

The Antichrist's Playbook: Lessons from the Hanukkah Story



The Book Of James (Part 5) December 20, 2025

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/z9hyvt/the-book-of-james-part-5>

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document be printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliteration into the English alphabet. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

Unyielding Faith: The Antichrist and the War on Truth

This transcript is a sermon delivered by **Pastor Daniel Joseph** of Corner Fringe Ministries and uses the **Hanukkah story** as a prophetic template to explore the **nature of the Antichrist** and the necessity of spiritual endurance. Daniel parallels the historical persecution under **Antiochus IV** with the trials described in the **Book of James**, characterizing the Antichrist's primary strategy as an assault on **divine truth**. It warns that the enemy seeks to **compromise the faithful** through cultural assimilation, the abolition of the **Sabbath**, and the rejection of biblical law. Highlighting figures like **Mattathias**, Daniel encourages modern believers to remain **unyielding in their faith** despite societal pressure or the threat of death. Ultimately, this message serves as a call for the **religious remnant** to resolve in their hearts to prioritize **Scriptural commandments** over worldly comfort.

Shabbat Shalom, everyone. We are officially at week five of our series on the Epistle of James, and currently we are looking at verses two and three collectively, and this is where James says in James 1:2-3—² **My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials**, when you're thrown into the crucible, when you are starting to experience some serious heat, some persecution, ³ **knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience, *hypomoné* (ὑπομονή)**, this endurance, this perseverance.

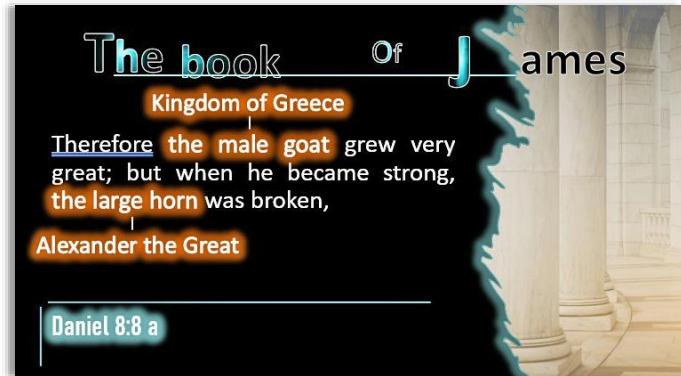
Considering the fact that we're now in the midst of celebrating Hanukkah, I thought it to be quite apropos for us to draw from the story of Hanukkah in light of what James is communicating here. Because I can tell you this, few stories highlight the idea that James has brought to the table more than that of the story of Hanukkah, and I'm talking in a very intense and powerful way. And so, we're going to dig into the story. And let me preface by saying we're not going to be able to cover all the wonderful things that I would like to cover. We're going to be very focused. We're going to zero in on the very things that James has brought to the table. We're going to focus on this concept of being tested in the faith, the concept of being hurled into the crucible and the trials and tribulations, and what that actually looks like in real life.

With no further ado, we're going to jump right into it. We're actually going to start today in the Book of Daniel, because the Hanukkah story doesn't begin in the Apocrypha in the Book of Maccabees. That's not where it begins. It begins with the prophecy, with a vision that was given to the prophet Daniel. And he's given this really bizarre vision, and I know many of you have read it, but it's this very bizarre vision

where he sees this goat literally coming out from the West; it's floating. It's not on the ground. It's coming across the whole face of the earth in the air; it's floating. It has a huge, significant horn, and it comes against this ram that has two horns, and it is vicious. This goat that is literally levitating across the earth, when it gets to the ram, it destroys it. Nobody could deliver the ram from the hand of this goat. And so, this is where we're going to pick up the story.

Daniel 8:8— **Therefore the male goat**—and just to save us time, what we're talking about when we're looking at the male goat here is the Kingdom of Greece—and this isn't my hypothesis; this is not my opinion; this is actually what we're told in the Book of Daniel, and of course, it's confirmed in the Book of Maccabees, the fulfillment of the event itself. And so, this male goat that Daniel sees in this vision

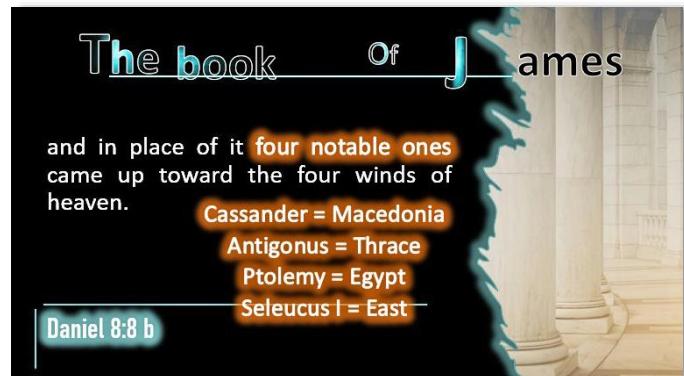
represents the beast. This beast represents a kingdom. It's no different in the Book of Revelation. So, the male goat **grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken** ... (Emphasis added).

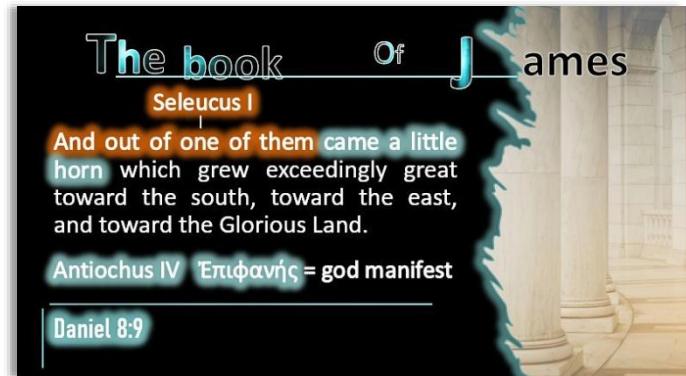


I'm going to tell you that the large horn is Alexander the Great. It's always struck me as a little odd that, my goodness, Alexander the Great is actually in the Bible. It's prophesied. This is who Daniel saw that was symbolized as this horn, this very large horn

on this goat. And you know, if you were to talk to historians today, they'd all be in agreement. The greatest world leader in the history of humanity, most will tell you, is Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great's conquest is unparalleled. He took more land and more territory year by year than any other empire in history; it's unparalleled. And he did this; he literally took over the world, and by the time he hit age 32, it really was at its peak, but that's where the large horn is broken. He dies at 32 years of age.

And what happens after he dies? Well, we continue in this vision. Daniel 8:8—**... and in place of it four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven** (emphasis added). You can check this out; this is history. When Alexander dies, his empire is divided among his four generals: Cassander, Antigonus (who would eventually belong to Lysimachus), Ptolemy, and Seleucus I. His kingdom is divided into four, exactly as Daniel sees it in this vision.





Then we move on, and this is where it's going to begin to get interesting. —Daniel 8:9— **And out of one of them**, out of one of these four generals, specifically Seleucus I, **came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land**, i.e., Israel (emphasis added). And who is this little horn? This is the one called Antiochus IV. He gave himself the title, and this kind of helps you understand what this guy thought of himself, but he gave himself the title

"Epiphanes (Ἐπιφανῆς)," god manifest.

It's interesting, even today, the incredible archeological finds that we have. There are so many that testify to what the Bible has already written, and it confirms the authenticity and the accuracy of the Bible. We have coins today of Antiochus that he minted with the title "Epiphanes," god manifest. It kind of shows you what he thinks of himself, right? I mean, this is the absolute type of the Antichrist. He is a legitimate Antichrist.

Moving to Daniel 8:10— **And it grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them** (emphasis added). This horn, which we know is Antiochus, okay, this horn would become so exalted that he would cast down some of the stars. Now here's what I want to help you with. The imagery that Daniel is seeing with stars is all about the faithful elect. It's about the congregation of God, those who serve Him. And from the very beginning in the Torah in Genesis Chapter 15, we have the stars being likened to the righteous. That's why God brings Abraham outside and says (Genesis 15:5), "**Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.**" And He said to him, "**So shall your descendants be.**" That promise of his descendants, that he would be the father of many nations, the imagery that God Himself used was stars.

I can take it a step further in the Book of Daniel itself. It likens the stars to the righteous. Let me show you. We read this in Daniel 12:3— **Those who are wise**, meaning they're wise—they act biblically wisely—**shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever** (emphasis added). And so, the prophecy here is talking about the rise of the Antichrist coming against the flock of God, coming against the church at that time.

Then we move on to Daniel 8:11-12—¹¹ **He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.** This guy goes after the righteous, the elect of God—the congregation of God—and then He's going after—this is what's being described—he's going after the temple, the epicenter, the very place where the Lord Himself wrote His name. The place that is dedicated to the worship of the one true God. It's not a surprise; he's coming after that. And ¹² **Because of transgression, an army was given over to the horn**, meaning the Antichrist, **to oppose the daily sacrifices;** now take this in: **and he cast truth down to the ground.** **He did all this and prospered** (emphasis added). I'm going to tell you right now that if there is any activity that so fully encompasses the work of the Antichrist, this is it.

This is it; it's the Antichrist coming and casting truth to the ground. I want you to understand that for the Antichrist, for the spirit of the Antichrist, for the devil to gain territory, for him to take the land, for him

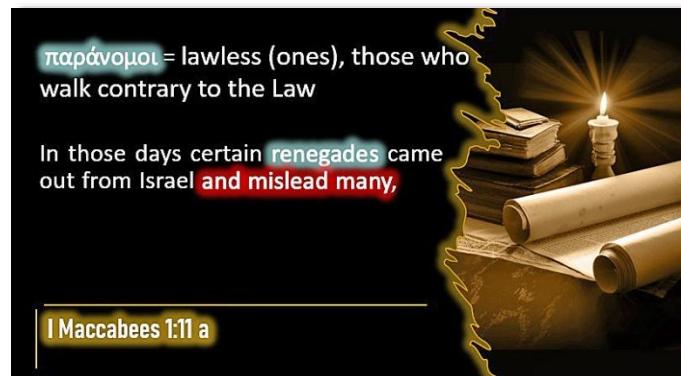
to come in and conquer, for him to get into your homes, for him to get into your marriages, for him to get into our schools, into our governments, and into our churches, one thing has to happen. One, he has to cast truth to the ground. Take this in: the truth is so powerful, it renders the devil powerless. That's how powerful it is. And this is where we pick up on those words that Yeshua spoke in John 8:32, where He told us, **"The truth shall make you free."** The devil cannot come in, control, conquer, bind, and enslave unless you give up the truth.

Do we understand how powerful the truth is? And what does the Word itself say? Psalm 119:160—**The entirety of Your word is truth.** Psalm 119:151—**And all Your commandments are truth.** Psalm 119:142—**And Your Torah, law is truth.** What is the devil coming for? The truth. It's the one thing standing in the way of him binding you and enslaving you, and he's going to do everything in his power to compel you to give it up. And I promise you this: if you give up the truth, he will come in like a flood, and he will bind you; he will enslave you. It's what's holding the forces of evil back. In your marriage, in your home, in your schools, and in our government. So, when we have our own government taking the law of God out of the schools, you just invited the Antichrist in. You invited the devil to come and bind and enslave, and he will take the land, and he will control, and he will implement and impose his authority. God help us.

With that said, let's jump into the Book of Maccabees, the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. And you know, as a side note, if you've been following this series, you'll appreciate the irony here. But even Martin Luther said, in his second Leipzig Disputation in 1519, "**The Book of Maccabees has weight with the faithful, but it avails nothing amongst the obstinate.**" That's a good introduction.

1 Maccabees 1:11—**In those days certain renegades came out from Israel ...** I want to highlight this word, "renegades," because as we look at this in the Greek, "*paranomoi* (παράνομοι)" and "*paranomos* (παράνομος)" in the singular, it's "lawless ones." This is what we're talking about. We're talking about lawless ones. Those who have abandoned the Torah are walking away. They're OK with this. The worst part of this is they're coming out from the congregation of God. They're coming out from Israel. But, I have to tell you, as we look at this, I don't care how many times I have read this over the years; I lost count. The sting of the reality of what's being communicated never dulls. This is painful.

How is this even possible? I don't want to believe that this is possible, that coming out from the congregation, we have lawless ones rising up. We have wolves in sheep's clothing. We have false teachers and false prophets. May it never be so, but it is. And so, as we look at this, it's very concerning; this is troubling. Renegades, these lawless ones, are coming out from Israel. And what does it say? **And mislead many** (emphasis added). This is crazy; they mislead many, not some. They have come on the scene. They've risen up, and they're misleading many.



And I'm going to tell you, if the story of Hanukkah is at all a prophetic template of the last days, God help us, this is an indication of what we would expect to see: that the churches, the congregations of God, would be compromised, and the lawless would rise up and pull you away from the truth—pull you away from the commandments.

Now, what are these men saying? What is the message of these *paranomoi*? This is the message: 1 Maccabees 1:11— ... saying, “Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles around us ... Ah, we need to assimilate and take on the value system of those on the outside, lest we offend. We need to start thinking as the world thinks. See, we need to take on the definition of the things that the world thinks are evil and hateful and the things that they think are good. We need to take that; we need to absorb that. We need to become more like the world. Again, I say, “God, help us,” because all you need to do is look out in the church right now. This is exactly what's happening. The churches are doing everything they can to bend over backwards to become more like the world, lest they offend. I mean, we're reading this in the story of Hanukkah, which is prophetic about the end of the age and the rise of the Antichrist. I wonder what time it is.

And look at the motivation, because this goes to the heart of today's message. The motivation for compromising and becoming more like the world is this: “... for since we separated from them many disasters have come upon us.” (Emphasis added). See, once Israel is thrown into the crucible, and they're experiencing trial and tribulation, and their faith is being tested, we now have *paranomoi*; we have the lawless rising up within the church, within the body, the congregation of God itself, and offering the congregation the solution, and the solution is compromise. Walk away from the very things you're clinging to that are offensive. This is literally what's going on in the day. The thing that they're clinging to, the Holy Word of God, is completely offensive, just as it is now. People are literally ripping out certain pages of the Torah, out of the old, even out of the new. People are reinterpreting passages because they don't like what they say; it's unbelievable. This is what false prophets do; they teach the world to compromise.

You know, it's interesting. There are two voices. One voice is going this way, communicating to the church, You need to compromise; you need to become more like the world. And then there's another voice. It's the Holy Spirit telling you (Revelation 18:4), “Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.” Paul's words are so powerful when he says listen (2 Corinthians 6:14-15),¹⁴ ... “For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with the demons, with Belial? And his answer is “none.”

And he goes on to get into the prophet Isaiah, which talks about (2 Corinthians 6:17), “Come out and be separate, and I will receive you.” Do you understand how important it is that we are sanctified? That's what “sanctified” means—to be separated. And oh, those words of Yeshua, they echo. That word when He's praying to His Father in John 17:17. Yeshua literally prays, “Father, sanctify them; set them apart by Your truth.” Your truth. And then he says, “Your word is truth.” That's the call of the Holy Spirit. No, we're to be set apart. We're to remain right here, regardless of the context.

And yet, the spirit of the devil, the spirit of the Antichrist, is going to come and say, “Set aside truth. You don't need to be sanctified. Join us, and all will be well.” How do they respond to these deceivers? How does the congregation of God respond? —1 Maccabees 1:12— This proposal pleased them. Oh God, help us. Again, this is the prophetic template of what we would see in the last days. And I think of Paul's words, which speak so loudly, —2 Timothy 4:3-4—³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. When Paul uses that terminology, “*hygianousēs didaskalias* (ὑγιαινούσης διδασκαλίας),” this sound doctrine, it's explicitly of the law, truth. Time will come when they will not endure; they will not cling to truth, to His Holy Word, to His Torah. But according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;⁴ and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables, to lies.

And that's literally what's happening in our story. We want to listen, and you're telling us things like we don't need to suffer. We don't need to go through this tribulation. We can totally ease this. See, these false prophets have brought a solution to their suffering. We can end it. Compromise. I'm going to tell you right now, when the solution to your suffering becomes compromising the truth, you're a dead man. The solution to our suffering is Yeshua, and He will deliver us. That's where we put our trust: in Yeshua the Messiah.

1 Maccabees 1:15—[They joined with the Gentiles](#), they're joining with the world, [and sold themselves to do evil](#). They sold their souls to the devil. For what? I mean, it reminds me of Esau. He sold his birthright for a bowl of stew to ease what he was going through. He was willing to sell it, and this is exactly what's happening here. And this is what is described in Revelation. Read the Book of Revelation. I mean, people acquiesce to the mark of the beast. Everyone, young and old, rich, poor, free, and slave. They receive the mark.

Now, fast-forwarding a little bit, coming to 167 BC. This Antiochus, this Antichrist figure, sends his emissary with a very large army to Jerusalem. And it's interesting; this emissary comes in, and he speaks peaceably. He speaks kindly and gently to the inhabitants. And when you think about war, and you think about strategy, and you think about what's going on here, really, what this emissary is doing is setting up camp; he's getting the lay of the land to limit casualties. And then, just like that, he unleashes hell on all of Jerusalem. Burns the city to the ground, slaughters innocent men, takes women and children captive, and destroys the homes. And if that weren't enough, then what he does is he grabs wicked and evil men, and he plants them in Jerusalem. And Antiochus builds strongholds, just like the principalities and powers build strongholds against us. He builds strongholds in Jerusalem, fortifying it to control it. Absolutely, everything has been given over to the devil. It's a horrible, horrible time.

Then we come to 1 Maccabees 1:41—[Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people](#) (emphasis added). Again, at the end of the age, in the last days, this is what's going to happen. The world is going to be called to become one. We all need to come together for the greater cause. And we have an entity literally established right now, facilitating this right before our eyes; it's called the UN. And the UN, please understand, has a very clear agenda. We won't go into that today, but their agenda is very clear about what they're seeking to accomplish. And it is not a coincidence that this is the move of the Antichrist.

When the Antichrist goes to gather, we've seen this before in the Book of Genesis in chapter 11: Nimrod, an Antichrist figure, goes out to the world and gathers them all to the tower of Babel. To come together to build the tower of Babel for what purpose? To literally disconnect from God, and they wanted to build a tower so high that they could live any way they wanted. And God, if You think You're going to flood the world again, we'll escape Your judgment. It's a totally rebellious act against God.



So, there's this call that everyone needs to be one—1 Maccabees 1:42—and that all should give up their particular customs. In Greek, this is “*nomimos* (νόμιμος),” which literally talks about Your law. The law is the way you are convicted to live according to what is prescribed in God's Word. Abandon that. Do you understand? This is what the spirit of Antichrist demands. The spirit of Antichrist cannot cohabit with the truth. The truth must be cast down.

1 Maccabees 1:43—All the gentiles accepted the command of the king ... Oh, that sounds great. We'll abandon our ways for your worship. Well, this should sound familiar because again, this is what we read in the Book of Revelation. All are being commissioned to worship the beast and to receive his mark—all. And so, the Gentiles accepted it. This is not a surprise; what we read next is. **Many**, not some, many, even from Israel. What? **Gladly adopted his religion**, his worship, and his form of worship (emphasis added). They gladly adopted it. And so instead of glorying in tribulation, they were glorying in the compromise. Instead of counting it all joy to suffer for His name's sake, they're counting it joy to abandon His Word. God have mercy. This is not the response that we want to see.

I think I've shared this a time or two. There was a woman who I heard talking about the grace of Jesus, and it began really well. And in fact, I could appreciate what I was hearing, talking about the grace of Jesus and the power of that grace. She then went on to talk about how it's so powerful that even if Christians accept the mark of the beast, they're still saved. Do you understand? I want you to listen to this. I had to walk away from this situation, going, God, why are you putting people like this in front? Why did I even have to hear this? Why does this rhetoric exist? Because it blew my mind. Here we are. The mark of the beast isn't even, globally speaking, being enforced, and you already have Christians justifying the action of taking the mark. You cannot make this stuff up. It was so bizarre to me. And the idea lying behind it was, you know what? God's grace is so powerful, and we are going to need Christians on the other side so that we can continue to preach the gospel to everyone who is given the mark. Do you see this insanity?

And what I'm telling you right now, make no mistake, is the same spirit that was alive and well in the Hanukkah story, where many gladly adopted his religion ... They were not in their right mind, and they were not thinking clearly. They couldn't think clearly because they walked away from the light of truth; they walked away from this. And these things they were justifying. For them to be glad about it, they were telling themselves, "All is well. This is actually going to work out for us," because nobody in their right mind would do this if they had the picture of judgment: of standing before an awesome and holy God judging according to His law. Nobody would do that if they had that image.

Now, as we continue, and I want you to pay attention, this is such an astounding detail. This is one of those moments, you guys, that stops me. I mean, I can't tell you how many times when I've read this, I'm like, what in the world? This is a moment you stop, you meditate, and you take it in. Because in conjunction with this statement of Israel adopting his religion, meaning I'm taking on the worship of the Antichrist, listen to what is said. — 1 Maccabees 1:43— ... **they sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath** (emphasis added).

Do you understand why this is mind-blowing? Because here's what I can tell you. When you start combing through First and Second Maccabees, it talks about all sorts of sins. There's a plethora of things that are mentioned. Why pray tell, as we're talking about the spirit of Antichrist and Israel departing? We're not talking about Gentiles; we're talking about Israel departing from the faith. The two things that are mentioned are idolatry and defiling the Shabbat—unbelievable.

How are we supposed to understand this? Well, let me first begin to say, do not ever let anyone tell you the Shabbat doesn't matter. It is so powerful, it is so important, and it's the thing that the Antichrist went after. You'll never convince me when you say, "Oh, and guess what? The Antichrist isn't my only metric; it's the Holy Word of God; that's my metric." When God says, "Remember, don't forget to keep Shabbat holy." That's a command—don't turn it into a suggestion. And which I hear a lot of today, that people say, "You know, if you want to keep the Sabbath, that's great. There's nothing wrong with it, but you don't have to." When you start turning commandments into suggestions, that is the devil's work. For the Antichrist to go after this, that should be sobering.

But it is interesting that these two are brought side by side, almost as though we have this giant parenthetical statement here. Why these two? Well, when you look at the Ten Commandments, what do you see? The first four of the Ten Commandments have to do with the greatest, the first, and the best commandment there is: loving the LORD your God. And it envelops because it begins, "You shall have no other gods before me." That's the first one. What is the last commandment in the Great Commandment? Shabbat. It literally enveloped the first and greatest commandment. Really, really powerful.

Moving on to 1 Maccabees 1:48b—[They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane](#). Antiochus had his soldiers, and again, listen to me because this is important: this is the work of the Antichrist, shoving pig down the throats of the Jewish people. In fact, there's a story in 2nd Maccabees about shoving a pig into a priest's mouth, and he spat it out, and he refused to consume and defile such an abomination. Again, I tell you, when you have the Antichrist going after Shabbat, and you have the Antichrist going after the food laws, where you distinguish between clean and unclean, let us sober up a little bit. It's the work of the Antichrist. He wants them to be defiled in every way.

And here's why: isn't this interesting? Now, pay attention here; you can't even make this stuff up. The concept of "Hey, we're supposed to make a distinction between clean and unclean food. We're not to become defiled." It then says this in 1 Maccabees 1:49—[so that they would forget the law and change all the ordinances](#) (emphasis added). Is it a coincidence that today, in far too much of the church, the very same people who would tell you, "It doesn't matter what Christians eat. Christians are free to eat pork." These are the same people who have forgotten the Torah. The whole thing is so surreal. I mean, if there was any story that could capture the move of the Antichrist and what he does, this is the story. But of course, the devil worked hard to take this out so that Christianity doesn't read this anymore. It's unbelievable.

1 Maccabees 1:50—[He added, "And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die."](#) Exactly what you read in the Book of Revelation: don't receive the mark. Everyone who did not receive it is put to death. You will be called to worship the beast or else. And get this: — 1 Maccabees 1:56—[The books of the law](#), the Torah, [that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire](#). The Antichrist is literally casting truth to the ground. He cannot have... This book (Bible) is so valuable and so powerful; if he wants to continue to control, if he wants to continue to enslave and to bind, you can't have this floating around. There can be none of it; it has to be burned. That's how dangerous this book is. Let someone

pick it up, and the Holy Spirit will fill his heart with truth. And he'll have clarity because I'll tell you right now, this book will absolutely dismember every lie and deception put forward in the pits of hell. Every single lie forged is going to be destroyed.

And that cunning spirit that comes in—we're told by Yeshua Himself (Matthew 24:24) **"to deceive, if possible, even the elect."** You will know that cunning spirit because you have the truth. Not even the most unimaginable deception will take you out because you refuse to let the truth go. You cling to the truth, amen? It just shows you the devil's war is all against God's Holy Word, and that war began in the garden when Satan came to unburden Eve with the law. So, you don't need that; you don't need God's word. You just take that away, and everything's all right; you're going to be fine. In fact, you're going to progress. God help us.

Man, all throughout history, it's not even just the garden, but I think of ... How many of you have heard of William Tyndale? Make sure you thank the Lord for his life. Because the primary reason we have the Bibles today in English, which for some of us is the only language we know, is because of the work of William Tyndale. He actually gave his life; he was burned at the stake. And do you know why he was burned at the stake? Because he had the audacity to translate the Bible into the English vernacular, into the common vernacular of the people. Because his vision was, you know what? The church was abusing its power, and the Bible at that time was in Latin. And he saw the corruption, just like many others in his day saw the corruption in the church, and so he made it his goal to translate the Bible. And keep in mind, he wasn't like his predecessor, Whitcliffe. Wycliffe did great work, but he translated from the Latin and brought it into English.

Tyndale translated from the Hebrew and the Greek. And the church wasn't having it; it was illegal to do that. Did Tyndale care? He didn't care. He knew how important the Word of God was to have in every single person's hand. From the man who's plowing the fields to the children, they needed the word of God. He has to leave England to do this and go to Worms in Germany. He translates it, and then he smuggles these Bibles in. Once they caught wind, do you know what they did? In 1526, he translated it; he brought it in. They outlawed that Bible; they seized the Bibles, and they were banned. They were going to homes searching for these Bibles. You can't even make this up. This is in England, and when they found them, do you know what they did? They burned them. They were burning Bibles in England in Tyndale's day because he translated them into English.

Now I'm sharing this with you because everywhere I go in history, I see the devil going after the truth, the thing that sets us free. That's how powerful the Bible is. And there are times we're disconnecting from the reality of the power, and you need to reconnect right now. Amen? You know, the psalmist—I mean, my brain just floods with thoughts on this issue. But the psalmist says in Psalm 119:72, **The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver.** In other words, oh, you can give me all the riches of the world; they're nothing. The riches I want are Your holy law. That's the riches of the kingdom.

1 Maccabees 1:57—**Anyone found possessing the book of the covenant**, the Torah, **or anyone who adhered to the law**, so whether you have the Torah or you're walking it out because it's in your heart, what happened? **Was condemned to death by decree of the king** (emphasis added). And this, make no mistake, is the very stage in the Book of Revelation. This will be the stage at the end of the age. The spirit of Antichrist will be completely intolerant of this, and this book (Bible) is already being detailed as hate speech; it's already happening. Wake up; the spirit of the Antichrist is going forth.

1 Maccabees 1:62— **But many in Israel**, praise the Lord, **stood firm**; this is the remnant. **And were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food** (emphasis added). Because they had the conviction of the law, God's holy Word, they were not even going to give in to that. And you know, there's a story. As you look at it, the priest was offered, "Just pretend you're eating it and we'll silently discard it, and you'll be fine." I'm not kidding; I'm not making this up. Even the soldier who respected this priest offered him a way out. Just pretend and do it. He was like, "Not going to happen." Not going to happen; I'm not going to pretend to defy the Word of God. He was resolved; Eleazar the priest was resolved in his heart.

1 Maccabees 1:63-64—⁶³ **They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die.** ⁶⁴ **Very great wrath came upon Israel** (emphasis added). The key component is that you have to get it resolved in your heart. You must be connected to His Word. You must be immovable now so that when you're thrown into the crucible, when there is a time of testing, you're not blinking; you're holding fast. You already counted the cost. You're like, "If this is how it's got to be, so be it. I've already made my decision. I have decided to follow Jesus. Have a nice day. It's over."

Jumping ahead to 1 Maccabees 2:17-18—¹⁷ **Then the king's officers spoke to Mattathias as follows:** This is the father of Judah Maccabee. Hanukkah begins, and the unfolding, very much so, of the victory begins with Mattathias, the father of Judah Maccabee. **"You are a leader, honored and great in this town, and supported by sons and brothers.** ¹⁸ **Now be the first to come and do what the king commands, as all the Gentiles, oh, and here's the crazy part, and the people of Judah, the Jews, and those that are left in Jerusalem have done ...** In other words, Antiochus's emissary comes on the scene and says, "Mattathias, look around you. Everyone's doing this. In modern-day speech, it would be that everybody is receiving the mark. Don't be such a buzzkill."

I love his response. He goes on in 1 Maccabees 2:18—**... Then you and your sons will be numbered among the Friends of the king, and you and your sons will be honored with silver and gold and many gifts.** Here's what I'm telling you. When you come into this time of affliction and pain and suffering and tribulation, the devil will give you a way out, and he will bless you. He can make you rich. And there's going to be no more, you know, animosity that we had, all that hate that you felt; all that goes away. Now we can be friends.

Listen to Mattathias in 1 Maccabees 2:19-21—¹⁹ **But Mattathias answered and said in a loud voice, because he wants everyone to hear, "Even if all the nations that live under the rule of the king obey him, and have chosen to obey his commandments, everyone of them abandoning the religion of their ancestors,** ²⁰ **I and my sons and my brothers will continue to live by the covenant of our ancestors.** ²¹ **Far be it from us to desert the law and the ordinances** (emphasis added). I'm not going anywhere. I'm going to stand on His holy Word; I will be immovable. I don't care; the whole earth can go; the whole earth can follow. You need to have this resolved. Because the time is going to come, you're going to be looking all around you, and nobody's going to be on your page; it's just you and Yeshua, and you need to remember that. He won't leave you or forsake you because you've clung to Him. He's not going to leave you and forsake you in this moment. You want to talk about having your faith tested. I mean, this is a story that exhibits that; what a phenomenal example.

1 Maccabees 2:49-50, 61—⁴⁹ **Now the days drew near for Mattathias to die, and he said to his sons: "Arrogance and scorn have now become strong; it is a time of ruin and furious anger"** (emphasis added). See, he's going on; he's going to die. He wants to leave his sons a word. And listen to me, he's leaving us a word today because I can tell you, as we look at the topography of what's going on, arrogance and scorn have become strong. The truth is offensive; it's absolutely hated, and therefore,

listen to these words.⁵⁰ Now, my children, show zeal for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors.⁶¹ “And so observe, from generation to generation, that **none of those who put their trust in Him will lack strength** (emphasis added). Your faith in Yeshua is what's going to carry you to the end. Period. Nothing else is going to carry you to the end, but you have to lock it in now—faith in Yeshua.

[Closing prayer]

Abba Father, we give You praise and glory for the faithfulness of Your Word, for the truth of Your Word, and for the glorious nature of the wisdom that we can extract from Your Holy Word. There is nothing comparable to Your Word. The power—(Hebrews 4:12) it **is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.** And true discernment is not the ability to tell the difference between right and wrong; it's the ability to tell the difference between that which is right and that which appears right.

And so, Lord, I know where we are at; I know how soon Your return is. And I pray we become—we take heed to Mattathias's wisdom—that we become resolved in heart. That we put our hope and trust in Yeshua the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, that we are bold for His name, and that we cling to His words, and not one word of His falls to the ground on our watch, but we walk them out. May Your Holy Name, Yeshua, be magnified in these last days by Your faithful elect that stands strong, that will be bold as Mattathias was bold, and he was loud. He declared the truth of who You are. He was unashamed; he was not ashamed of the Gospel. And I love those words Paul speaks (Romans 1:16), “**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also to the world.**”

And so, we just thank You for Your goodness, Lord. We are not even people who deserve to open this book and to read the glorious riches and the truth of Your character. We are not worthy. And every time we open this book, Lord, let us be in awe of who You are. Let us stand in awe of Your Word. And we just pray this in Yeshua's mighty name. Amen.