



As we hear about the situation going on in the Ukraine with Russia attacking, it eerily brings thoughts up to my mind of the beginning of the end times. We have read in the scriptures about the “bear” rising up and coming from the north and attacking Israel. We know that it refers to this “bear” as “Magog” and its leader is known as “Gog.” This is found in Ezekiel 38.

In the Book of Ezekiel 38, we see “Gog” is a ruler from the land of “Magog.” However, in the Book of Revelation, we see that Gog and Magog relate to the nations who are under the rule of satan and those nations will be the ones that will attack the land of Israel. They, along with the world foes of Israel will meet in the final battle at Armageddon – the valley of Meggido.

It is interesting to note that as you read the scriptures, it says that all the nations of the world, including Israel, will line up willingly and yield themselves to the rule of the “anti-christ” who will set up his place of rule in Jerusalem. For 3½ years it would seem as if everything would be okay for both Israel and the rest of the world. Unfortunately, after the first 3½ years of what seems to be peace, the “anti-christ” and the entire world will once again come against Israel and the Jewish people.

Also, unfortunately, by this time the scriptures tell us that Israel would be deceived by this “anti-christ” and would have turned their “weapons” into “farming implements.” In other words, Israel and the Jewish people would be at a place of being totally defenseless against any attack by the forces of darkness that are ready to rally against them. They would be rounded up and set up for total annihilation in the “valley of Megiddo” which is Armageddon.

It is there that we will see Jesus coming with the “hosts of heaven” and destroy the armies of the world that would come against the people of Israel. This would be the last “sign” for the Jewish people to believe in the Messiah, Jesus, just prior to His millennial rule and reign on this earth. All who are still left upon this earth will live in total peace for 1000 years.

This 1000 year millennial period is expressly for the Jewish people to truly see who Jesus is and it will be their last opportunity, as well as anyone else who is on this earth at that time, to receive Him as their true Messiah and Lord. At the conclusion of those 1000 years, the devil will be released for a short time and all the people who are on this earth will have the opportunity to make their final choice.

In 1 Samuel 17:34-37, bears are treated in the same way that wolves are in many parts of the Bible - as symbols of evil or the devil. These “lions” and “bears” threaten the flock, who represent the Israelites. The “bear” is a native of the mountain regions of Western Asia, frequently mentioned in Scripture. We see that David defended his flocks against the attacks of a bear. This could be representative of the Messiah, Jesus, defending His “flock,” the true believers in this hour, from the “attacks of the bear.”

We know that there is another enemy that had attacked and is shown who will attack the true believers. That would be the “dragon.” We can grasp and see that the “dragon” would be representative in today’s world as China. We see these things coming about in our time. If you are a true believer in the scriptures you can begin to see that quite possibly we are in the early stages of the time just prior to what we would call, “the end times.”

As we look briefly into the history as given to us in the Bible, as well as in the history books, we see an amazing story told which is very much representative or symbolic to the age that we find ourselves living in today. We look at the period in which Babylon seized and destroyed Jerusalem. They took many of the elite Jewish people, such as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, as well as Daniel, with them back to Babylon.

They wanted to “retrain” them. Fortunately, there was a remnant. Those that we just mentioned refused to yield to the Babylonians and chose to continue to worship their God. Yes, they lived in the realm of “darkness” but they refused to partake in it. We see that they went through hard times but we also see that God had delivered them all simply because they would not yield to the ways of worship that the Babylonians wanted them to.

This is important for us today to grab a hold onto. These men were in Babylon. They were living and doing things in the realm of the Babylonian kingdom. That was not the issue. The real issue came when they all were commanded to not just be a part of the Babylonian system but they were then told that they had to worship the Babylonian god, their king, Nebuchadnezzar. That was where these men “drew the line.” And that is when we see God rise up on their behalf and do the wonderful things that we read of in the scriptures concerning these men.

However, we see that history continues and we read of the Babylonian Kingdom falling to the Medo-Persian Empire. Unlike the Babylonians, the Persian Empire centered squarely on its military and political bases rather than its religious, cultural, or economic life. Historians consider the Persian imperial political structure and administrative forms to be the finest example of government prior to that of the Roman period. In fact, they think that the Romans “borrowed” Persian ideas as they formed their own empire.

This meant that the real basis of power in the Medo-Persian Empire was the army, even above that of the king, although the king supposedly controlled the army. This sounds eerily similar to what we are seeing in Russia, today. We see Vladimir Putin now begin to use the military to rise up and show its strength – not just in their own territory of Russia but we have seen them expand their “power” as they have taken back Crimea and now, they have come into the Ukraine. As we can see, Mr. Putin is trying to get back what they lost when the USSR broke up into separate countries back in the 1990’s. Could he be wanting more??? Hmmmm....

As we see what Russia is doing militarily, we must never lose focus on what is happening in the other parts of the world. I am not speaking of military build ups and wars that may be “lighting” up throughout the world. No, what I am speaking about is the greater “unseen” enemy that is sweeping over the nations of the earth today. What I am referring to is an aspect of “religion” that has been around for, I guess, forever. It is called Gnosticism. It is not called that today but its roots are in everything that is happening.

Gnosticism is another “front” in which the forces of evil are using in the world today. Perhaps it is even a greater “front” and even more “powerful” than the military campaign that we just spoke of. This is a subtle “front” that does not seem dangerous because there are no weapons and there is no fighting. No, this “front,” I believe, is very much more a dangerous “front” to the western world because it is perverting the ways and ideas of people. It is making and allowing sin to be more acceptable and a part of our everyday life. It is compromising our moral understanding of what is right and making the wrong things acceptable and actually becoming the norm.

The “concept” of Gnosticism has been around from the very beginning of time. We find its beginning in the Garden when Adam and Eve fell to its lures by the devil. However, the “religion” of Gnosticism has its roots from the Persian religion known as “Zoroastrianism.” That is a big word. It literally, represents a thinking of “dualistic” belief in both good and evil and man's struggle between them.

The result being that it has been decided that both, good and evil are actually good. It doesn’t make sense to me but that is what it has become. Although Zoroastrianism may have faded away into obscurity, we do see that its fundamental principle of “dualism” (that there are good things that come from both “good” and “evil”) has lived on in what has become known as the “religion” of Gnosticism. It is still in existence today.

Gnosticism then “teamed up” with the “Christian religion” of the Roman Empire in the third century AD when Emperor Constantine had “accepted” Christianity. Some of the beliefs and practices such as: a god by the name of “Mithra” whose birthday was celebrated on December 25 all of a sudden became the day in which Jesus was born; Sunday, a day that would be used to worship the god of the sun now became the “holy day” of the week; “All Soul's Day” to honor those who were dead and pray for their “salvation” came into being; some beliefs concerning heaven, hell and purgatory were all embraced by Roman Catholicism.

These beliefs and practices were all allowed to enter into the Roman Catholic doctrine for the express purpose of countering and trying to dissuade the general population of people away from the “pull” of the cults that they were used to following. They added these “beliefs” to cause the Romans and all those in the empire to now “sign up” and become a part of the Roman Catholic Church under the influence and control of the government and leadership of the Roman Empire.

With that said, we see that in today’s world there is an ever increasing emphasis in the realm of Gnosticism being brought into the world by a vast majority of people. We have seen that over the past 70-100 years an increasing number of movies and books that have been introduced that emphasized most of the same major heresies that the true church had to contend with during the first century.

The present-day heresy is not exactly in the same form as it was during the years following Jesus’ death. However, we see that there seems to be a growing resurgence and popularity of the various philosophies that are growing in today’s world that are generally known and found in the doctrines of Gnosticism.

Gnosticism was the predominant source of heresy that was in the earth when Jesus came upon the earth. Gnosticism was the main source of heresy when the New Testament was written. The books of John, 1Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, 1 and 2Timothy, Jude, and 1John, all combat various elements of Gnosticism.

Even the book of Revelation cites Gnostic beliefs and practices, referred to as “know[ing] the depths of Satan” and the false teachings brought forth by the cult and its followers called the “Nicolaitans.” (Revelation 2:6, 15, 24) Gnosticism is clearly not some minor biblical issue that was in the past. Gnosticism is a greater threat now than we might think!

Paul warns Timothy about “the subtleties and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge and “spiritual illumination.” The word translated “knowledge” or the word “science” in the King James Version, comes from the Greek word, “gnostic.” Paul is referring to Gnosticism in both his letters to Timothy when he urges Timothy to beware of the “false teachers” who bring in foreign and strange concepts that were undermining the true faith of many believers.

The *Gospel of Thomas* and the somewhat newly-discovered *Gospel of Judas* are examples of what are called “Gnostic gospels.” They both were written much later (three or four centuries later) than the other four Gospels found in our Bibles. Without going into these “false” gospels we can simply say that they both contradict the true gospel accounts by asserting that both Didymas/Thomas and Judas Iscariot were given “*secret knowledge*” that the other disciples did not possess. Hmmm....

Today, we see Gnosticism practiced by Jewish “mystics” in a “religion” known as Kabbalah which is a Gnostic version of Judaism. Kabbalah has been around for centuries. However, it is growing greatly today in the western world. Followers of Kabbalah today are well known celebrities such as Madonna, Demi Moore, Britney Spears, and Mick Jagger and many others in every aspect of life. Kabbalah is a Hebrew term that literally means “receiving.” They believe that Kabbalah is the “soul” of the Torah, and that the “secrets of life” are hidden within the Torah. It also uses and tries to give the “true meaning” of the Jewish “Oral Law.”

Thus, Gnosticism takes elements of Judaism and arranges them according to “secret knowledge” about the nature of God, good and evil, and the origin and destiny of man. Its followers believe that they have found “enlightenment,” even if they continue in a life of riotous living and debauchery.

I tend to think that the most dangerous aspect, and one the devil has been using since the beginning, is the concept that Gnosticism believes in what is called - "progressive revelation." This is the erroneous belief that God is continuing to reveal His will to mankind. It implies that all of the scriptures found within the Bible are not as important as hearing directly from the “spirit world,” today. Many of those involved in Kabbalah believe that "God" is personally revealing things to them - even if it contradicts the Word as found within the Bible. That is dangerous!!!

Unfortunately, if we look at some of the teaching that is being brought forth today by members of the “Christian” world, we can see many of the same deceptive and false teachings being brought forth today. We are hearing more and more teaching that will make us feel better about ourselves rather than the truth of the Word which is given to us to change our lives to be more and more like Jesus and the life that He lived while on this earth.

So why have I decided to share these thing with all of you. Well, I believe that we are getting closer and closer to the “end times.” We see things happening all over the world that keep pointing and revealing to us that the end times are near. I do not pretend to know everything concerning these times. I do not pretend to know everything that is happening on this earth at this time or what will come. I do believe that God will show His people and direct His people as things happen.

This takes a total trust in Him and Him alone. I believe that if we are truly listening to His Spirit, our God will direct our very lives and He will guard and keep His people – those that truly love Him – from being deceived. We may not know it all – actually, no one does – no one that is except God, the Father. Even Jesus must wait until the Father tells Him that it is time to come back to earth. However, I do know, without a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is ready to come and that **He will come**.

Time is getting short. If He takes us up with Him before everything takes place or if we may still be here as it all unfolds, it does not matter. One day, when Jesus does return, those that trust and believe in Him will return with Him and rule and reign with Him upon this earth for 1000 years. After that, we will be with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the New Jerusalem. Oh what a day that will be!!! What matters to each of us today, is that we simply trust Him and know that He is the One and only true and living God – and that He is and always will be - my God.