

# Week of Meetings-06 the Old Roman Empire Coming to Life

by Dwight Pentecost

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*The sermon explores the significance of the Antichrist and the Roman Empire in the context of the tribulation period, highlighting the role of Satan and the emergence of a false kingdom.*

**Duration:** 56:18

**Scripture:** Zechariah 14:4, Matthew 24:22, Revelation 10:11, Revelation 11:15, Revelation 22:20

**Topics:** "Daniel's Visions", "End Times"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the vision that Daniel had regarding the future history of Israel until the coming of the Messiah. Daniel saw four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea, and from the sea, four great beasts emerged, each representing something different. The first beast was a lion with eagle's wings, symbolizing royal authority and speed. The second beast was a bear, representing the Persian Empire, and the third beast was a leopard with four heads, symbolizing the Greek Empire. The fourth beast, described differently than the previous ones, was a composite of the previous empires and represented the Roman Empire. The sermon also mentions how the book of Revelation picks up where Daniel 7 left off, discussing an individual who will become the head of the final form of the Roman Empire.

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## Transcript

Our Father, once again, we count it a privilege to be able to open your Word, to give our minds and our hearts to it. We thank you for that revelation of your plan and purpose that you have given to us in the Scriptures. We pray that as we study, we might understand that program that one day we'll see Jesus Christ enthroned as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

We thank you that we will be privileged to share the glory of his reign. We pray that as we look into this portion that is before us tonight, the Spirit of God may give us insights into what is written, and may we apply these truths to our experience as we wait for the coming of the Lord of Glory. For it's in his name we pray, Amen.

We are coming in a study tonight to the 13th chapter of the book of the Revelation. In the 11th chapter, the 15th verse, we have a record of the second advent of Jesus Christ back to this earth. Now, that's not the rapture that takes place before the tribulation.

That's the second advent when his feet touch down upon the Mount of Olives, as predicted in Zechariah 14. John was told that he must prophesy again. That's in chapter 10, verse 11.

Having taken us all the way through the seven years of the tribulation period, he now is going to go back and cover that same seven-year period a second time. But in the second trip through that begins in chapter 12, he's not going to be dealing with judgment as he had from chapters 4 through 11, but rather he's going to be dealing with persons and movements and nations that will play a significant role in those last days. And in chapter 12, we were introduced to the nation Israel, represented by the woman that brought forth a man-child.

We were introduced to Satan there in verse 3, represented by a great red dragon, and then we saw a conflict between Satan and the nation Israel from verses 13 to 17, where Satan is attempting to exterminate every physical descendant of Abraham so as to prevent the institution of Christ's kingdom here on the earth. For that kingdom was promised to Abraham's descendants, and if Satan could exterminate all the Jewish people, it would make God a liar and would prevent the program of God to enthrone Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords impossible. Now we're coming into chapter 13, and in this chapter we will be introduced to two more characters who will play a very significant role in these end-time events.

We nickname the first one described in verses 1 to 10 as Antichrist. Antichrist is not a name used of this individual in the book of the Revelation. It is a nickname, but it is a good one, because Antichrist can mean one of two things.

It can mean one who is opposed to Christ or one who comes as a substitute for Christ, and both of those things are true. He is a false messiah who will try to do for the world by Satan's power all that Christ will do when Christ comes, and he also is opposed to Jesus Christ. He is Christ's enemy.

So while Scripture does not give him that name, we use it frequently, and I think it is legitimate. So that's the first person we're going to look at. And then in verse 11 through verse 18, there is a second person that is called another beast, but in Revelation 19, the same individual is called the false prophet, and so we will use that term for him, since that is a biblical term.

So we want to look tonight at something of the person and work of these two individuals that will play significant roles in the years of the tribulation period. Now, in chapter 13 and verse 1, John saw a beast rise up out of the sea. Now, this is not a natural beast like unto some beasts that you would see in a zoo or in the wild.

It is a symbolic creature, because when John describes the appearance of this beast in verse 2, it was like a leopard, his feet were the feet of a bear, his mouth as the mouth of a lion. So this is a composite beast, or perhaps we should say a mongrel beast. And again, I'm emphasizing that this is symbolic, because there is no such creature in nature that is part leopard, part lion, and part bear.

But I think I can see some wheels moving behind those eyes that are looking at me, because you are thinking of another passage of scripture where you have a lion and a bear and a leopard. Am I right? Right. Where do we find? Now, don't tell me someplace in the Old Testament.

OK. The seventh chapter of Daniel's prophecy, Daniel 7. Now, will you turn with me back to that for a few moments, because that passage will give us important background to understand Revelation 13. It so

happens that I took a class this afternoon at seminary through Daniel 7, so I can shift my mind into neutral, my tongue into high, and just get going.

OK. Daniel is living after 70 years of the Babylonian captivity. Daniel must have been somewhere in his 90s, because he lived through the 70 years of Babylonian captivity.

He was a young man when he was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, 605 B.C. So let's say he was 20 when he was taken captive, and 70 plus 20, according to my old math, was 90. Yet he still is in a very important, influential, administrative role in the affairs of Babylon and then later in Medo-Persia. But Daniel was very much concerned about what was going to happen to the nation Israel from that point on.

He knew from Jeremiah's prophecy that the Babylonian captivity was to be only 70 years in duration, and Daniel knew that they were coming to the end of that 70 years, and it would be very natural for Daniel to be pondering the question, What now? And God gave him this dream and this vision in which he revealed what the future history of Israel would be until the Messiah comes. And to teach that, Daniel saw, verse 2, four winds of heaven striving upon the great sea, and four great beasts came up from the sea, different one from another. Now, these are not four of the same kind, or four members of the same family.

They are different one from another, showing that these four beasts represent four different things. Again, these are symbolic creatures. They are not natural beasts, because even in your wildest imagination, you have never seen a lion with eagle's wings.

But that was significant because a lion represents royal authority or power, and the eagle's wings represent the speed with which the eagle can fly. So if a had added to an eagle's wings, it could move with unusual power and rapidity. Now, before we go any further, I want you to look with me in verse 16 and 17, because I want you to see that God did not leave us in doubt as to the significance of these symbolisms.

It was explained. Now, this is not my interpretation. This is God's interpretation of what the symbolism meant.

I'm looking in verse 16, "...I came near unto one of them that stood by me," that is, the revealing angel, "...and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made known the interpretation of these things. These great beasts," which are four, "...are four kings which shall arise out of the earth." The earth here would represent the Gentile nation.

Four kings and their kingdoms that would arise. Now, that helps us when we go back to verse 3 where we have the four beasts. They come up from the sea, and the sea in prophecy is often used as a symbol for a Gentile nation or for Gentile nations, and the first was like this winged lion.

Anyone living in Babylon would have known right away what that represented, because Babylon had massive walls some 60 feet high, and they were perhaps 20 feet thick. There were massive gates to enter those walls, and around the gates set in those very thick walls, the walls were lined with azure blue tiles, and set into those tiles in golden tiles was a figure of a winged lion standing upright. That winged lion was the mascot or the symbol of Babylon, and if you go to London and go to the British Museum or go to the museum in Germany, you will find these very tiles with the lions embedded in them, reconstructed from the original tiles there on display.

So that Babylon was the first of four empires that in succession would rule over the land and the people of Israel. We go on to verse 5, the bear that's higher on one side than the other, and Babylon, as we would

see in Daniel chapter 5, was conquered by Darius the Mede joined with Cyrus the Persian, and the Medes and the Persians took over the political power of Babylon and founded a succeeding empire represented by that bear, and it's lopsided, higher on one side, because the Persians soon overshadowed the Medes. So when you study history, you don't study the ancient Medo-Persian empire, that's biblical, but you just study about the Persian empire.

Then we come to the third beast, and verse 6 is like a leopard, already one of the fastest animals, but this leopard had four wings of a fowl, emphasizing again the unusual speed with which this animal could move. And this leopard would represent Alexander from Macedonia, who in a period of months conquered the Persians and extended the empire from Macedonia, northern Greece, all the way over to the Indus River. That would be over to include what is now the nation of Iraq.

All that territory ruled over by Alexander. An unusual thing about this leopard is that it had four heads. Alexander died in the drunken debauchery when he was 33 years of age, unmarried and childless, had no heir, so that his empire was divided among four of his generals who perpetuated the Greek empire.

Then we come to the fourth beast, and that's in Daniel 7. I'm going to ask you to do what I asked the class to do this afternoon. I want you to read verse 7 and see if you notice anything that's different in verse 7 than what we had in verses 4, 5 and 6. It does not describe its external appearance. Notice that? But what does it describe? Its internal characteristics.

So it was dreadful and terrible and strong. It devoured, it broke in pieces, it stamped everything with its teeth. So he is describing its power or its internal characteristics rather than its external characteristics.

The only external characteristic he describes is that it had ten horns. Now, let's go to God's own interpretation of the horns. Look at verse 24 in Daniel 7. The ten horns out of this fourth kingdom are ten kings that shall arise.

The fourth empire would represent the Roman empire that conquered Greece, took over all of its political power and established the strongest power of all the four. But this empire would be marked by gradual weakness and deterioration and division until eventually the political power that had been centralized in Rome would be divided out among many nations that emerged out of the Roman empire. Now, in the beginning of the fifth century of our era, I think it was in 416, hordes from central and northern Europe, the Goths, the Visigoths, the Huns, the Vandals, united and came down and sacked Rome.

But those conquerors did not take over the political power and establish a succeeding empire. Rather, the political power that had been united in Rome was divided out among many separate identifiable nations. So, the nations like Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Belgium, Ireland, Great Britain had their national origin in the overthrow of the united Roman empire so that for some 1,500 years we have been living in the ten-horned state of this fourth empire.

You see, the Roman empire was never succeeded by another empire that occupied the land of Israel and subjugated the Jewish people to it. So that we have these four empires that, in succession, will occupy the land of Israel and subjugate the people of Israel to its authority. Now, why don't we go into all that? Back to Revelation 13.

Here we have a beast rising up out of the sea. Do you notice that's the same as Revelation 7? An identifying thing about this beast is that it has ten horns. Now, what does that tell you? Is that the lion? Is

that the bear? Is that the leopard? It has to be the fourth beast, doesn't it, of Daniel 7. Now, I want you to look at verse 2. As this beast is described externally, what do you see? I hear some whispering.

It had the other three beasts in it. It was part leopard, part bear and part lion. So what does that mean? This fourth beast had incorporated into it the political power of the people, the laws, the customs of the three previous empires.

So Rome, the fourth empire, was a composite, a mongrel empire taking over the territory of Greece and of Persia and Babylon to form the greatest, the most extensive, the most powerful of all the empires. So what do we have here in Revelation 13? It picks up where Daniel 7 left off and is going to talk to us about an individual who will become the head of the final form of the Roman Empire. Now, I ought to do one more thing in Daniel 7, and that is have you look at verse 8. As Daniel looked at these ten horns and he told us represented ten kingdoms that weren't in existence in his day but would come into existence, he says, there came up among these ten another little horn.

Another little horn. Now, if the ten horns represent ten kingdoms, what would you conclude this little horn would represent? Another kingdom. But instead of being strong and powerful and conquering everything, it's called a little horn.

What does that suggest? Weakness, someone of little influence, insignificant, nobody paid much attention. But this little horn doesn't stay little, because there in verse 8, he is given power over three of the original ten. Now, if he gets power over three of the ten, those nations are going to start paying attention to him, aren't they? So, we are looking for the emergence of an individual who will consolidate under his authority nations that originated through the division of the old Roman Empire.

Now, I'm tempted to go back into Daniel chapter 2 and verse 43. So, I say, get started and just go running all over. In verse 43, Daniel is talking about the fourth empire, the Roman Empire, that it was characterized by iron mixed with clay, that is weakness.

That image had ten toes. Then talking about those ten toes in verse 43, and I'm going to read this differently than you'll find it in your text, just believe me, this is what Daniel is saying. These ten shall attempt to unite themselves according to the plans of men, but these ten shall not cleave one to another.

Now, you students of European history, what is European history? A record of the attempt by one individual or one nation to subdue all of Europe under his authority. It's an attempt by military power to put the Roman Empire back as it was at its zenith. Charlemagne, in the year 800, went to Rome and had himself crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, but nothing came of it.

Come back into more modern history. Not your history, but more modern history. What did Napoleon try to do? You don't remember that, do you? Well, Napoleon tried to subjugate all the nations of Europe under his authority, put back the old Roman Empire.

Now, coming a little closer, some of you can remember what did Hitler try to do World War II? Put all of Europe together under his authority. But Daniel 2.43 says all those things would be doomed to failure, that those nations would never be put back together until we reached what we refer to as the last days or in the tribulation period. Now, it will be the goal of this individual that we're talking about in Revelation 13 to see the nations that arose out of the old Roman Empire reunited under his control to reconstitute or rebuild the old Roman Empire.

Now, we're talking about an individual here in chapter 13 that Daniel in 7.8 calls the little horn. Daniel 8, this one is called the king of fierce countenance. In Daniel 9, he's called the prince that shall come.

Daniel 11, he's called the king that does according to his own will. In Daniel 12, he's called the abomination of desolation. So that from 7.8 to the end of Daniel, Daniel is focusing his attention on the person and the work of this individual that we have nicknamed Antichrist, and John is picking up just where Daniel left off, and he's telling us that in the tribulation period this individual will emerge from among the nations that originated in the breakup of the old Roman Empire, and his goal will be to reunite those nations under his authority in defiance of God.

Now, where will Antichrist get his power? Well, it isn't because he's smarter than Napoleon or Hitler, but look at verse 2, "...the dragon gave him his power, and his seat of throne, and great authority." Go back in chapter 12, where the symbolism of the dragon is explained. The great dragon is that old serpent called the devil and Satan, so that Antichrist will be the instrument that Antichrist uses to set up a false kingdom here on the earth to which nations submit their authority. It is an imitation of the rule of Christ when Christ returns to the earth a second time, and this individual does not come to power by military conquest.

I want to emphasize that. How did Cyrus and Darius, the Persian and the Mede, come to power? By defeating Babylon. How did Alexander come to power? Defeating Persia.

How did Caesar come to power? By defeating Greece. We would think from past history that Antichrist would launch a great military campaign and conquer the nations that arose out of the old Roman Empire and subdue them to his authority. That would defeat Satan's purpose, because Satan's purpose is to convince the world that this individual is the world's Savior, the world's Messiah.

That's why he is referred to as a false Christ. Now, when Jesus Christ comes back to this earth the second time, what name will he bear? King of kings. That's true.

I'm thinking of Isaiah 9.6. What kind of a kingdom will Christ introduce? Kingdom of war? Kingdom of peace. He is coming as the Prince of Peace, as Isaiah 9.6 says, and that's when men will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, because he is coming to bring the world peace. Now, if Antichrist gained political power by war, you see, Satan could never offer him to the world as a substitute for Christ and say to the world, you don't need Jesus Christ, here's the one who can solve the world's problems.

If I could take a peek ahead to what we'll see in Revelation 7.13, Antichrist will be elected or appointed or invited to become head of these ten nations, because 17.13 says, "...these ten nations that emerged out of the Roman Empire shall give their power, their authority unto the beast." Now, there's an awful temptation to put a hypothesis in here. Have you been following what's going on in Western Europe? Our attention is focused on Eastern Europe, and nobody can believe what we're seeing happen. The dissolution of the Russian Empire and the independence granted to Poland and Czechoslovakia and Hungary and Yugoslavia and all these countries.

Unimaginable. But let me tell you something. My attention isn't on Eastern Europe.

My attention is on Western Europe. See, Eastern Europe is not a part of this prophecy. Eastern Europe was not a part of that ten-nation confederacy.

Eastern Europe was never dominated by Rome so that they would be brought in into the restored Roman Empire. They were outside of it. Does the year 1992 mean anything to you? 1992 fits the goal of the 12 nations that are now in the EEC, European Economic Community, to have one political sphere.

Europe. No longer France and Spain and Italy and Greece, etc., etc. Just Europe.

They expect to have the country united politically. As I've mentioned with some of you, June 15th last, while I was in Spain, these 12 nations elected 511 members of the European Parliament. The Parliament is constituted.

They are merging economically, preparing for a single currency, eliminating passports to go from one country to another. As of January 1st, just a month ago, Spain and France eliminated their borders so there's no longer a need for a passport or going through customs or anything else to go from one country to another. Now, what's that preparing for? Well, you have a Parliament made up of now 12 nations.

You have to have an election to constitute or centralize authority in some individual so that the government can function. Now, I'm not saying that all this prophecy is going to be fulfilled by 92, but what I am seeing is that the groundwork is being laid for the fulfillment of these prophecies, and it will be by satanic manipulation that these nations will forget their age-long hatreds and animosities and fears and suspicions, and will not just become an alliance of 12 nations, but a single Europe under one head. Makes me think that the end is drawing very, very near.

Now, that's just a little aside. Let's get back to what John is telling us about this individual. One of his heads he saw as it were wounded to death.

Now, you notice it says, as it were. It doesn't say dead, but it appeared to be dead. And all the world wondered after the beast.

Now, the beast is the head of this 10-nation confederacy. Remember the time President Kennedy was shot, I got a lot of phone calls and letters from all over the country asking if I thought Kennedy could be the one referred to in Revelation 13-3, who had the wound, and they were questioning whether he might be resurrected to be this individual. Well, you see, it doesn't say that an individual was dead, but as it were, a resemblance of death.

But the beast here is not referring to an individual but these 10 nations. Now, since the Roman Empire has existed in a divided state for over 1500 years, what prospect would you say there was to bring them all back together in a united confederacy? Impossible. Who would ever want to bet on odds like that? So that, I take it, it was the Roman Empire that received the death wound when they were overthrown, and it appeared from history they would never be brought back together again.

But you will notice that while the Roman Empire looked to be dead because of the division, it continued in that divided state. It wasn't really dead. Now, the political power of the head of this confederacy of nations.

I'm dropping down, but let me take it in verse 4. The coalition of nations united under Antichrist appears to be invincible, more powerful than any other group of nations. They told me when I was in Spain this summer that when the 12 nations unite, as they expect to do in 92, the population would be over 350 million, greater than the population of the U.S. population. The gross national product would exceed the GNP of the United States and Canada.

Now, what does that mean? Well, our GNP is already behind Japan, so the GNP of this coalition will be greater than Japan or the United States, so what's it doing to us? Pushing us further and further behind. And I think that's what's inferred in verse 4. Who is like the beast? Who's able to make war with him? Who can resist him? Because politically, economically, he will be more powerful, or head of a more powerful coalition than any other nation. The next thing we notice about him in verse 5. He is the adversary of God.

He has a mouth speaking great things in blasphemy. Now, blasphemy in scripture is rebellion against God. That's what blasphemy is.

So this one is saying, I'm greater than God, God is subject to my authority, God can't tell me what to do, and the extent of his power is given in verse 5, 42 months, which is 3 1/2 years, so that he will exercise this authority for the last 3 1/2 years of the tribulation period. Now, I'm going to verse 7, given on him to make war with a saint. The saint is a reference to the nation Israel, introduced to us in chapter 12.

He becomes the persecutor of Israel. And we saw in chapter 12, verse 13, that Satan in his attempt to exterminate all the Jews will cause Antichrist to unleash the greatest persecution against Israel that that nation has ever experienced. He's the enemy of Israel.

Now, another thing in verse 7. Power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations. In the book of the Revelation, that phrase refers to universal power, worldwide power. So I put it this way.

The one who began insignificantly as the little horn will be given power over three. Revelation 17, 13, he will be elected head of the ten, but then the final step in his rise to power is that he will institute a one-world government in which all the nations of the earth will submit to his authority. Now, again, I see the Satanic activity because when Jesus Christ returns to the earth a second time, what will be the boundaries of his reign? Sea to sea and shore to shore.

He will rule over all kindreds and tongues and peoples and nations. What's Satan doing? Bringing about that false one-world government, an imitation of the reign of Christ, so Satan can say this man has brought you peace when all nations are subject to his authority. There can't be war.

He has the solution to all the world's political problems. Now, this individual is elected as head of the ten-nation confederacy at the beginning of the tribulation period, so that he will rule as head of the ten-nation confederacy for three-and-a-half years, and then in the middle of the tribulation period, he extends his rule from the ten nations to the one-world government. And that's the reference to the 42 months there in verse 5. Now, this has been referring to his political power down to verse 7. But when we come to verse 8, I notice a second sphere in which he exercises absolute authority.

Look at verse 8. You tell me what that sphere is. You're afraid of your own voices. I heard spiritual.

All right. That's all right. All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him.

What realm is that? Religious realm. That was the word I was after. He will exercise authority in the religious realm.

Put in here 2 Thessalonians 2, verse 3, 4. He, as God, sits in temple showing himself that he is God, so that he demands not only obedience in the political realm, but in the religious realm as well. Now, I can't get so far afield as to go into it in chapter 17 tonight, but in due course we'll get to it, and we will see how this Antichrist will terminate every organized religion and to compel obedience to himself in the religious

realm. Now, if you're thinking, and I'm assuming that you are, I've no reason to doubt it, you would wonder what will cause all the peoples of the world to recognize this individual as God.

And that's when we are introduced to a ministry of this second beast in verse 11, that in Revelation 19 is called the false prophet. What was the ministry of a prophet in the Old Testament? It brought God's message to God's people. He was God's representative before man.

This second beast appears as a prophet, but not of the prophet, a prophet of the God of heaven, but a prophet of this one who has had himself proclaimed God. It says that this second beast, he doesn't have ten horns like the first beast, but he has two horns like a lamb, and the lamb is associated with sacrifice throughout the Old Testament. So, it's emphasizing that he is moving in the religious realm.

Verse 12, the second beast gets power from the same one who gave the first beast his power. He exercises the power of the first beast before him. And back in verse 2, it was the dragon that empowered the first beast, so the dragon, or Satan, is empowering this false prophet.

Now, what's the ministry of the false prophet? Verse 12, he causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast. He sets Antichrist up as God. And how does he persuade the world that Antichrist is God? It isn't by his sermons, by his words, but he performs miracles.

Satan has power to perform miracles, do supernatural works. Remember he did that when Moses performed miracles to prove that he was God's prophet? The high priest of Pharaoh duplicated many of the miracles to say, our gods are as powerful as your gods. But then those priests were embarrassed because there were many of the miracles that God caused Moses to perform that Satan didn't give the power to the priests of Egypt to perform.

But, verse 13, this false prophet does great wonders. He makes fire come down from heaven and the earth in the sight of men. Why fire from heaven? Remember any prophet who did that? Elijah did.

That fire demonstrated that the God of Elijah was the true God, and he was the true prophet. To drop down a little bit further, verse 14, he deceives them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast. The miracles are not designed to prove that the false prophet is worthy of worship, but that the Antichrist is worthy of worship.

He says to them that dwell on the earth that they should make an image of the beast which had the wound by a sword and live. Now, this is some physical reproduction of Antichrist. And then this false prophet had power to give life to the image of the beast, so the image of the beast should both speak, or that that image should speak.

Now, please don't ask me to explain how I did it. This is a satanic deception. This is not giving life to a lifeless image.

God alone is the Creator. Satan cannot create life. That's why when the religious leaders asked Jesus for some proof that he was the Son of God that they couldn't deny, he said, I'll give you the sign of Jonah, which was his resurrection.

Why was his resurrection a definitive proof of his person? They said, you do your miracles by Satan's power. But Satan is not a Creator. He cannot originate life, and resurrection is the work of creation.

And what we find here is that the false prophet is trying to duplicate the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus and cause a lifeless image to come alive so that it appears by deception that Antichrist has originated out of that lifeless image. Do you get the picture? It's an amazing deception. The result of this miracle is that he causes the world to worship the beast, and verse 15, as many as would not worship, the image of the beast should be killed.

Now, this is not exactly religious liberty. You worship or you die. So he has absolute authority in the political realm, he has absolute authority in the religious realm.

He is king, he is God. You see what a deception that is? Because when Jesus Christ comes to reign, what will he be? God on a throne, an imitation of the work of Christ. Then there's a third thing, and that's in verses 16 and 17.

He causes all small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in the right hand or in their forehead, that no man might buy or sell, save he had the mark of the name of the beast or the number of his name. Now, you notice that what we are dealing with in these two verses is in the economic realm, buying and selling. What's available and what the price is.

It's a regimented economy. Or can I put it this way? The one who's head of a one-world government and the one-world religion will institute a one-world economy. Why will he do that? Because according to Revelation 6, the world's economy is so out of line that it takes all that a man could earn working from sunup to sundown to put the simplest meal on the table of his family.

That's the announcement, you remember? A measure of wheat for a day's wage, three measures of barley for a day's wage. Don't even consider purchasing the oil and the wine, which were considered staples. The measure of wheat was the amount of grain that a housewife would pound into flour to bake bread for a family for one day.

A whole day's wage just for that bread. And barley was normally used as cattle food. It was so coarse, and only the very poorest would have baked bread out of barley.

But the economy will be such, since you can get three days of bread for one day's labor, people would be reduced to consuming that which was normally set aside for cattle. And oil and olive oil, wine, just prohibitively expensive. Don't even think about buying.

Now, that says to me the economy is totally out of control. Now, how can Antichrist persuade the world he has the solution to all the world's problems, and that he is the world's Messiah, if he can't feed the hungry and take care of those in need? So he will try to do what Christ will do in bringing prosperity and plenty, removing famine and want by regimenting the economy. And everyone will have to submit to his economic system in order to be able to buy or sell.

Now, you'd be surprised at how many letters I get asking something to the effect, do I think it's wrong for a person to go through a checkout line at the grocery store where they pass your products across a scanner and have it rung up on a computer, and they somehow identify that with a mark of the beast? Well, people can go haywire. The story was going around a while ago, you probably heard it, that in Brussels, the head of the United Nations, they had a gigantic computer that had every person in the world on that computer by number. You heard that? Did it? And the name of that computer was the Beast.

And people read this chapter in the light of that and tried to bring us into the computer age and all the rest of it. We had a graduate student, doctoral student from Brussels who was going home for the summer. We asked him to check it out.

He had a lot of friends who worked in that headquarters there in Brussels. When he mentioned it, they just laughed at it and said, we use a lot of computers here, but there's no such thing as that. Well, there's so much fruitless speculation about prophecy that really brings the whole study of prophecy into ill repute.

But what I see here is that in order to imitate the reign of Christ, this individual will have authority in the political realm, in the religious realm, in the economic realm. It will be a well-ordered, arranged system, but the goal is to prevent the reign of Christ, persuade the world they don't need Jesus Christ, that he can solve all the world's problems. To me, this is a delightful chapter, an exciting chapter.

And I can't help but feel that we're seeing the stage being set for the appearance of just such a person as this, when nations that originated out of the old Roman Empire are voluntarily uniting, forming a single political unit, eradicating their borders, electing members to a parliament, 511 of them. And the next step will be to elect or invite one man to exercise authority over the ten, or over these nations. Now, I don't necessarily conclude the first individual elected will be antichrist.

You could have conceivably a number of men elected for a one-year, a two-year, a four-year office, because it isn't the election of this individual that starts the seven years of tribulation period, but according to Daniel 9, when such an elected one makes a covenant with the nation Israel to guarantee their security and their peace, that act will identify him as the antichrist. How long it will be before all this is fulfilled, I don't have the slightest clue. How long does it have to be? I'd say very, very short.

I think the stage is getting set. So we can say with John as he closes the book of the Revelation, even so come, Lord Jesus, now is our salvation nearer than when we believe. Thank you, Father, for giving us the privilege of looking in your word how rich it is, how satisfying it is, how exciting it is.

We pray the Spirit of God shall enable us to understand that which we have seen in your word tonight, not simply to satisfy our curiosity or to excite us at the prospect of the coming of our Lord, but to use these truths that conform us to your Son. It's in his name we pray, Amen.

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