***The Seven-Year Tribulation Period, No. 2

RV112-02***

We are studying the first seal, and this is segment number seven of our study of Revelation 6:1-2.

**Daniel 9:24-27**

The information, first of all, that we've been referring to is in Daniel 9:24-27. As a brief review, Daniel 9:24 gives us the prophecy of the 70 weeks of years as a whole. And we are presented there with six divine objectives which are to be achieved in that 490-year period. Then in Daniel 9:25, we have found the prophecy dealing with the 69 weeks of 483 years in particular. We are zeroing in on that segment. Then, in Daniel 9:26, we have the details of the events which occur between the 69th and the 70th week. Then, in Daniel 9:27, which we shall look at in this session, we have the details of the 70th week itself.

You want to remember that the terminal point of the 69th week, or the 483rd year of the 490-year schedule, was the official presentation of Jesus Christ the Messiah ruler to the Jewish nation, at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on about April 6th, 32 A.D. This is a very important event, so you find it recorded in several of the gospels. They each get a little different slant. This is the only time that Jesus Christ presented Himself officially to the nation (to the people and also to the leaders) as their Messiah ruler.

In Luke 19:29, we have this event described for us: "And it came to pass, when He was come near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the Mount of Olives, He (that is, Jesus) sent two of His disciples, saying, "Go into the village opposite you, in which, at your entering, you shall find a colt tied on which yet never man sat. Loose him and bring him here. And if any man asks you, 'Why do you lose him' thus you shall say to him: 'Because the Lord needs him.' And they that were sent went their way and found, even as He had said unto them. And as they were loosening the cold, its owner said unto them, 'Why do you loose the colt?' And they said, 'The Lord needs him.' And they brought him to Jesus, and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they sat Jesus on it. And as He went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when He was coming there at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen."

The picture you have here is the Lord getting on top of this donkey on the Mount of Olives and descending to the foot of the Mount of Olives. The relationship of that is this: The Mount of Olives is above, and down below is the city of Jerusalem. So, He's coming down the paths in order to enter the city of Jerusalem. This is what we refer to as His triumphal entry, and it took place on the Sunday before He was crucified. This is generally referred to as Palm Sunday, because the people tore palm branches off the trees, and along with their clothing, through them in the pathway for Him to walk on. It was a sign of honor. It was a sign of esteem for a royal personage.

Verse 37: "And when He was coming here, even at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed be the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.' And some of the Pharisees from among the multitudes said to Him, 'Master rebuked your disciples.' And He answered and said unto them, 'I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.'" This was such a high point in human history. This was finally what all the Jews for centuries had waited for – the moment of the presentation of the promised Deliver. Here He was finally on the scene, and Jesus Christ said that nothing could stop the praise coming to Him. If human voices would not praise Him as the King of the whole world, then the very inanimate creation would speak forth. The rocks themselves would burst forth in some kind of a noisy expression of praise on this occasion.

We may also look at the same event described by John in John 12:12: "And on the next day, many people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet Him and cried, 'Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.' And Jesus, when He had found a young ass, sat upon it as it is written, 'Do not fear, daughter of Zion, behold, your King comes sitting on an ass's colt.'" This is a quotation from Zechariah 9:9, which was one of the prophetic identifying marks of the genuine Messiah. So, the Lord Jesus is simply fulfilling this prediction.

Verse 16: "His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him. The people, therefore, that were with Him, when he called Lazarus out of the grave and raised him from the dead, bore witness. For this cause, the people also met Him, for they heard that He had done this miracle. The Pharisees, therefore, said among themselves: 'Perceive how you prevailed nothing. Behold, the world has going after Him.'" Indeed, on that particular Sunday, all the city of Jerusalem was in an uproar of adulation over the arrival of the promised Messiah King.

The Gospel of Matthew was specifically written to the Jews concerning the things that deal with the nation of Israel. In Matthew 21:1, this incident is again described with a little different slant: "And when they drew near unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying into them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and straightway you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her. Loosen them and bring them unto Me. And if any man says anything unto you, you shall say, 'The Lord needs them.' And straightway he will send them. All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying (here again He is referring to Zachariah 9:9), 'Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, your King comes unto you meek, sitting upon an ass, and the colt, the foal of an ass.'

"And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way. Others cut down branches from the trees and spread them in the way. The multitudes went before, and that followed Christ, saying, 'Hosanna to the son of David."

The people knew of His divine royal lineage. They knew that He was, by His family descent, qualified to claim the throne of David: "'Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.' And when He was come into the city, all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?'"

And then we have an interesting clue as to what most people really thought of Him: "And the multitudes said, 'This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.'"

**Emotions**

Well, that was true what they said about Him, but that very expression suggests that they had certain reservations, and something less than complete conviction as to who He was relative to His claims as being the King of the Jews. But they were caught up in the excitement. Once you start operating in the religious realm on the basis of emotions, you can get carried away. Don't think that that is not possible for you to get trapped in. We have a long string of past Bereans and current Bereans who are just the type, because they are not solid on the Word of God, who can be taken off by an emotional kick. It's always a threat to get caught up in some great emotional movement, so that there is where it's at. That is at the heart of the charismatic movement. That is at the heart of the Body Life movement – the concept of Christians getting together, and the body ministering to each other by folks sharing the thoughts off the top of their head, and what they feel God has for them to say to everyone else, which usually fills the congregation with a lot of human viewpoint.

But this crowd here was carried away with the emotion. They were cutting the branches, and putting out the clothing in the pathway, and shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David," but to them, He was just the carpenter fellow Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth from Galilee, and that was as far as they really esteemed Him. When all the excitement had died down, before the week was out, from the same mouths that yelled, "Hosanna to the Son of David, the king of the Jews," they were screaming the words, "Crucify Him. Crucify Him." That's where emotion goes. And if you want to destroy yourself in your walk with God; if you want to destroy the effectiveness of your spiritual gifts; and, if you want to put yourself in putting your life down a spiritual rat hole, and have all of eternity to look back and regret it, when you stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ and discover what has happened, just go ahead and do that.

You want to be careful about somebody that you know who is close. Maybe it is somebody from this congregation who rises up and says, "Hey, folks, I've found where it's at. Boy, I'm so excited about it, and I'm ready to go." Every time somebody gets up and is so excited about it, it reminds me of the first-grader who can't wait to get to the washroom, and I'm afraid he's going to have an accident. So, don't get unrealistic about all of this terrible excitement that is detached from the content of the Word of God. Here is a classic example. The real view of the multitude was not what their words and their excitement, at the moment that they were caught up in, seemed to convey. However, the Lord Jesus was nobody's fool, and He was not deceived by this great adulation. He was not deceived by the fact that the crowd was standing there cheering and waving and clapping and giving Him this thunderous reception. He knew what was in them, and He knew what they were capable of doing. He knew exactly how fickle the emotional orientation to God at heart really is.

So, you have the sad picture following this very event. At the end of the day, the Lord Jesus draws off by Himself, and He perhaps goes back across the Kidron Valley, and back up here to the Mount of Olives. He looks out across the valley to the city of Jerusalem, lying there, shimmering in the setting sun. He expresses those sad and tragic words of Luke 19:41-44: "And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, at least in this day, the things which belong unto your peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes. For the day shall come upon you that your enemy shall cast a trench about you and compass you round, and keep you in on every side, and shall lay you even with the ground, and your children within you. And they shall not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation." You didn't have the sense to know that the time of reality had come. You're kicking around with all the emotion, and before the week was out, you were caught up in another emotion. In the earlier part of the week, they were caught up in the emotion of praising Jesus. When their leaders got through manipulating them, they were caught up in the next emotion which came along, which was to kill Him. That's the emotional orientation crowd. Those who do not structure their lives upon the content of the Word of God.

Matthew 27:20-23 tell us what these same people felt at the end of the week: "Pilate said unto them, 'What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said unto him, 'Let Him be crucified.' The governor said, 'Why? What evil has he done?' But they cried out the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified.'" This was the same people and the same crowd, but now they're on a different emotional kick.

**The Antichrist**

Jesus Christ, the Messiah ruler, then was crucified. This took place after the end of the 69th week of years, but before the 70th (final) week of years. The 69th week of years terminated with that Sunday when He came into the city, and was welcomed with such triumph. The 70th week of Daniel's time period cannot begin until the antichrist is in command of the Western Confederacy of ten nations, and until he has made a treaty of protection with the Israeli nation. So, we know that today there is not a supreme ruler over a ten-nation confederacy – a ruler who has come to that position by the dint of his own forceful leadership, and by dint of his own military capacity. We also know that there is nobody in the world today who has made a special treaty with the Jewish people and, in effect, said to them, "I'll protect you. No matter who tries to get at you, I will protect you from all of your enemies, and all of the hatred that's in the Arab world. You can count on me. All of the anti-Semitism that is in Russia, you can count on me. I will protect you." The Jewish people will welcome that opportunity in the future, and they will accept that protection. But until that antichrist in that political position of authority over those ten nations, and until he makes this treaty with the nation of Israel, the 70th week cannot begin. It's still ahead.

So, the murder of the Messiah ruler, Jesus Christ, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by the Romans, all took place before the 70th week began some 2,000 years ago, and it still hasn't begun. Into this gap of 2,000 years, between the 69th and 70th year, God has placed the church age. Of course, as we looked at in the previous session, there are many references in the Old and New Testament Scriptures to this special final period of God's dealings with the Jewish nation in terms of seven years from the period of 490 years. There are many references to a seven-year period, and that period is divided into two three-and-a-half year segments. The 70th week of years will begin after the rapture of the church, at which point God's program for the body of Christ will be concluded.

**Daniel 9:27**

So, now we turn to Daniel 9:27 to consider the information which is revealed in that, thus to close the framework of the interpretation of Revelation chapters 6 through 19 which deal with this seven-year period: "And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week." The primary personality of this verse is the antichrist of the tribulation era. The verse in the Hebrew literally says, "And he shall come to prevail a covenant." A smooth translation is: "And he will make a firm covenant;" that is, he will make a treaty. The word "he" is the one we are concerned about. Who is he within this context? Here again, we have to look at what the Hebrew grammar gives us. In the Hebrew grammar, we have the word "confirm" or "prevail," which looks like this in the Hebrew: "gavar." "Gavar" means "to confirm" or "to prevail." In the Hebrew, endings are attached to this word which indicate that it's the third person, masculine, singular. So, it is "he" – a human being, and a single person, not a group. He is going to cause a treaty to be made.

Furthermore, in the Hebrew language, there's a stem of the word upon which the endings are added (the suffixes and prefixes), which is called the hiphil stem. The hiphil stem tells us that this has been caused by this individual. He brought it about. So, the hiphil stem of this word, "gavar" (to prevail or to confirm) indicates that the antichrist Himself is the instigator of this covenant with the Jews. He goes to the Jewish people. He goes to the government of Israel, and he says, "I have a deal for you. Boy, do I have a deal for you?" He imposes, by his sheer personality and forcefulness, this treaty upon the Jewish people: "I'll take care of you, and you stand by me." And the Jews say, "OK, you've got a deal."

The "he" here refers to the antichrist who is the instigator. This refers back to the context in Daniel 9:26. When you have a personal pronoun like "he," you have to look back in the immediate language of the context to see who it is that is (what we call) the antecedent – who it is that that's pointing back to. If you look back in Daniel 9:26, you see that the "he" is to be found in this particular chapter. It says, "The people of the prince that shall come." The prince is the only word that third person, masculine, singular can tie back to. It has to agree in terms of being singular or plural; and, it has to agree in its gender (whether it's masculine and feminine). And it is very clear from the language in the Hebrew text that the "he" of verse 27 is the prince of verse 26.

So, we have already seed that the prince of verse 26 is the antichrist. We have seen him as the little horn in Daniel; and, we have seen him as the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians. He is referred to in a variety of ways in the Scripture. He is the coming prince. He is the one who is going to be the antichrist who makes the deal with the Jewish people. This coming prince, as we said, has already been referred to in Daniel 7:8 as the little horn. The little horn of Daniel 7:8 has come from the Roman Empire. That is very clear there. He is part of the Roman Empire. Daniel 7:8 is talking about the world empire of Rome. Out of that world empire comes this little horn. So, he is the same person as the Roman prince of Daniel 9:26. He is the prince who comes from the people who have destroyed Jerusalem and scattered the people in 70 A.D.

Verse 26 was still future. Even after the death of Jesus Christ, it was still future. That happened 40 years after Jesus died – that, finally, the nation was dispersed. We know that this future prince is Roman also because he descends from these people who are in the future are going to destroy the city of Jerusalem.

In John 2:18, we have a statement made that also refers to the antichrist: "Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, 'What sign do you show unto us showing that You do these things?'" And the sign that Jesus presented to them was the sign of the coming antichrist, which the people (the Jews who are living at that time) would be fully able to relate to.

Then, in 1 John 2:18 specifically refers to the antichrist: "Little children, it is the last time, and as you have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists by which we know that it is the last time." So, here again, John indicates to us that the antichrist comes on the scene at the last days. There are a lot of people who are in his characteristic now – they're antichrist types, but they are not *the* antichrist who is still coming.

2 Thessalonians 2:3 speaks about the man of sin – also to be revealed in the future. Both of these references (the one in 1 John 2:18, and the one in 2 Thessalonians 2:3) are referring to this coming prince that we have in Daniel 9:26, and which, in Daniel 9:27, is referred to by the word "he."

The covenant (or the agreement) of the antichrist in Daniel 9:27 is said to be made with "the many." The word in the Hebrew is the word "rav." It's an adjective, and it literally means "the many." This same word is used in Isaiah 52:14, which gives us a clue as to what it means: "And many were astounded at You. His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men:" "Many were astounded." That is referring to the many of the Jewish nation who saw Jesus so brutalized that He didn't even look like a human being. It is this same "many" that is referred to in Daniel 9:27 that: "He (the antichrist) shall make a treaty (a firm covenant) with the many." "The many" is referring to the people of the nation of Israel (to the Jewish people in the future).

Gabriel, in Daniel 9:24, clearly applies the events of the 490-year prophecy to Daniel's people (which is the Jewish people): "And to Daniel's holy city," which is Jerusalem. The antichrist, in Daniel 7:21, is described as persecuting the saints. Notice: "I beheld, and the same horn (the little horn) made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." That's exactly what we anticipate in the future. The antichrist is described as persecuting the saints. Who are the saints? The saints in Daniel are the Jewish people. In Daniel 7:25, we're told that these saints (these Jewish people) are persecuted for three-and-a-half years: "And he shall speak great words against the most high God, and shall wear out the saints of the most high God (the Jewish people), and think to change the times and the laws. And they shall be given into his hands until a time, times, and the dividing of time." There is that Hebrew expression for three-and-a-half years.

So, the antichrist, we are told in Daniel 19:27, is going to make a firm covenant with the nation of Israel. But then something happens: "He (the antichrist) shall instigate a firm treaty with the many (the people of Israel – the Jewish people) for one week;" that is, a period of seven years. This in the context of this 70 sevens: "And in the midst of this week (in the midst of the seven years), he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease." What we have stated here is that the antichrist is going to double-cross the people of Israel. How is he going to do it? How is he going to show that he has now turned against them? He's going to show it by causing their temple worship to come to an end.

**The Temple**

How can the antichrist stop their sacrificial system unless they are doing these sacrifices? How can he cease the oblation (these meal offerings) unless they are again performing these ceremonies? And how can they perform the ceremonies unless they have a temple built in which they can function in this way? So, you have, in Daniel 9:27, the clue that when the antichrist comes on the scene and makes his deal with the Jewish people, there will be a temple functioning again under the Mosaic system in Jerusalem. The Jews will have restored their priesthood and their whole sacrificial system. This is part of the thing that he's going to protect for the Jews, and then he's going to turn against them later.

**A Homeland; Jerusalem; and, the Temple**

That is why we have said that in the prophetic picture, there are three great things that must come to pass before the Second Coming of Christ – not the rapture, but before the Second Coming of Christ. One is that the Jews have to have a homeland again on the territory of the Promised Land. That this happened. Secondly, the Jews have to possess the whole city of Jerusalem in order that they could possess the site upon which the temple was authorized to be established. That has happened. They have the whole city. Third, the temple has to be erected, and the sacrifices re-instituted.

The Jewish nation has made extensive research, and has put scholars on the job of researching how the Mosaic system worked in all of its details. The have been getting all the ancient records and all the information that they have that they can gather – even that which is outside of the Bible, to establish a clear procedure for re-instituting the sacrificial system. Two things have been met, and there is one more to go. So, if tomorrow morning, you wake up and discover that something has happened either to the Dome of the Rock, which is the Muslim mosque which is now on the site of where Solomon's temple stood; or, if a recent finding by Jewish archaeologists has indicated that the actual site of the temple was not on that rock, but was a short distance to the north, where they have now built what they call the Great Synagogue. If they discover indeed, and are satisfied that that was the site, and suddenly, you read in your newspapers that the Jews are starting to rebuild the temple and to re-institute the sacrificial system, grab your hat, because we're on the bobsled, and we don't have far to go. If that third one comes to pass, start packing your bags. That is the last element that needs to fall into place so that we can be cleared out, and the prophetic clock starts ticking again – ticking off the last seven years.

This act of treachery on the part of the antichrist is identified in Daniel 9:27 by the words "the overspreading of abomination:" "And for the overspreading of abomination, he shall make it desolate. It's a little hard to understand. A better translation of that is this: "And on the wings of abomination will come one who makes desolate." That's what the Hebrew says. Here's the picture: Here comes somebody like a bird suddenly coming in on wings, and he just suddenly appears out of the air, and he swoops in, and what he arrives, he causes desolation. He is like a hawk, with its keen eyesight, circling above and looking for its prey down below, and when he cites him, he pulls those wings up to his side; goes into his dive; flips his way now to give himself control; snatches his prey; and, desolation to his victim. That's the picture. I would be hesitant to press this to the fact that he's going to come in on an airplane. I'll let you pursue all the possibilities of how the abomination appears on a wing, but, of course, that's exactly how it could happen. He could appear in some dramatic way.

Pastor Sullivan, in the Lewisville, Nebraska school, has decided to return to the battle zone itself. If you saw it on television, he came swooping in onto the church campus in a helicopter. It was very dramatic and very theatrical, and it certainly caught the attention of the news cameras. He just swooped down there in this helicopter, and walked out, and the crowd was there waiting for him. And it made good news coverage.

One way or another, the Bible says, "On the wings of abomination (on the wings of something very loathsome), this person is going to come in to make desolate." The prediction in Daniel 9:27, that the coming prince (the antichrist) will cause the Jewish sacrifices and offerings to cease in the middle of the week, represents the treachery to the nation after the agreement which he has made for them. Obviously, we must conclude that the present occupation of Jerusalem by the Jewish people is preparatory to the rebuilding of this temple complex, and of the re-instituting of these sacrifices.

The power of the antichrist will be so great that he probably himself (for all we know) may be the reason that the Jews are able to rebuild their temple. He may have such power in the Western Confederacy that he may even tell them to go in there and blow up that mosque and clear it off: "Get your bulldozers out, and take it away, and nobody's going to stop you." This man is going to have power because he is going to be Satan's man. Every capacity that the devil has will be at the disposal of the antichrist. It is not unthinkable that the reason the Jews can rebuild their temple, even on the site of the Dome of the Rock, will be because the antichrist makes it possible for them to push the Arabs aside and to do it.

Revelation 11:1-2 confirm for us that there will be such a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem: "And there was given me a reed like a rod (a measuring stick), and the angel stood, saying, "Arise, and measure the temple of God and the altar, and them that worship in it. But the court which is outside the temple, leave out, and do not measure it, for it is given until the gentiles (to the nations), and they shall tread the holy city underfoot 42 months." This is a picture of the temple in the tribulation period. John is told to measure it. He is also told to forget the outside court because it represents the treading upon Jerusalem by the gentiles for another three-and-a-half years. But that very expression, "Go and measure the temple" that is existing in the tribulation, shows again, that there is a rebuilt temple.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 predicts that the antichrist is going to set himself up as God in that Jewish temple before its final destruction. That is the abomination that makes desolate. The abomination is that the antichrist sets up his own image, and he tells people, "Now, worship me. I'm God."

2 Thessalonians 2:8: "And then that wicked one shall be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." What the antichrist faces is the doom of God Himself because of what he did, which is described in 2 Thessalonians 2:4: "Who opposed and exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped. So he is God, sitting in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

**Arrogance**

Of course, Revelation 13 confirms exactly that picture. This powerful man finally sets himself up through his religious associate, the false prophet, and says that he is God. This man is the epitome of arrogance. Arrogance is the problem which we as Christians have, and it's a worthy study that we won't get into ourselves now. There's an amazing amount of arrogance among Christians. There is a great deal which is portrayed as a firm conviction, or Holy Spirit-led beliefs that are nothing but pure gutted arrogance on the part of those who are pressing a certain cause, and holding a certain viewpoint. There is a great deal of arrogance among Christians relative to God and God's dealing with them. And this man is the epitome of arrogance. He sets himself up against the real God.

The predictions of 2 Thessalonians and of the book of the Revelation are obviously related to this passage in Daniel 9:27. It's all talking about the same thing, and it's related to that 70th week.

Daniel 9:27 also indicates the final judgment of God upon this personality: "Even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured out upon the desolater." Here again, we need a revised translation. And that is: "He will make desolation even until the consummation (until he comes to his ordained divine end), and that which God has determined shall be poured out upon the desolater." It indicates that this individual comes under God's divine wrath. Of course, the book of the Revelation, because it deals with this period of human history, gives us the clue and gives us the picture of what's going to happen.

**Hell**

Revelation 19:20 says, "And the beast (the antichrist) was taken, and with him the false prophet that brought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image." A lot of people will respond and worship his image in that Jewish temple: "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone." This is the same lake of fire into which human beings are going to be sent who have rejected salvation through Jesus Christ. What happens to a human beings who is cast into the lake of fire? Our natural inclination is to think that fire burns, consumes, and disintegrates whatever is in it. That is not so in this lake of fire.

Notice Revelation 20:10. At the end of the 1,000 years, Satan is given one more shot at the human race. He raises a new rebellion. God disposes of him. And now the final judgment before eternity begins upon the devil: "And the devil that deceived them (the nations) was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, forever and ever." 1,000 years later, the antichrist and his religious henchmen, undoubtedly a member of the World Council of Churches, are there still in the agonies of hell. They are not consumed. They are not destroyed. They are still there in that suffering, and they will continue to be there forever.

So, human beings who think that they will be wiped out of existence, no matter how evil they have been (and their counting on that), are going to be sadly disappointed. Furthermore, there is the old cliché, "Well, I may be going to hell, but so are all my friends, so we'll have a good time together." That is going to be a short-lived hope, I can assure you, because there's nothing but agony, agony, and agony there. The terrible thing about it is that it never ends.

One of the most powerful motivations to reach out into the highways and hedges, and to bring in that harvest which is ready to be brought in, is to stop and think what it's going to mean to these people to be in that lake of fire and that agony forever. They are never able to change it.

The Lord Jesus Christ indicated that the midpoint of the tribulation would be a time that immediately preceded His Second Coming in power and glory. The midpoint of the tribulation would be very near to His Second Coming. Again, I want to remind you that this is not the rapture. There is no event that must be fulfilled before the rapture. We do have to get to the middle of the tribulation, and to the end of the tribulation, as a matter of fact, before Jesus can come back to this earth in the Second Coming. But at that time, we will be coming with Him.

But the thing I want you to note is that the Lord made it very clear that the people who are living at that time, when they get to the middle of the tribulation, can at least have this comfort, especially those who become believers, that the return of the Lord is just three-and-a-half years away. Matthew 24:15-16 say, "When you therefore shall see (this is Jesus speaking) the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet." Now you know what the abomination of desolation is? That is the image of the antichrist in the restored Jewish temple as the God that they must worship: "Spoken of by Daniel the prophet stand in the holy place (that is in the holy of holies of that temple), whoever reads it, let him understand, then let them who are in Judea flee into the mountains." This is going to happen in the middle of the tribulation. God is telling people, "If you can possibly escape; if you can possibly get away from the authorities; if you can possibly get out into an isolated place; or, if you can possibly get out to a survival retreat, this is the time to go. When you see that image put up, get out."

Matthew 24:21 says, "For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be." So, that the last half of the tribulation (the last three-and-a-half years) are called the great tribulation. It's going to be the epitome of human suffering. The intensity of the whole antichrist world and the intensity of evil will mount in a great crescendo. The violence, the degradation, and the antagonism toward God will rise to its red hot pitch. The time will be near the end when Christ then will return.

The Lord Jesus had just referred to the end of the age and His return to the earth in the verses immediately before this in Matthew 24:13-14: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations. Then the end shall come."

Remember that Matthew 24 is the discussion to the Jewish people. It is dealing with the future of the Jews. And verse 13 is often used by those who believe that you can lose your salvation: "But he that shall endure until the end, the same shall be saved." How many times have you had that quoted to you: "See, you can lose your salvation. If you don't hang in there and behave yourself, you're going to be lost." Well, the enduring unto the end is enduring until the end of the tribulation. That's the context. When it says, "Enduring unto the end of the tribulation," it means staying alive until the end of the tribulation. Those who manage to do that will then be saved; that is, their lives will be preserved. They will go into the millennium without having to go through death. A lot of them will have to die to go into the millennium. But those who endured through that last three-and-a-half years, and who survive right to the end, they go into the millennium without having to go through the experience of death.

Also, "The gospel of the kingdom" is not the gospel of the grace of God. That is the gospel that the apostles were preaching. That is the gospel of John the Baptist was proclaiming – the gospel that the King is here, and the Messianic Kingdom is about ready to be set up. That's the good news that they're going to be preaching then. The good news of the church will now be passed. That will not be the news that is then proclaimed.

So, the Lord has just referred here to His own coming. This abomination in verse 15 then is connected with His immediate arrival.

Matthew 24:16-28 describe the time of the Jewish persecution after the abomination that Daniel has referred to. You can pursue that on your own, and realize the suffering that those people will experience at that time. Verse 22, for example, indicates that the time of suffering will be shortened (or limited) to those three-and-a-half years of the great tribulation. It says, "If it was permitted to go any longer than that period, humanity would wipe itself out of existence," because the terrible weapons of the nuclear age will be turned loose.

Matthew 24:29-30 add the fact that Jesus Christ will return to the earth immediately at the close of the 70th week, which is the period of human history just before the millennium: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give its light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." So, immediately after the tribulation – that's when Jesus Christ appears. That terminates the 70th week. Then there's that period of days that we have found added to that three-and-a-half year period, when the transition is made into the Millennial Kingdom.

So, Jesus placed the 70th week of Daniel's prophecy into the seven years of the tribulation era. The 70th week is still future. It must end with the coming of Christ in order to achieve the conditions that we have described in Daniel 9:24. It gave us six things that are going to have to be concluded by the end of that 70th week. Those things are referred to in such a way in the Hebrew language that they are a unit. They all have to be executed together. If only one of these can be executed after Christ returns, then that indicates they all must wait till He returns for their full execution. And of course, the one about restoring the holy of holies in the temple obviously cannot be executed until He returns. So, all six things of verse 24 are going to be fulfilled together at the end of the tribulation after He returns. Again, I want to stress that these 70 weeks are decreed. They have been fulfilled, and the last one has been decreed, and will be equally absolutely fulfilled.

So, the restoration of the Jewish temple will mark the immediate presence (arrival) of the Lord Jesus Christ. The 70th week of Daniel is again associated with the seven-year tribulation relationship between Israel and the antichrist. As we have seen, several places in the Bible refer to this period.

So verse 27, to sum it up, says this: He (the antichrist) will be the instigator of a treaty with the Jewish people ("the many"). He will make a treaty that was supposed to last for seven years. In the middle of that seven-year period, he will turn against the Jewish people and cause their restored sacrificial system and worship system in a restored temple to be terminated. He'll clear out what they have in that holy of holies, and he will put his own image there – an idol of himself, under the guidance of his false prophet. Then he will swoop in upon the world on wings to bring abominations and to make desolation. That is abominable thing that he will do, but he will bring the world the worst kind of abominations imaginable, because this is the middle of the tribulation. He is now the world ruler. All other powers have been placed under his authority. Until the consummation of what God has planned (that is, these three-and-a-half years – it won't go any longer than that so that humanity doesn't destroy itself), that which God has then determined upon this man (this desolater) will be executed. With his termination will come that period of days to readjust the earth; to clean things up; to realign human society; and, to appoint all of you, as members of the body of Christ, into the positions of authority that you'll be exercising in the Millennial Kingdom. Then the King will dramatically sit upon His throne. The coronation will take place, and He will be crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and the golden age of humanity will begin. The antichrist and his henchmen, the false prophet, at that time, will be imprisoned in the lake of fire; and, Satan himself is put in chains in the pit of the abyss.

So, with that background from Daniel, we can now (next time) proceed into the breaking of the seals, and into the whole revelation that we have concerning the tribulation period, and I hope that you will now see how it fits into God's overall plan, and that this is indeed a piece of human history which is yet ahead. If you've got nothing else, understand this: There was a break between 66th and 70th weeks. All the other weeks were consecutive. There was a break between the 69th and 70th weeks. The things that have been described in the 70th week have not taken place in history. There is no way that they could possibly have taken place. Therefore, that is what is on the horizon. Once the Jews are able to rebuild their temple, the rapture will be at hand, and then these things will be absolutely fulfilled. Daniel expected the 70-year captivity to be fulfilled literally. We may expect, as always, that what God says that He's going to do will be literally fulfilled as well.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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