***God's Triple Confirmation, No. 2

RV194-01***

We are studying "The Prelude to Doomsday." This is segment number three in Revelation 15:1-8.

**The Mark of the Beast**

The news media this past week announced that the Japanese have devised an invisible bar code which scanners can read on packages to replace those black bar codes that you see now. This is exactly what Revelation 13:16 refers to. The invisible bar code makes that Scripture even more realistic, where we read that the agent of the antichrist, the false prophet, causes the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the free and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand and on their forehead. This mark will not have to be visible, because that would be quite unsightly on peoples' foreheads and on their right hands. Now the technology is there for it to be invisible, and yet to be readily scanned and read by the devices that do that. This will become no doubt a worldwide technique, and it will identify those who are loyal to the antichrist, and who worship him.

Revelation 20:4 describes the fate of believers in the tribulation who refuse to take this mark, visible or invisible. Revelation 20:4 says, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them. And judgment was given to them, and I saw the souls of them who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus, and because of the Word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and upon their hand. And they came to life and reign with Christ for 1,000 years." Those whom the antichrist martyrs are going to be the winners in the end. While they will have gone through a period of suffering on this earth, their joy will be eternal.

On the other side, those who say, "I'll take the mark, especially now that it's invisible, so it won't be so unsightly and ugly. Revelation 14:9-11 describe the consequences to them: "Another angel (a third one) followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives the mark on his forehead or upon his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full-strength in the cup of His anger. And he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day and night – those who worship the beast and his image, and who receive the mark of his name."

Yes, to have taken the mark will have brought them, at the time, great personal benefits. It will enable them to prosper. It will enable them to fit into the antichrist's world. But when God gets through with them, they will pay the horrendous price of the lake of fire, in conscious torment forever without end. This is a concept almost inconceivable to the human mind.

Revelation 19:20 adds to that: "And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast, and those who worshiped in his image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone." People take this mark because they're tricked. They're deceived. They actually think that the antichrist is God. They actually think that this is where it's at. They actually think that because everybody else believes this, that that's the way they should go.

I think that this announcement is another evidence of how rapidly the world is being prepared for the arrival of the antichrist – the invisible barcode.

The news media also announced this week that the United States government is now admitting to a new series of UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) sightings, especially over Belgium. Belgium, as you know, is the location in Brussels of the main worldwide computer, and I don't know if there's any connection with that. But it is true that since the administration of President Eisenhower, government policy has been not to hazard public panic by letting people know of the sightings of UFOs that the United States government and military agencies have confirmed.

A few years ago, there was a major discovery in Roswell, New Mexico, of a UFO that had crashed. The parts are now in storage on one of our military bases, and it has been hushed up. This activity, I suspect, is demonic, and it is now on the increase, and it is now being picked up on radar screen sightings, and even by visual sightings of pilots who know what they are seeing.

I think it is interesting that during the 1960s, movies that dealt with aliens from outer space always portrayed them as malevolent creatures who are out to do injury to mankind. Suddenly, in the early 1970s, the entertainment media switched, and aliens were transformed from malevolent creatures into agents of goodwill, seeking to benefit mankind with their superior knowledge. So, we had E.T. – that wonderful, ugly lizard-like creature who had a heart of gold.

What a better way indeed, to calm the natural public fears over evil demonic spirits who have superhuman powers, which mankind can, on the one hand, not control; and, on the other hand, he cannot resist? What better way to try to reduce public panic by turning the aliens into the good guys? I think this is another sign that Satan is stepping up his activities to restore the world government of the Roman Empire, which is essential for the antichrist to reign. The antichrist cannot come on the scene until mankind is acclimated, and especially the United States citizens are acclimated to the concept of a world government.

**The Angelic Warfare**

This conflict, between the angels of God and the angels of Satan, began in eternity past in heaven when Satan decided to rebel against God. And he took a third of the angels with him in that rebellion. That conflict has raged ever since, with the goal of conquering God, and frustrating His plans for mankind. Today, as things are daily coming together for the era of the tribulation, we have entered what we refer to as the intensified stage of the angelic conflict; that is, Satan knows God's predicted timetable for his destruction, and the end of the world system. So, he knows his time is very short. He is corrupting the human race today at a maximum rate, and he is trying to remove any resistance to his antichrist, and to the New Age.

**Bilderberg**

There are powerful organizations that Satan has brought into being in order to bring that about. One of them is an organization that you may not have heard about, or you may have. It is called The Bilderberg. The Bilderberg is a conference that meets annually of European and United States scholars and intellectuals. The Bilderberg group is a formal conspiracy. That's it. It's a conspiracy dedicated to creating a new world order. That's their terminology by which they mean a world government. People who are invited to the Bilderberg meetings are sworn to secrecy. No newsmen are ever permitted. The people that are invited are government officials; business leaders; bankers; professors; foundation officers; occasionally, a labor leader or a scientist; selected journalists; even selected religious leaders like the Catholic Bishop Hesburgh of Notre Dame University; and, other notable people (the power people) of the world structure from the United States and Western Europe.

This organization was brought into being by Prince Bernard of the Netherlands, and it was brought in specifically in May of 1954, at the time when Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin was exposing the enormous infiltration into the United States department of State of communist agents. These included men like Alger Hiss, who was there at the founding and putting together of the United Nations charter, McCarthy has been vilified, but like the Schofield Bible that the religious world has been trying to kill for years, it still is alive and well. McCarthyism has since been proven to be exactly true. What Senator McCarthy pointed out of the infiltration into the American government was true. Now that the Soviet government has fallen, the American government is being horrified by inside information, where the communists themselves are telling where they have been in our government, and how right McCarthy was, and he scared them stiff when he began alerting the country to what they were doing, because that counters world government.

So, the Bilderberg movement was brought into being at that time to counter McCarthy's deterioration of the concept of world government, and the progress of acclimating Americans to be part of that.

The essence of the Bilderberg group is internationalism. The essence of what Senator McCarthy was after was nationalism and national sovereignty. Prince Bernard himself was sympathetic with beginning this organization because, as he said, "The governments of the free nations are elected by the people. And if they do something the people don't like, they're thrown out. It is difficult to reeducate the people, who've been brought up on nationalism, to the idea of relinquishing part of their sovereignty to a supranatural body." This is the tragedy. Due to the freedom and democracy we cherish, we aren't able to achieve what we all basically want to do. We're moving toward unity, but we crawl like snails when we should run."

Well, there are a lot of us, Prince Bernhard, who do not want this kind of world unity, and who are not about to get on board. The name Bilderberg comes from the fact that the first meeting of this conspiratorial secret organization was held in the hotel de Bilderberg in Oosterbeek, Holland, almost four decades ago. There was absolutely no publicity for that first meeting. The important people of the world (the power structure) were invited, from Europe and the United States. The area was ringed with security so that a journalist couldn't get within a mile of the hotel. Each year, those who have been in these meetings are sworn to secrecy, and they mean it.

**David Rockefeller**

The most powerful person on the international scene is David Rockefeller of the Rockefeller family. Last year, David Rockefeller delivered the opening address to the Bilderberg conference, which was held in Germany. By some stroke of good fortune, a conservative correspondent, Hillary duBerrier, obtained the text of David Rockefeller's speech, of all things. And he has been publishing part of that report. This organization is only one of such organizations. Others include the Council on Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission. These are Satan's organizations that are the background of what we're studying in the book of the Revelation, and I want you to make that connection.

At one point, Rockefeller in his remarks said, "We are grateful to The Washington Post, The New York Times, Time magazine, and other great publications whose directors have attended our meetings, and respected their promises of discretion for almost 40 years," by which he meant "secrecy."

The Washington post is participating, under an oath of secrecy, here in a conspiracy to bring America and Europe together into a united federation. That's an American newspaper that is viewed as practically the voice of God. The New York Times, on its masthead, proudly boasts that it prints all the news which is fit to print. Yet, its directors have been attending these conspiratorial meetings, and they've been pledged not to print a word. What they heard in those meetings was very fit indeed to print.

**A World Government**

Time magazine is the information Bible of millions of people. Here it is sworn to secrecy, while its leadership attends the meetings of the Bilderbergs. At the same time, Time magazine repeatedly runs articles describing as kooks those who suggest that there are conspiratorial organizations moving to entrap the United States in a world government. We Christians know that that's the direction of history. Now we know some of the mechanics by which that's being done.

There is one more thing that I think is interesting that David Rockefeller had to say at that meeting last year: "It would have been impossible for us to develop our plan for the world if we had been subject to the bright lights of publicity during these years. But the world is now more sophisticated and prepared to march toward a world government which will never again know war, but only peace and prosperity for the whole of humanity. The supranatural sovereignty of an intellectual elite and world bankers is surely preferable to the national auto-determination practiced in the past centuries. It is also our duty to inform the press of our convictions as to the historic future of the century."

He makes no bones, when he's in his own crowd, of saying, "Boys, we've got the money; we've got the power; and, we're in the positions of manipulating the levers of power. We don't care who is president in the United States, or who runs any country. We are the people who call the plays. And now we can be more bold and open. That's what he means by "sophisticated," because mankind has lost its way, especially the United States, from its biblical foundations and orientation. So, now it can be manipulated into the destruction of its freedom, which was based upon the principles of the Word of God by those godly pilgrims who founded the nation.

What David Rockefeller is saying is that if the American people had been told what was planned for them in world government without first conditioning them for it, these conspirators would not have gotten away with it. Now there is nothing to stop them. And if you think there is, it's very faint. And you are seeing things daily taking place which should confirm to you that the movement toward world government, and toward the destruction of the moral fiber of this nation, and of its freedom, and of its prosperity, is on its way. What is David Rockefeller want? He wants peace. He wants prosperity. Does that remind you of anything in the Bible? Paul, on one occasion, said, "When they say, 'Peace, peace,' then comes sudden destruction upon them."

This morning, while eating breakfast, I steeled myself and watched Oral Roberts on TV. I have told you what is happening over on the political side on the world scene. But as you know, we have learned from the Revelation that there is also a religious side to all this. Is that operational? You betcha, folks. On the religious scene today, the influence of Satan is enormous, and it is preparing mankind for the New Age religion of the antichrist, and it's doing it, supposedly, through Christian organizations. As I watched Oral Roberts this morning, I admired his capability of manipulating the emotions of that vast audience that he had in front of him. Most of the swaying crowd had their hands lifted, and their eyeballs rolled up in their heads. He asked them if they could not feel Jesus: "Don't you feel Jesus here?" And he repeated it several times, and they all indicated that they could feel Him. Then he asked the crowd, "Can you not see (visualize in your eye) the hand of Jesus extended to you? Can you not see His hand ready to give you a miracle?"

I'm here to tell you that that's a technique of the occult world. This is how the demonic worshipers operate. They visualize. They create in their souls an agent to open the doors to prosperity; to blessing; or, to whatever they want. That agent that comes along can be called "Jesus" or anybody else, but he ends up being a demon. This is visualization. This is New Age. This is Hinduism. And here, Oral Roberts, with millions listening to him, is sounding for this technique: "Can you not see the hand of Jesus extended to you?"

Then Oral Roberts told us of his special anointing from God to heal people. He said, "This is a miracle that God wants for you." Then he extended his big hands flat to the TV camera. I think he's had silicone implants in those hands. They were enormous as they came toward you on the screen. He said, "Put your hands on mine for your miracle." I was so impressed to see what was happening that I forgot to keep eating.

Then he finished his program by touting his new book on how you can use your faith to change a "No" answer to your prayers to a "Yes." How you can do what? In the occult world, the practitioner; the shaman; the witch doctors; the psychiatrists; or, the psychologists – they're all in the same boat: whoever. They all go through certain techniques and motions and manipulations. They draw certain things. They say certain words. They drip certain blood contributions, and whatever. And they do this because this binds a demon to their will to perform what they want to do.

Oral Roberts has picked something else up from the occult world – how to use your faith to change a "No" response to a "Yes" to your prayers. Now, that's the kind of book I'd like to have. I can see great potential for a book like that. This is exactly the technique that Bob Tilton, that all of you know about, uses. He is constantly telling you how your faith is the key to making God kick the jackpot in heaven for you.

This is the Oral Roberts who then asks for an offering, as he would send you this book to release your faith so that his message of miracles, healings, and prosperity could keep going out. I remind you that this is the same religious con artist who said that God told him that he would die if he did not raise something like $10 million for the Tulsa hospital to continue the work of getting people well. "Hey, oral, what happened to the healing anointment that you had?" But charismatics are never concerned about being consistent or logical – only emotional and experiential.

I remind you that this is the same false teacher who announced that he discovered that Jesus was a rich man, because Jesus wore designer clothes. And he based that upon John 19:23, where the thieves were throwing dice for separating the clothing of Jesus among them. And when they came to His robe, it was seamless. That's high quality clothing, and they hated to rip it up into shreds, so, they just threw the dice for one of them to get it. Now, that's designer clothing, and this was his way of defending the fact of the principle of charismatic preachers. He would say that if you are not rich and living high on the hog, people should not come to listen to you preach, because you are obviously not a man of God. Those who are God's prophets and God's preachers are all wealthy. That is the principle of the charismatic movement. And it's no wonder that so many people want to go into the ministry in it. ... The people are the ones who have to make you rich. So, the people are intimidated that they are not coming through for God if they do not make the preacher wealthy.

Well, the point of all this is that now is the time for Christians to remember who they are in Christ, and to unite in Christian mental attitude love against their real enemy, Satan, and to not be distracted by some human element that is a pimple of irritation, but is not the real disease, and is not the real enemy. As the apostle Paul warned us, our battles are never against flesh and blood, but they are against the spirit powers of darkness of Satan and his agents.

Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians, who were a sorry group of Christians if there ever was one. Look at 1 Corinthians 16:22. The apostle Paul has been speaking to this mixed-up, carnal group of Corinthian Christians. They had taken the spiritual gifts that were in existence at that time, including the gift of tongues, which was operational then, and they had completely distorted them. They were speaking in gibberish like the priest down at the local temple were doing, and calling it "speaking in tongues." That is the same thing the Charismatics do today. You can you can simply read 1 Corinthians 14, and you'll see all the things that Paul condemned that were already coming to pass into this pre-charismatic contingent in the first century. And as one charismatic man one time proudly told me, "Everything that is a problem for us in the charismatic movement, God has spoken about in 1 Corinthians 14." And the idiot was proud of it because it's true.

There were all the abuses that the apostle Paul warns of that take place: female domination; the speaking in gibberish; the confusion; the using of tongues and speaking of the excitement; the experiential orientations of emotions instead of the Word of God; and, the whole bit. And there was great sin in this congregation. Incest was nothing for them to tolerate. The sin was horrendous in this congregation, and it was the spirit of the times. Woody Allen would have fit perfectly into the Corinthian Church, and they would have welcomed him to their bosom as one of their own.

So, the apostle Paul has taking this church to task. When he comes to the end, what kind of a note is he going to end on to this mixed-up, fouled-up group of Christians who are very hard-hearted and stiff-necked. In verse 22, he says, "If." This is first class condition. That means that it's something which is true: "If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha!" If anyone does not love the Lord, and it is true that some of you in the Corinthians church do not love the Lord. You're going to ask me which word for "love" is here. I'm glad you asked that. It is very interesting.

"Agapao" is the word you're familiar with. That's mental attitude love. That's not the one that is used here. This time, he uses the other Greek word "phileo." "Phileo" is the word for emotional attachment. This is for expressing adoration and devotion. This is the kind of attachment you have for the girl you fall in love with, or the man you fall in love with. This is an emotional attachment. This is totally different. Now everything within you is in high gear within your whole soul toward this individual. Interestingly enough, he says, "Anyone who does not have a deep emotional attachment to the Lord," meaning Jesus Christ. Of whom is he speaking? Well, obviously, this would apply to unbelievers. But in this context, he's been speaking to this carnal church, and he's referring to the problems that have existed with them – Christians who don't have an emotional attachment to the Lord. They have an emotional attachment to all kinds of things, mainly themselves, but their eyes are not on Christ.

**The Holy Kiss**

Paul says a very severe thing concerning these people. The emotional context of this word "phileo" is further illustrated for us by the Greek word for "kiss." It is "philema," because a kiss is an expression that conveys an adoration; an admiration; a devotion; and, an emotional element. This is why the Bible speaks about (in the custom of the New Testament church) "the holy kiss."

You have that in Romans 16:16. And if you look back up here in 1 Corinthians 16:20, Paul says, "All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss." The "word" holy means "separated to righteousness." Therefore, it connotes a kiss of moral integrity, and a kiss that is genuine.

1 Peter 5:14 speaks of "a kiss of love." That is the word "philema," and there the word for "love" is "agape." This is a kiss (an emotional expression of my good mental attitude of well-being toward you. So there in 1 Peter the two words are connected together.

So, there the holy kiss is a token of Christian Brotherhood with a deep feeling of commitment to one another.

In the American Christian community, it is not our custom to greet one another with a holy kiss, but that's irrelevant. Whether the kiss on the cheek is there or not is irrelevant. It is the spirit that is to be there, of Christian-to-Christian, of emotional devotion, admiration, and attachment, because this person is part of my family. And I can have that kind of sense of camaraderie, even with somebody whose personality might grate against me. There might be someone that I might not like to be associated with in social activities. I have no ill will. That's why it's the kiss – the "philema" of "agape" love. The kiss can be directed to those because you have an emotional warmth toward them in Christ, and you may have nothing more on the human level than that here.

Here Paul says, "Anybody who does not have an emotional attachment with the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. That word looks like this: "anathema." Obviously, we get an English word "anathema" from that. The word "anathema" means "to be under the judgment of God." It means to call down the wrath of God and discipline upon somebody. If you say anathema upon you, you're calling for Almighty God to bring judgment and discipline upon this individual for something.

The unbeliever, as well as the believer, who lacks an emotional attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ, is condemned to God's punishment. You are to be emotionally attached to Jesus Christ. And I don't have to explain that to you. Anybody who's ever been in love, you know what's on your mind. You know how the love toward a person constantly brings that person to your mind. When you have an emotional attachment to a person, you know how that person is not someone who drifts off, and you forget about that individual. That individual is prominent in your mind. Anyone who does not have this kind of an eye and warmth toward Jesus Christ is placed by Paul under the anathema of God.

Then, having said that, he uses a word from the Aramaic: "Maranatha." In the Greek Bible, this is a translation transliteration from the Aramaic, which they the Jews spoke in New Testament Times. It's a variation of Hebrew. This is two words: "maran atha." The Aramaic is transliterated into Greek, and "maran" means "Lord," and "atha" means "come." So, the expression is, "O, Lord, come," or "Our Lord, come." "Maranatha" is a fitting expression for Christians to use in greeting one another, or leaving and saying "Goodbye." In New Testament times, it seems that's what they did. They would say "Maranatha" instead of "Aloha," and everybody knew they were saying, "O Lord, come."

John reflected this spirit when he concluded the book of the Revelation. In Revelation 22:20, this is exactly what John is doing when he says, "And he who testifies to these things, says, "Yes, I am coming quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus" ("Maranatha"). He said, "Come, Lord Jesus." The same concept is expressed there.

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns to this earth, he is going to deal appropriately with unbelievers and with carnal Christians who do not have an emotional attachment to him. So, an appropriate prayer for Christians today in a world at a high level of antagonism to Jesus Christ, to the authority of the Bible, and to biblical Christians is to wish one another "Maranatha" – "O, Lord, come," and leave the judging to the Lord, as you keep your own nose clean, and do your job and His service. I hope you will believe me that that's the only thing that's going to count with Christ when you stand before His tribunal for your judgment – keeping your nose clean, and going about His business, with your eyes on Him. If you're not emotionally attached to Him, your eyes are going to drift off. Times may be bad for you now, but the good times, I can assure you, are at hand.

In 1 Corinthians 16:23, Paul goes on to conclude the book. He says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. He commits these carnal Christians to the grace of God to straighten them out and to carry them through. Then he concludes the book with, "My love." You can probably guess which word he uses here. He is shifting off the emotional level now, and he's back to "agape," the mental attitude love. Paul declares his mental attitude love for this spiritually shallow and sinful Corinthian a group of Christians. They're all saints in Christ Jesus, whatever their spiritual condition, and therefore, they're entitled to "agape" love. That's the point. Paul thus embraces the whole Corinthian Christian community as their spiritual father.

This true Christian love must be our anchor in the intensified stage of the angelic conflict. What is taking place on the world scene, as I've shown you, and what is taking place on the religious scene, can be multiplied scores of times. The powers of Satan are in the intensified mode, and we Christians better wake up to that fact. Our mental attitude "agape" love is our anchor point. This true Christian love is what we must base everything we do upon. It must be our guiding motivation. Please don't debase it, and don't cheapen it.

I sat in the secretary's office of a church recently, and while I was waiting, the secretary kept answering the phone, which repeatedly rang, and every time she answered it, she said, "Good morning, we love you at Skunk Hollow Church." That really wasn't the name. But then she would go on with the business. I thought, "This poor lady must be driven crazy by the end of the day." This must have happened like a dozen times in the short time I was sitting there in the office, waiting to be ushered in. I doubt that this lady realized how degraded and demeaning and debased she was making the biblical word "love." She had reduced it. The authorities of that church had instructed her to do that, and had reduced the meaning of the biblical word "love" to a meaningless public relations gimmick. I doubt if that lady could explain to you the difference between mental attitude love and emotional love, that the Bible so carefully, explicitly differentiates.

Paul's love in the angelic warfare is as Christian-to-Christian in Christ. It's not a debased sentimentality that appeal to the sin nature. And that's what they were doing. Every time that secretary will pick up that phone this week, she is going to debase the quality of love by appeal to the sin nature, but then that whole church does exactly that.

The apostle Paul has alerted us to the fact that we Christians must stand united, and keep our eyes on the Lord, and have our emotions attached to Him, so that our efforts are now. We are going to go about our business as if we're going to be here for 100 years. But we're also going to be acting as if tomorrow we're on the way up in the rapture. What must be done must be done now, and we cannot do it without the principles of God's love as the motivating force behind what we do.

The apostle John has reminded us that we Christians do not operate on blind faith. He has told us that he himself now has received three signs to confirm that these amazing things that are being revealed to him in his vision are not some personal hallucinations, but this is indeed the Word of God that is coming to him. The first was the sign of the woman in Revelation 12:1-2. The second was the sign of the red dragon in Revelation 12:3. And now the sign of the seven angels in Revelation 15:1-8. We have pointed out that God has historically confirmed His message to His servants in a trilogy of signs. We showed that in the experience of Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and Elijah. And today, we too have our signs. We're not having visions, and we're not hearing voices. We're not always seeing things externally as the sign, but sometimes we do have that. Basically, our signs are the Scripture – the confirmation of the inerrant Word of God.

That's why we stand on the principle of Acts 17:11 here at Berean Church from whence we have taken our name, concerning the Christians in Berea: "Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the Word of God with great eagerness, examining the Scripture daily to see whether these things were so." Anybody who does not want to receive the Word of God willingly, and does not want to personally examine the Scripture to confirm that what the preacher tells him is so does not belong in this congregation. Those who are not interested in receiving the Word of God with great eagerness, and who are not interested in confirming for themselves what God has said, eventually drift off, because that's all we do here. We give you a chance to learn, and the chance to confirm.

**Elisha**

Now I want to direct you to Elisha in 2 Kings 2:13-14. Elisha is another great example of a man who had the trilogy of confirmation, Elijah has just been taken to heaven in a chariot. His student, Elisha, picked up the mantel that fell from him, and returned and stood by the bank of the Jordan. Then, in verse 14: "Elisha took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and struck the waters and said, 'Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?' And what he had struck the waters, they were divided here and there, and Elisha crossed over." What a confirmation to this young man! "Am I to take over now? My master is gone. I think that God is telling me that I am the replacement prophet? What confirmation? He takes up the mantel, and he strikes the Jordan River, and the Red Sea experience happens all over again. It opens up. And Elisha walks through dry shod.

In 2 Kings 19:19-22, we read, "The men of the city said to Elisha, 'Behold, now, the situation of the city is pleasant, as my Lord sees, but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful.'" He comes now immediately upon a group. They said, "'We have a beautiful place to live, but the water is so bad that nothing will grow.' He said, 'Bring me a new jar and put salt in it.' So, they brought it to him, and he went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said. 'Thus, says the Lord, I have purified these waters. There shall not be from there death or untruthfulness any longer.' So, the waters have been purified to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke."

A second confirmation to Elijah that he was able to purify under God's direction the spring water that fed this town.

Move on to verse 23 in this chapter. Then he went up from there to Bethel, and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city, and mocked him and said to him, "Go up, you bald head. Go up, you bald head.'" Here is Elisha, and he's moving on now into this ministry. Here's the third of the trilogy of confirmation, right at the start of his ministry; He says, "Is God on my side?" This was because one of the things that was always evident in the Old Testament was that if you were God's man, and someone reached out and struck against God's prophet, that person received immediate, enormous divine discipline. The prophet of God was his man, and he was to be respected and left in God's hands, and he was to be listened to. They didn't have a Bible to go to. That's why when a prophet spoke, he was not to be treated with any contempt.

These teenagers come out, and call him bald head." Elisha looked up behind him and saw them. He cursed them in the name of the Lord: "Anathema." Then: "Two female bears came out from the woods and tore up 42 lads of their numbers," and the party was over. This was the first demonstration of how to end gang fights and gang activities. This gang was out of business. And Elisha had his third confirmation.

**King Hezekiah**

Turn to 2 King's 19:20. King Hezekiah is faced with the powerful king of Assyria who has come down to destroy Jerusalem: Sennacherib. Everywhere the Assyrians go, the people are in deadly fear of them. They are the ones who began the system of crucifixion. But the system originally consisted of a tree that was cut down to a certain height; a sharp point was cut on the tree; and, then a group of men picked up the victim who was to be crucified, and impaled him on this upright state. So, he would writhe the scream there until he died. Nobody wanted to come into conflict with the Assyrians. And Hezekiah was in deadly fear.

Is God leading me? Should I resist Sennacherib who says, "Yield to me, and I'll spare you?" 2 Kings 19:20: "Then Isaiah, son of Amoz, said to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: 'Because you have prayed to me about Sennacherib, king of Assyria. I have heard you.'" He has the confirmation from the prophet Isaiah: "God is going to take care of you." Now, when a prophet spoke, he always told the truth. That was the evidence that he was a prophet. This was an immediate relief to Hezekiah. But God is not satisfied with that. He comes through with a trilogy of confirmations.

In verse 29, God is going to give a second confirmation. God says to Hezekiah, "Then this shall be the sign for you. You shall eat this year what grows of itself, and in the second year, what springs from the same, and in the third year, sow and reap, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and of Mount Zion survivors. The zeal of the Lord shall perform this. Therefore, thus, says the Lord, concerning the King of Assyria, 'He shall not come to the city or shoot an arrow here. Neither shall he come before us with shields or throw up a mount against it. By the way that he came, by the same he shall return. And he shall not come to the city,' declares the Lord. 'For I will defend this city to save it for My sake and for My servant David's sake.'"

Then in verse 35, God made this promise. God says, "'Don't worry, Hezekiah. I'm going to take care of you, and here's the final stage of the second confirmation.' Then it happened that night that the Angel of the Lord (the pre-incarnate Christ) went out and struck 185,000 in the camp of the Assyrians. And when morning rose, early in the morning, behold, all of them were dead." I like to read that as, "All of them woke up dead, but there they were: 185,000 of your army never gets out of the sack that morning – they're dead.

Now Hezekiah begins to get encouraged by this. But God says, "One more time, Hezekiah. You're human. I'm going to close the trilogy."

2 Kings 20:8: "Now Hezekiah said to Isaiah, 'What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, that I shall go up to the house of the Lord the third day?'" Hezekiah has a deadly illness, and now he is distressed that he's going to die. He said. "You told me that I would go there, and that the Assyrians will not conquer, and that I will worship there. What's the confirmation?" Isaiah said, "This shall be the sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he has spoken. Shall the shadow go forward ten steps or back ten steps?"

They had a sundial that was based upon a series of steps by which they would tell the time. Isaiah says, "God will give you the confirmation, Hezekiah, to put you at ease. Do you want the shadow to go ten steps forward or ten steps back?" So, Hezekiah answered, "It is easy for the shadow to decline ten steps. No, let the shadow turn backward 10 steps." He said. The thing is already going down. Just because it spurts ten steps down, that won't convince me. But if I see the thing going back up, as if the earth was going back around, changing its motion once more, so that the sun is rising again, tell me that:" "Isaiah the prophet cried to the Lord, and he brought the shadow on the stairway back ten steps on which it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz." And Hezekiah had his confirmation. Did the earth stop spinning and go backwards? No, I don't think so. It was just a miraculous act of God that caused the shadow to move. And I don't think we could imply anything more than that.

**Ezekiel**

Let's take a look at Ezekiel. Turn to Ezekiel 1:1 for our final great example: "And it came about in the thirtieth year and the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was by the River Kebar, among the exiles, that the heavens were open, and I saw visions of God." Ezekiel was being called to some very hazardous duty as a prophet. God confirmed it by opening heaven before his eyes and seeing the angels of God.

In Ezekiel 3:22-23, we the second sign of the trilogy: "And the hand of the Lord was on me there. And He said to me, 'Get up and go out to the plain and there I will speak to you.' So, I got up and went out to the plain, and behold the glory of the Lord (the Shekinah glory) was standing there like the glory which I saw by the river Kebar, and I fell on my face." That is the second confirmation: "Yes, this is God you're listening to, Ezekiel. Go ahead and do the job. I'm going to carry you through."

The last part of the trilogy was Ezekiel 8:4: "Behold the glory of the God of Israel was there like the appearance which I saw on the plain." Here again, Ezekiel is sitting in the house, dejected and concerned, and God gives him this third vision.

John 22:30-31 tell us that the Lord Jesus Christ performed many, many signs. These were in the tradition of the Old Testament for the confirmation of the hand of god, upon that which Jesus Christ was doing. No one will be excused in eternity among the Jews or the gentiles, who stood in the presence of Christ and saw His signs – signs that no man could perform, but only God could bring about. They were confirmation of the truth of the message.

So, here, in the book of the Revelation, in the finest traditions that God has historically followed, He gives to His servant John the third conclusive sign that what God has said is coming to pass on this earth. It is going to happen. We live in the day now of the culmination and the fulfillment of that which amazed John to see that that's what was coming. And we see it coming to pass in our day, on the political side and on the religious side. Those who are willing to be taught, and those who have ears to hear, let them hear.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1992

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