

# SALVATION IN SYMBOLS & SIGNS

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Corresponds to Program 54

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV and KJV.

## THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION STUDY GUIDE

**W**e continue this study in Revelation 13 with another question from a viewer.

**Question** – “Who are the twenty-four elders in Revelation 4 and 5?”

**Answer:** This question comes from Revelation chapters 4 and 5, the only place in the Bible where twenty-four elders are shown around the throne in heaven. Neither in Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1, nor Daniel 7, are the twenty-four elders shown around God’s throne. This is a new development taking place after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, revealed to John in AD 90 on his exile on the isle of Patmos. This is a beautiful picture of the inclusion of the human race in the heavenly throne room as a result of the Lamb slain for our sin. Revelation 5:8-10 sums this up when it says:

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

The elders are first pictured around God’s throne in Revelation chapter 4. Then in Revelation chapter 5, John is shown that the elders are:

- 1) Redeemed (verse 9)
- 2) By the blood of the Lamb (verse 9)

- 3) From the nations of Earth (verse 9)
- 4) And have been made kings and priests (verse 10)
- 5) And shall reign on the earth (verses 10)

In the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, Jesus led a large group, “many” of the “saints,” to heaven with Him (Matthew 27:52, 53).

“Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8; Psalm 68:18).



“But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near.”

**LUKE 21:20**

This indicates that the elders are the human captives from earth led to Heaven by Christ at this ascension. Not until Jesus led the captive saints to Heaven from their graves is this group of twenty-four elders seen in Heaven! This beautiful picture in relation to our redemption and inclusion in Heaven, is illustrated by this group of first-fruits or elders (Isaiah 6:1-4; Ezekiel 1:1-28; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23).

The term “elder” is used approximately 175 times in the Bible to describe leaders among God’s people. There appears to be no Biblical reference that the word is used to describe angels or any other created beings. On this point alone, we find solid foundational support for the elders being humans.

The twenty-four elders possess things promised to the overcomers in the seven churches. The crowns, the white raiment, and sitting on thrones, all correspond to the promises to the seven churches (2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; Revelation 2:10; 3:1; 3:21; Matthew 19:28; Revelation 3:4, 5, 18; 16:15; 19:13, 16).

### KEY SCRIPTURES

**Revelation 5:10** WE SHALL REIGN ON THE EARTH

**Ephesians 4:8** HE LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE

**Matthew 24:15** ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

**Luke 21:20** SEE JERUSALEM SURROUNDED BY ARMIES

(There is a more detailed study available on this subject that you may request through the SISS website).

## THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

### Revelation 13:3, 13-14; Matthew 24:15; Luke 21:20

Matthew 24, Luke 21, and Mark 13 are all prophetic chapters of the Bible that parallel Daniel and Revelation. Luke 21:20 tells us that God's people will be surrounded by armies when the abomination of desolation occurs. Revelation 13 has suggested that the healing of the wound is connected to the image of the beast being set up. Now we see that this is also connected to the persecution of God's people so that they cannot buy or sell and will eventually face a death decree.

### Revelation 16:13, 14

In Revelation 13:3, the whole world wonders after this earthly power whose deadly wound was healed. In Revelation 13:13,14, the whole world is deceived by the miracles done by this second earthly power, later called the false prophet, and the devil's attempt to counterfeit the coming of Christ (Matthew 24:26). Revelation 16:13, 14, is summarizing the deceptive work of these two earthly powers that are working together to deceive the whole world. So, we see the abomination of desolation will come upon the earth through a combination of the dragon (the devil), the sea beast (papacy healed from its deadly wound), and the land beast (U.S. speaking like a dragon). These are the armies that are gathering in the world at the end of time to war against God and against His government established upon His 10-commandment law. Right now, we don't see the entire world following the Papacy and US, but when someone comes as the Messiah, claiming to be Christ and performing miracles, it will perpetuate a huge deception upon all of humanity.

## STANDING IN THE HOLY PLACE

The abomination of desolation is the outworking of the devil's ambition to sit in the place of God "in the sides of the north" (Isaiah 14:13). The man of sin, the devil's representative on Earth, also seeks to sit in the place of God on Earth, just like the devil sought to do in heaven (2 Thessalonians 2:4, 8, 9). The Greek word that describes the "revealing" of the man of sin is "apokalupto." This is the same word used to describe the "revelation of Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 6, 8; Revelation 1:1). We could say that the devil has his own counterfeit trinity and revelation to counteract the Godhead and the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We could even conclude that the devil will actually attempt to take on a personation of Jesus Christ as described in Revelation chapter 1:12-17, in order to multiply his deception power and seek, if possible, to deceive the very elect.

We also see a correlation between the dragon who began his deceptive work in heaven and the sea beast who continues this deceptive work on the earth. Compare, for example, Rev-

elation 12:3 with Revelation 13:1 and notice the same configuration of heads, horns, and crowns. We see God exposing both the heavenly and earthly manifestations of deception. In Heaven, the angels were deceived, and in earth the whole world is deceived (Revelation 12:4; 13:3, 14). We also see this correlation in Daniel 8:10, where the little horn casts down the stars to the ground just like the devil did in Revelation 12:4. Then we note that the dragon uprooted a third of the stars of heaven and the little horn uproots one third of the horns (Revelation 12:4; Daniel 7:8). God is basically saying if you have seen the little horn, you have seen the power behind it, just like Jesus said, "if you have seen Me you have seen the Father" (John 14:9 CEV). The little horn is to the devil as John the Baptist was to Jesus. He prepares the way for the final deception, the personation of Christ by the devil (2 Corinthians 11:14).

### Revelation 16:15, 16

These verses are speaking to the time before the final plagues fall. They are speaking to our present experience. The plague of the frogs that came upon Egypt showed the frogs were everywhere (Exodus 8:1-4). The word "gathered" in Revelation 16:16 can be translated "to entertain."

Gather – "to lead together, collect, or convene; specially, to entertain." (Strong's Concordance).

When we look at the plague of the frogs and understand the meaning of "gathered," we are being instructed that the devil is working everywhere through entertainment to remove from us the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The devil is trying to entertain us out of the kingdom of God. The bottom line is this: are we surrounding ourselves with spiritual influences and following the Lamb wherever He goes, or are we filling much of our time with worldly entertainment? Is the majority of our time spent on anything but Jesus Christ and God's great love for us?

Additionally, the frogs in Egypt were the last miracle that the magicians of Egypt were able to counterfeit (Exodus 8:7). The personation of Christ by the devil is the last counterfeit of the devil in the end of time.

## ARMAGEDDON

The word "Armageddon" comes from the Hebrew tongue. It is not the Greek of the New Testament, but the Hebrew of the Old Testament that we must consider here. To make matters just a little bit more complicated, the Hebrew has not just one but two meanings. The first is "hill" or "mountain of Megiddo." The second "mount of the assembly" or "congregation."

This second translation has a very spiritual meaning, denoting the battle between God and Lucifer for the loyalty of this earth and its inhabitants. Isaiah picks up the theme in chapter 14:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will

ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Here, the mount of the congregation is actually the place where God, who alone is worthy of all worship and adoration, sits. Lucifer, the devil, vows to ascend to the place of God by drawing to himself the worship and adoration of this world. This interpretation is an exact fit to the description of Armageddon that we studied in Revelation 16.

Yet there is a second, more literal meaning to the word Armageddon. It means the “hill” or “mountain of Megiddo.” If you were to travel to Israel today, you could easily find the valley of Megiddo. It is, in fact, a modern tourist attraction, though there is not a lot to see. In the view of its fertile plains, there lies a “hill,” rather “mountain” would be a better description. This “mountain” has an eventful and meaningful history for these last days. Its name is Mount Carmel and it is the only real mountain in the entire valley area. The Old Testament records the history of a decisive conflict that took place atop this mountain, one that bears significant similar-

ities to our Revelation 16 conflict between good and evil. It was the battle between the false worship of Baal and the true worship of God. This understanding of the battle of Armageddon calls us to acknowledge and worship God above all counterfeit worship.

### Summary

The best way to summarize what we have learned in this lesson is to say that anything that places itself where God should be, is an abomination that makes us desolate of Christ and His saving righteousness. The devil is trying to deceive us into putting man’s word in the place of God’s Word, man’s authority in the place of God’s authority, man’s mediation in the place of God’s mediation, man’s favor in the place of God’s favor. When we place man in the place of God, we are in reality worshiping the devil, who is working behind the men of this world to remove from us the redemption that we have in Christ Jesus. God loves you. He will never let you be deceived as you keep looking to Jesus. So, be of good courage and keep following the Lamb wherever He goes. Amen. ★

