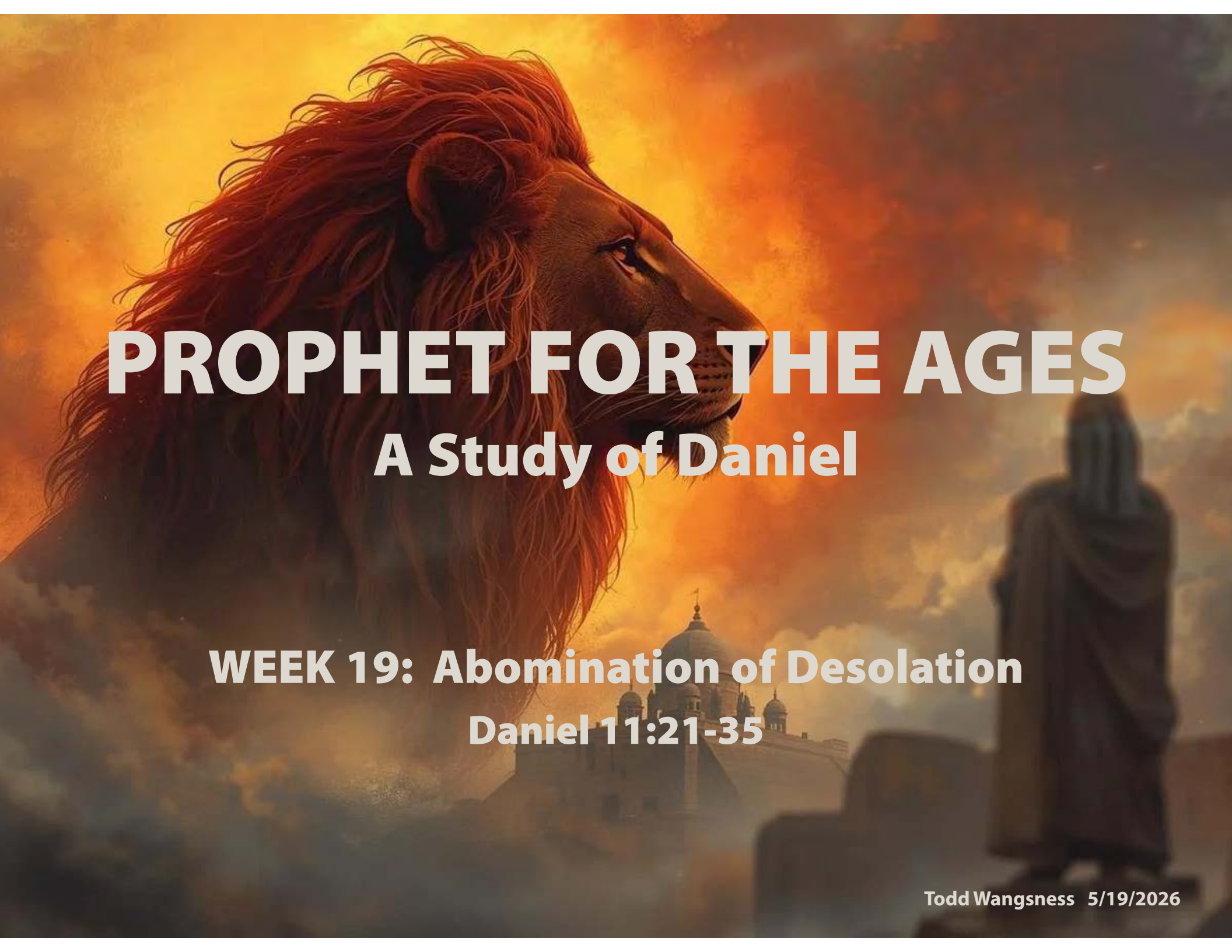




PROPHET FOR THE AGES

A Study of Daniel

WEEK 19: Abomination of Desolation
Daniel 11:21-35

Prophet for the Ages: Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 11:21-35 Overview

Rise to Power (v. 21-24): Antiochus Epiphanes succeeds Seleucus IV (who dies in 175 BC) not by rightful inheritance but through intrigue, flatteries, and deceit during a time of perceived security. He gains strength with a small force, enters peaceful provinces, distributes plunder to buy loyalty, and schemes against strongholds.

Conflicts with the King of the South (v. 25-30): He wages wars against Egypt (Ptolemy VI and others). These involve large armies, broken alliances, and temporary successes. A key moment is Roman intervention ("ships of Kittim," Roman ships from Cyprus), which forces his humiliating withdrawal. Bitter, he turns against the "holy covenant" (the Jewish people and their faith).

Persecution of the Jews and Temple Desecration (v. 31-35): He profanes the temple, removes the daily sacrifice, and sets up the "abomination that causes desolation" (often linked historically to an altar to Zeus or pagan sacrifices in the Temple).

- He favors Jews who forsake the covenant and uses force/flattery to corrupt others
- He persecutes faithful Jews with sword, flame, captivity, and plunder
- A remnant of the wise (the Maccabees and faithful) resist, instruct many, and "fall" (suffer) but receive "a little help." This leads to refining, purifying, and making the faithful white until "the time of the end."

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Notable Quotes About Daniel 11:21-35

“Probably no other portion of Scripture presents more minute prophecy than Daniel 11:1-35, and this has prompted the sharpest attack of critics seeking to discredit this prophetic portion.

Interestingly enough, it was the eleventh chapter of Daniel with its detailed prophecy of about two hundred years of history that prompted the heathen philosopher Porphyry (third century A.D.) to attack the book of Daniel as a forgery. In his study, Porphyry established the fact that history corresponded closely to the prophetic revelation of Daniel 11:1-35, and the correspondence was so precise that he was persuaded that no one could have prophesied these events in the future. Accordingly, he solved the problem by taking the position that the book of Daniel was written after the events occurred, that is, it was written in the second century B.C.”

- John Walvoord

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Notable Quotes About Daniel 11:21-35 (cont.)

“Antiochus Epiphanes is important, but mostly as a historical preview of the Antichrist. This is why so much space is given to describing the career of one evil man – because he prefigures the ultimate evil man. Antiochus Epiphanes is the ‘trailer’ released well before the Antichrist, who is like the ‘feature.’ Daniel was told that this revelation pertained to the latter days (Daniel 10:14), and Daniel 11:36 begins to look more towards this final world dictator, who is sort of a ‘last days Antiochus Epiphanes.’”

- David Guzik

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Prophecy ... Not History!

- The angel continues relating this incredible vision/prophecy to Daniel
 - Chapters 10 – 12 form a single vision describing in great detail, events that would occur in a few centuries
 - And – crucial for our time – events that will shortly transpire at the *end of the age* concerning the rise to power of a powerful, evil ruler described as the Antichrist
- Daniel received this prophecy from the angel in 538 BC
- Antiochus IV Epiphanes arose to power in 175 BC
- Consequently, Daniel received this *extremely detailed* “history in advance” from the angel 363 years prior to the events occurring!!!

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The Rise of Antiochus IV Epiphanes to Power

Dan 11:21 *And in his place shall arise a vile person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue.*

- Antiochus IV Epiphanes was a *vile* person. He was the most brutal oppressor of the Jewish people in history.
 - “Vile” (Hebrew: *nivzeh*. Despicable, contemptible, brutal)
- He usurped the throne that rightfully belonged to the son of the late king, Seleucus IV Philopator
 - Philopator’s son, Demetrius I Soter, was Antiochus Epiphane’s nephew and next in line for rulership
 - Antiochus assembled an army and claimed the throne for himself
- He captured the throne when Demetrius was in Rome as a hostage
- When people least expected it, he used bribes and flattery, along with his assembled army to seize the kingdom

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Dan 11:22-23 *With the force of a flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, and also the prince of the covenant. 23 And after the league is made with him he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small number of people.*

- **Prince of the covenant:** In 175 BC, Antiochus forced out the legitimate Jewish high priest, Onias III, who was the ruler of the Jews at that time
 - He replaced him with Jason, who was a *Hellenizer* (favored the pagan Greeks/Syrians) and a brother to Onias
 - Another brother of Onias, Menelaus, murdered Onias and bribed Antiochus into allowing him to take the office of high priest
- **After the Syrian's defeat to Rome at Thermopylae, their power was greatly diminished**
 - He made an alliance with Cleopatra I (his sister) who was ruling the Ptolemaic kingdom (Egypt)
 - He dealt deceitfully with her and backed her opponent, Philometor, in a civil war and he became stronger over time

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Dan 11:24

He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but only for a time.

- He deceitfully approached other nations promising peace, then attacked them when they least expected it, even prosperous regions within his own kingdom
 - He then plundered those people and used the ill-gotten gains to bribe, influence, and win favors for those who would side with him
- He continued to plunder the strongholds of Egypt for the next 12 years

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Antiochus's First Egyptian Campaign

Dan 11:25-26 *“He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. 26 Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall be swept away, and many shall fall down slain.*

- In 170 BC, he rallied his armies against Egypt, who was now ruled by his young nephew, Ptolemy VI Philometor, Cleopatra I's son
- He wanted to regain control of Israel and Coele-Syria, a prosperous region controlled by the Ptolemaic kingdom
- Antiochus bribed Philometor's most trusted counselors and they *devised plans against him*
- Even though Philometor had superior forces, the betrayal caused many of his soldiers to be killed in battle and Antiochus *swept away his army*

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Dan 11:27-28 Both these kings' hearts shall be bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end will still be at the appointed time. 28 While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant; so he shall do damage and return to his own land.

- Antiochus took Philometor as a hostage and falsely promised to re-establish him as king of Egypt
- Philometor also deceitfully agreed to Antiochus's plan, but – instead of becoming a vassal king under Antiochus – he allied himself with his brother who had assumed Egyptian rule
- They agreed to joint rulership instead of fighting a civil war
 - Even though the conflict greatly enriched Antiochus, his plans to rule over Egypt were confounded
- In his frustration and anger, as he returned back home, he paid a visit to the land of Israel and plundered them
 - He killed 40,000 Jewish men, women, and children and took another 40,000 into slavery

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Antiochus's Third Egyptian Campaign

Dan 11:29-30 *"At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. 30 For ships from Cyprus (Kittim) shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do damage. "So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant."*

- The angel makes no mention of Antiochus's 2nd Egyptian campaign in 169 BC, but goes into detail about his 3rd campaign in 168 BC
- He realized he had been betrayed by Philometor after working to establish him as vassal king in Egypt
 - Philometor instead allied with his brother, Ptolemy VII and they ruled as co-regents
- So he waged a 3rd foray into Egypt and was on the brink of military success, when ships from Kittim (Roman ships) came against him and made it very clear that Rome would not allow Syria to overcome Egypt
- Enraged, he turned back from Egypt and – again – took out his wrath on Israel

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- He made multiple raids into Israel to commit atrocities upon the Jews
- A significant portion of the Jewish population had become apostates that supported the enforcement of Hellenistic (pagan Greek) culture, religion, and literature
- These Hellenizers abandoned *the holy covenant*, exactly as the angel foretold
- This is described in detail in the apocryphal book II Maccabees
 - II Maccabees 4:7-50 details the Hellenization of Judea, the corruption of the Jewish priesthood under Seleucid rule, and the tragic murder of the righteous high priest Onias by his brother. This pivotal narrative highlights the extreme political instability and religious persecution that eventually ignited the Maccabean Revolt.

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The Abomination of Desolation

Dan 11:31 *And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.*

- Many of the Jews consented to Antiochus's pagan religion, sacrificed to idols, and profaned the Sabbath
- Antiochus forced a cessation of the daily sacrifices, erected an image to Zeus in the temple and sacrificed swine on the altar
- He forbade Sabbath keeping ... those who kept the Sabbath were executed
- He brought in prostitutes and gave free reign to his soldiers to have intercourse with the prostitutes in the sacred courts
- The Holy of Holies and other sacred courts were filled with debauchery and revelry
- This *Desolation* continued for over three years

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The Maccabean Revolt

Dan 11:32 *Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.*

- Antiochus continued to plunder the faithful Jews and rewarded the apostate Jews by giving them bribes and flattery
 - By pitting one element of the population against the other, he gained control of the entire population of the Jews
 - He elevated the apostates to positions of authority
- These devious schemes led to the revolt of the Maccabees (*people who know their God*)
- The Hasidim joined with the Maccabees in this revolt and – battle after battle – finally proved victorious over Antiochus's forces
- They ultimately prevailed – according to several sources – 1150 days after Antiochus desecrated the temple (after 2300 evening/morning sacrifices)
- The origins of the Qumran community (Essenes) lie with the Hasidim
- The Hasidim had no interest in politics and eventually withdrew from the Maccabees
- The rededication of the Temple is commemorated to this day in the Festival of Hannukah

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The Devolution of the Maccabees

Dan 11:33-34 And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. 34 Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue.

- **Sadly, the Hasidim (*people who understand*) refused to battle on the Sabbath**
- **Antiochus exploited this policy and purposefully attacked them on the Sabbath**
- ***Many fell by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering***
- **Even though the Maccabees were ultimately successful in throwing off Syrian rule, it was at a great cost**
- **Of the five Maccabean brothers that started the rebellion, none of the five died of natural causes**
 - **Three died in battle and two by treachery**
- **Ultimately, the apostates succeeded in watering down the faithful to such a point that the Maccabees became greater Hellenizers than those the Maccabees had originally fought**

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Transitional Prophecy to the Antichrist 2.0

Dan 11:35 *And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.*

- ***Those of understanding*** refers to the Hasidim, who were subjugated to intense persecution
 - **God's purpose in allowing this to occur was:**
 - **To *refine* them**
 - **To *purify* them**
 - **To *make them white***
- **Does God allow His people today go through intense, trying times?**
- **Verse 35 is a *transitional prophecy***
 - **The last part of the verse connects this passage to the *time of the end***
- **As challenging as the persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanes was, it will be nothing compared to the time of *Jacob's Trouble*, the soon-coming Tribulation**

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Questions To Ponder

- What confidence do we have that the time of the Antichrist and the Tribulation are still in the future?
 - Maybe Antiochus Epiphanes was the Antichrist?
 - Preterists think that Nero was the Antichrist and the destruction of the temple and intense persecution of Christians at that time was *Jacob's Trouble*?
- The Hellenizers and apostate Jews were idol worshipers. Thank God we don't have to deal with idol worship anymore! Or do we?
 - 1 Joh 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.
 - 1 Joh 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.
 - 2 Cor 10:3-5 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

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Questions To Ponder (cont.)

- How do we make our *calling and election sure*?
 - *2 Pet 1:5-9 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.*
 - *2 Pet 1:10-11 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*

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Questions To Ponder (cont.)

- Is there reason to *hope* for the future? Sometimes it sounds a little bleak!
 - *Rom 5:1-5 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*
 - *Eph 1:18b-19 "... that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ..."*
 - *1 Cor 2:9 But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*