire of the Roman Empire.
- More specifically, we looked at the ways the Bible makes the case the antichrist will arise from that area of the world. We generally know this area today as northern Syria, or that region which was the ancient Assyrian Empire.

I. HOW DANIEL 9:27 PROVIDES SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE RISE OF THE ANTI-CHRIST:

- A. This verse is a hub of much of Biblical prophecy.
- B. **Daniel 9:27** essentially summarizes the activities of the antichrist from the start of The Tribulation to the end of those seven years.
- C. This is the verse that plainly makes the case that The Tribulation begins with the confirmation of the covenant that the antichrist makes with Israel.
 1. While it's popular in some circles to teach that the Rapture marks the beginning of The Tribulation, that argument is not made in the Scriptures.
 2. The argument that IS made in the Scriptures is that The Tribulation begins with the confirmation of a covenant between Israel and the antichrist.
 3. THAT case is made in **Daniel 9:27**.

- D. I want to briefly consider three possible reasons or motives for Israel coming to the table in the first place, “The Three F’s”:
1. The first possible motive is **FEAR**. Is the nation of Israel so weakened and vulnerable from the attacks of her enemies by that point that she will look to the antichrist for protection within the terms of this covenant?
 - a. This is a popular notion, and I would suggest it’s the main idea suggested by most scholars over the last few decades. However the Bible does not support this view.
 - b. The Bible paints a clear picture that Israel’s proximal and regional enemies will suffer devastating defeat and humiliation in a series of upcoming conflicts.
 - c. The upcoming conflicts of *Psalm 83, Isaiah 17, and Jeremiah 49* are some of those which make this case.
 - d. Israel will emerge from these events safer, stronger, and more successful. She will have greater resources and territory.
 - e. So, this motive of FEAR is a tough sell.
 2. What about **FORCE**? That’s another possible motive we should consider.
 - a. Will Israel’s enemies and the rest of the world compel Israel to sign the terms of the covenant because they are uneasy about the FORCE and the strength of Israel?
 - b. Will they see Israel’s pattern of unlikely victories, along with her surge of strength on the world stage and want to be protected from her?
 - c. It’s an interesting point-of-view, and it has some elements of truth to consider. However, this is not the core reason the Bible provides for Israel’s motive in signing this covenant in the first place.
 3. And so that brings us to the third possible reason Israel would come to the table with the antichrist, and that is the reason I call **FOCUS**.
 - a. By FOCUS, I mean Israel desires something very specific from the terms of this covenant that *Daniel 9:27* mentions.
 - b. I believe the Bible makes the case that Israel is FOCUSED on getting something out of the deal. She’s an important enough party to be at the table in the first place, and she has reasons for being there.
 - c. I believe we can rule out two possible reasons: (1.) money and resources, and (2.) power and strength.
 - d. Israel is already surging in wealth and power in our own time, and she is a significant nation on the world stage right now.
 - e. With a series of victories over her enemies behind her, Israel will be even stronger and more successful than she was before. It is highly unlikely that Israel will be FOCUSED on needing more money or more power as a reason for signing this covenant.
 - f. That brings us to the most likely elements of FOCUS Israel will have as she considers the terms of this future covenant.

4. I think Israel's FOCUS that the Scriptures define is a two-fold one. There are two main elements Israel wants from this deal, INSULATION and INSTITUTION.
 - a. Let's start with the first of those two: **INSULATION**. By INSULATION, the idea is that Israel will want no part of what is going on in the world at that time.
 - She will want to be her own island, she will want to be separate and apart.
 - Israel will not wish to get involved in what's going on in the world. She will not want to worry about getting preoccupied with catastrophic trends and events.
 - She will want to be INSULATED from them.
 - The natural question arises: "What global events could define those times? What could be going on that Israel would want INSULATION?"

II. HOW AND WHY THE ANTI-CHRIST BECOMES THE MAIN BROKER FOR ISREAL'S CONCERNS:

- A. To understand these issues, we need to begin exploring the conditions of the post-Rapture/pre-Tribulation timeframe. I know (and RESPECT) that some of you struggle with the idea that there is a gap of time between the Rapture and The Tribulation.
 1. I know many of you have come to feel that there is very little time, if any, between these two points.
 2. I also understand that there are many commentators and authors and such who have held this view for multiple decades.
 3. In my own studies, I have concluded that there exists some gap of time between the Rapture and the onset of the Tribulation.
 4. I'm not alone in this conclusion: Bill Salus and others see it the same way. I don't know how long this gap will be, but there are a series of things that need to take place within that timeframe.

My appeal to you today, as it will be for the next few lessons, is to keep an open mind to the things I am sharing with you.

- My heart's desire is to never willfully teach you anything that I know is false. There are plenty of pastors and teachers that are brash and foolish enough to teach what the Scriptures do not declare. I am not one of those.
- Rather, I pray often to be brave enough to say the things that few people are willing to say.
- At ALL times I look to the Scriptures for my support and counsel, and when I find the truth there, I will share it as clearly as I am able to do.
- All that said, I remind you to "*be as the Bereans.*" Seek these things out in the Scriptures for yourselves and see if these things are so.
- Come to your own conclusions as the Holy Spirit guides you. Meantime, I am teaching what I, through my own diligence and humility, have come to believe.

- B. So, with all that understood, let's take a quick fresh look at the Seal Judgements, specifically Seal Judgment #5 and the ones which lead up to it.
1. Seal Judgment #5 is described in **Revelation 6:9-11**.
 2. This is a picture of many martyred saints who are in heaven and who are questioning God as to when He will bring about judgement against those on earth who have murdered them.
 3. Their specific question is "How long?" Their query indicates that they are unable to calculate where they are at in the sequence of events.
 4. Jesus responds by telling them to be patient. He does not give them a specific answer.
 5. He DOES tell them that there are events taking place on earth that will see many more martyrs killed.
- C. My current position is that Seal Judgment #5 takes place BEFORE the confirmation of this covenant that Israel signs with the antichrist and which we read about in **Daniel 9:27**. **NOTE:** The more I read and study this issue, the more I feel this is the most accurate view to hold. As I look at this issue, it has become for me a matter of logic and reason.
1. I don't want to suggest that those of you which do not see the matter the same way are not subscribing to logic.
 2. I am merely saying this view makes the best sense to me. It follows a clear path of reason as I see the issues.
 3. It also seems to be the view that is most consistent with the words of Jesus Christ in **Matthew 24:4-8**.
 - a. In this passage – and in the parallel Gospel accounts of **Mark 13 and Luke 21**, Jesus lays out a series of events which He calls the 'beginning of birth pains.
 - b. He lists several categories of global dynamics that will define this period of time: deception and the rise of false Christs, wars and rumors of wars, famines and pestilences, and various other fearful events.
 - c. These global dynamics line up well with the Seal Judgements: the rise of deception and a false Christ, wars and conflict, famine and pandemics and economic ruin, and so on.
 - d. These are all things which we are starting to see the early shadows of RIGHT NOW.
 - e. We see all the ways these things are the result of mankind turning away from God and acting in a depraved manner against humanity as a whole (The 'plandemic' and the food shortages are cases in point).
 - f. But I want you to note that Jesus says in **vs. 6**, "...the end is still to come."
 - g. Despite these events, Jesus says, 'this is just the very beginning.' He further says: 'the end has not arrived yet.'
 - h. More on the post-Rapture gap and the Seal Judgments later.

4. Meantime, this view that the Seal Judgments take place BEFORE the onset of the Tribulation (at least up through Seal Judgment #5) explains WHY the martyred saints in Seal Judgment #5 do not have the clear reference points that they would know of AFTER the confirmation of this covenant.
 - a. It is AFTER the confirmation of this covenant that a clear seven-year timeframe of The Tribulation begins.
 - b. It is AFTER the start of The Tribulation that the Scriptures provide an abundance of measuring systems to know how long everything will last from that point: (i.e. 1,260 days, 42 months, and so on).
 - c. The point is, we know it's AFTER the confirmation of this covenant in **Daniel 9:27** that the clock starts ticking with supernatural accuracy and God's revelation of the countdown is clearly known.
 - d. For these martyred saints to be asking: "How long?", makes a pretty strong clue that The Tribulation has not started.
 - e. They don't know when God will begin His judgments! They are waiting for God's wrath to be poured out on an unrepentant world.
 - f. These martyred saints know things are a mess on Earth. They know it is perilous down there for anyone who holds to the Word of God and maintains a Godly testimony.
 - g. I believe their question to God suggests that they can see and know events on earth as they are taking place. It's a key reason why they ask, "How long?"
 - h. They can perceive, at some level, what is happening. They also can perceive that Daniel's 70th Week is not underway.
 - i. They want some insight as to "When?" and "Why?", and God does not tell them.

5. If we continue the application of logic here, this position makes sense from other vantage points as well:
 - a. It means Seal Judgments #1-#4 which (obviously!) precede Seal Judgment #5 are also events which take place AFTER the Rapture but BEFORE the start of The Tribulation.
 - b. A key thing to consider is the flow of the book of **Revelation**.
 - For example, the church is seen on Earth in **Chapters 2 and 3**.
 - Then, in a type of the Rapture, John is transported UP in **Chapters 4 and 5** where he sees the church in heaven.
 - There John sees the preparations of the Seal Judgments. He sees the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David ("Jesus Christ") preparing to open the scroll and enact the judgments it contains.
 - c. Then, in **chapters 6 and 7, and up through the first verse of chapter 8** are listed the various Seal Judgments:
 - There is the debut of the antichrist in Seal Judgment #1.
 - He is described as one who is a "conqueror bent on conquest."

- He is beginning his career, and it starts with what we might call “political” ambitions at the start.
 - We also know from **2 Thessalonians 2:5-9** that the antichrist cannot be revealed until AFTER the Rapture.
 - So, we can surmise that, by Seal Judgment #1, the Rapture has already occurred.
 - From **2 Thessalonians 2:5-9** we learn that “the Restrainer,” the Holy Spirit, is enacting His ministry through the church, and who holds back the antichrist and His agenda, is taken out of the way in the Rapture.
 - The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, so that does not mean He is not around at that time, however, His direct influence through multiple millions of people is now removed.
 - And so the antichrist debuts on the world scene in Seal Judgment #1.
6. Seal Judgments #2 and #3 unfold in their own logical order. They reveal a world rapidly deteriorating rapidly with the onset of the extreme lawlessness which flourishes AFTER the Rapture and BEFORE The Tribulation.
 - a. Seal Judgement #2 is open war and conflict, not just between people and ethnic groups, but between nations.
 - b. Peace is taken from the earth in a grand melee of chaos, corruption, and conflict.
 - c. It may be in this judgment that some of the regional wars in the Middle East that the Bible describes takes place.
 7. Seal Judgment #3 introduces extreme famine and economic ruin on a worldwide scale. The common people can’t meet their basic needs, but the rich people still have their luxuries.
 - a. It’s a perfect picture of turbo-charged global socialism. It’s a graduation of everything we’ve ever seen in history whenever socialism takes over.
 - b. Venezuela was once the world’s 4th wealthiest nation. South Africa was once the “Jewel of Africa.” Both of these nations were once prosperous. Today, both have become poster children for the effects of socialism and the injustices that come from abandoning law and order and sensible economic policies.
 - c. We don’t seem to learn from history’s many examples. The sinful condition of man is an obstinate and foolish dilemma.
 - d. Keep in mind that socialism IS the situation that many people in our own country want. This is also what many leaders within the progressive liberal ranks want.
 - e. They WANT globalism, they WANT socialism, they WANT open borders, and they WANT a one-world leader.
 - f. They DON’T want Christians, they DON’T want law and order, they DON’T want God’s values or any systems of governance which are based on personal responsibility and Judeo-Christian values.

- g. That's why Joe Biden has been viciously attacking conservatives lately – and all those who want law and order. It's why he and his party have had a special venom against Christians and those who want moral standards.
- h. They may not know that they actually WANT the antichrist and his agenda. I believe some DO know this, but we as believers should be able to discern that God is preparing a complexion of variables in our time that will be unleashed upon the “earth dwellers.”
- i. The Seal Judgements (particularly #1-#5) describe some of the conditions which will be in full effect leading up to the start of The Tribulation.
- j. These are some of the conditions that will be marinating the world as Israel sits down at the table to negotiate this covenant we read of in **Daniel 9:27**.

D. **That brings us to Seal Judgment #4.** It might feel like I'm going backwards here, but I'm developing a point. I want to get a good foothold on this issue in this class today. Let's look at some background:

1. Seal Judgment #4 is found in **Rev. 6:7 and 8**.
2. Like Seal Judgments #1 - #3 before it, we see a horse.
 - a. But unlike Seal Judgments #1 - #3 before it, we see two personalities in association with this particular horse.
 - b. With the white horse, red horse, and black horse before, there was a single entity riding that horse, and that entity in each situation represented an individual, a function, or a specific effect on earth.
3. With this fourth horse - a pale green horse which suggests the image of death and decay – there are two entities named in association, and they are “Death” and “Hades.”
 - a. “Death” is easy to understand here. It means “death” just like it says. It's the state AFTER “life.”
 - b. “Hades” is not as easy to understand. Again, some of your English Bible translations may say “Hell” instead of “Hades,” however, “Hades” is the better translation.
 - c. “Hades” is a Greek word. It's the same as the word “Sheol” in Hebrew, and it describes the place that unsaved souls go to when the physical person dies.
 - d. We studied this very issue a few lessons ago – no need to go through it again.
 - Reminder: Hades is a sort of holding place for the unsaved dead. It is a place of torment.
 - It's a real place with real conditions, and it is personified here as one of the two “riders” of this pale green horse.
 - Wisdom is personified in **Proverbs 8** as a woman who calls out trying to get people to gain what she offers. That's personification. It's applying human-like qualities to a process or a non-human source.

- That's the situation with Death and Hades here, they are personified – they are pictured as human-like with will and intent.
 - They are both associated entities with this fourth horse, and with this 4th Seal Judgment, and they will BOTH have a role to play.
 - And as we consider the conditions of the world that Israel will be contemplating at the time of the covenant's confirmation in **Daniel 9:27**, Death and Hades will both impact the decisions of Israel's leaders then.
 - Death and Hades will represent conditions in the world and events going on that Israel will want to be INSULATED from.
4. It's important to see that Death and Hades are "given power over a fourth of the earth."
 - a. Traditionally, it is taught that a quarter of the earth will die here. I once taught that and believed this is what it is saying.
 - b. But this is very different wording than – say, **Rev. 9:15** where "a third of mankind is killed," or where we read a third of the trees are burned, a third of the water turned bitter, et al.
 - c. Here, Death and Hades are "given power over a fourth of the earth" and the purpose of that power is to kill. The four means of killing are defined:
 - Sword
 - Famine
 - Plague
 - Beasts of the earth (again "therios" – same term used to describe the antichrist; likely a reference to non-humans; Nephilim entities)
 5. So, Israel is facing a situation where one-fourth of the earth's population is being granted some sort of power to kill.
 6. Now here's where I want to shift gears and look at another Old Testament passage which has relevance for this covenant and the start of The Tribulation (**Cf. Isaiah 28:15**).
 - a. I believe this prophecy has a dual application (past: Assyria / future: start of Tribulation).
 - b. It's what some prophecy scholars refer to as a 'near – far' prophecy. It has a little application in a past time, but full application in a future time.
 - c. More on this later....(READ THE PASSAGE BELOW)

"Because you (Israel) have said, "We have made a covenant with Death, and with Sheol (Hades) we are in agreement. When the overflowing scourge passes through, it will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood we have hidden ourselves."" (Isaiah 28:15)

7. I want to alert you to this: something "troubles the Jewish state," and this is evident by what Isaiah says about this covenant.
8. We see Israel is concerned about an overflowing scourge that is raging within the world.

9. The question is raised as to what this overflowing scourge might be, what Death and Sheol represent, as well as how they are acting.
10. This will be our focus next week, and we will start tying up this particular rabbit trail.
11. We will unpack just what it is that Israel wants to be INSULATED from....