

Chapter VII

THE REVELATION OF THE ANTICHRIST

In our previous chapter we observed that the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ has provided us with a prophetic overview of the church age. This was done with the seven letters to seven churches in Asia in the first century. The book of the Revelation has also provided an overview of the first resurrection with John's call into heaven in the fourth chapter. These overviews continue throughout the book of the Revelation so that in chapter five the scene is in heaven, where John declares:

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. (Revelation 5:1-4)

The opening of the seven seals that guard the contents of this book will begin the events of the seventieth week of Daniel. This week, as we have seen, cannot begin until the antichrist makes a covenant with Israel for one week (Daniel 9:27); and the antichrist cannot be revealed

The Revelation of the Antichrist

until that which hinders is taken out of the way (II Thessalonians 2:7). That which hinders was removed in the fourth chapter of the Revelation when we observed the first resurrection. Now, in the fifth chapter, we are confronted with this seven-sealed book.

It is important for us to be aware that many of the events in the book of the Revelation are presented like scenes in a play. A chapter in the Revelation may present events that are coincidental or almost coincidental with events in preceding chapters or events in succeeding chapters. Events are also presented sequentially. We must not forget that when dealing with prophecy, things written together are not always fulfilled together. We must also be aware that in the Revelation there are flashbacks in time, so that after considering several events, we may consider events that preceded the events we just considered. There are also portions of the Revelation that flash forward in time. The timing of the events is determined by a careful examination of the events in the Revelation with other events in the Revelation, and by a comparison of those texts with relevant Scripture throughout the Word of God. For example, it may appear that the events in the fifth chapter of the book of the Revelation occur sometime after the events of the fourth chapter, but this is not the case. When these events are finally fulfilled, the amount of time between the events will be so slight they will appear to occur at the same time.

This is discovered in the fifteenth chapter of II Samuel where it is revealed that Absalom sought to overthrow the kingdom of David, his father. He stole the hearts of the people by subtlety, claiming he would do them justice if they brought their complaints against the king to him. He *prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him* (II Samuel 15:1). This was a declaration of his intent to be king. He sent spies throughout all of the land and

The Revelation of the Antichrist

declared, *As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron* (II Samuel 15:10).

Absalom is a type of the antichrist. This can be seen in many ways. He possessed great beauty like Lucifer (Ezekiel 28:17), so that the Scripture says, *But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him* (II Samuel 14:25). Absalom was like the serpent who deceived Eve (Genesis 3:1), he *stole the hearts of the men of Israel* with subtlety (II Samuel 15:6). Absalom was like Cain (and all who follow the way of Cain), because the driving force in his life was *a way which seemeth right unto a man*. He did not recognize, as all who are trapped in *a way which seemeth right* do not recognize, that all of the ways which come from that singular way end in death (eternal separation from God). They are all rooted in the lie of the devil: *Ye shall not surely die ... and ye shall be as [God], knowing good and evil* (Genesis 3:4-5). Consequently the life of Absalom clearly manifested his judicial participation in *the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil* through the federal headship of Adam. The self-righteousness obtained from that tree dominated his every thought, so that he thought himself more righteous than David, his father. Absalom was like Korah, who usurped the authority of Moses and Aaron (compare Numbers 16 with Jude 1:11), in that he rebelled against the authority of David. He was also like Lucifer, when Lucifer attempted to overthrow the throne of God. Lucifer convinced one-third of the angels that he could be God, and Absalom thought he should be king. *Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause may come unto me, and I would do him justice* (II Samuel 15:4). Absalom's perspective was the perspective of the world.

The Revelation of the Antichrist

It did not allow for the sovereignty of God or of David his father, who, in the typology of Scripture, represents the Lord Jesus Christ. Finally, in rebellion against God and David, Absalom pronounced himself king in Hebron at the sound of the trumpet (II Samuel 15:10). Likewise, at the time of the first resurrection, the antichrist will counterfeit the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ by declaring himself to be the Christ *with signs and lying wonders* (II Thessalonians 2:9).

This sequence of events (which allows for the revelation of the antichrist at virtually the same moment that the first resurrection takes place) agrees with the sequence we learned in our studies of the seven feasts of the Jews. We learned that the first of the last three feasts was the feast of trumpets. We learned it corresponds to the first resurrection, when ... *the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord* (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).

As we consider the acts of Absalom, prior to the time he declared himself to be king, his acts correspond with the acts of present-day apostate churches. These churches are in the process of stealing the hearts of the people with subtlety, just as Absalom stole the hearts of the Jews. They give lip service to Christ as Absalom gave lip service to his father; yet they have denied the Person or the work of Christ, or both the Person and the work of Christ, by the humanly generated doctrines which they hold.

The apostle John warned, *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not*

The Revelation of the Antichrist

that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist (II John 1:7). This non-confession means (by interpretation) a non-agreement with the Word of God about the Person or the work of Christ. These churches have abandoned the fundamental truths of the Word of God for the works of their own hands and a pseudo-unity among the various denominations under the canopy of Christianity.

The prophet Samuel revealed that at about the same time that Absalom was declaring himself king in Hebron, David, his wives, and his children fled from Jerusalem (II Samuel 15:14). This was a prophetic portrayal of the first resurrection (when the redeemed of all ages will be caught into the presence of our Lord in heaven), and Absalom's reign in Hebron was a portrayal of the antichrist becoming the eighth ruler over the fourth world empire, Rome.

It is interesting to note, in the series of events in II Samuel when David was compelled to flee Jerusalem, he left ten concubines *to keep the house*. These concubines correspond with the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image, and they also correspond with the ten horns in the seventeenth chapter of the book of the Revelation.

A concubine is not a wife, but functions as a wife. The churches (which fragmented from Rome during the Protestant Reformation) will apostatize before the coming of our Lord. They are seen in the seventeenth chapter of the Revelation reunited with the Great Whore. These are not the bride of Christ, but they think they are, and, until their apostasy, they once functioned as the Bride of Christ. It is these apostate churches, along with the Great Whore, which will enthrone the antichrist and declare him to be the Christ.

Apostasy (a departure from the truth to false worship) is categorized in Scripture as

The Revelation of the Antichrist

fornication. This is the reason Rome (at this stage the Roman church) is called *THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS*. It is also the reason the ten horns associated with the Great Whore are seen in the ten concubines with whom Absalom committed fornication (according to the counsel of Ahithophel) in the seventeenth chapter of II Samuel. At the return of David these concubines were put away *unto the day of their death* (II Samuel 20:3).

In John's vision in the fifth chapter of the Revelation, there was no one in heaven or in the earth who was worthy to open the seven-sealed book in the hand of our Lord. Nevertheless:

... one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. (Revelation 5:5)

This brings us to the opening of the seals in the sixth chapter of the book of the Revelation:

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four [living creatures] saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. (Revelation 6:1-2)

If we compare this text with the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, described in the nineteenth chapter of the book of the Revelation, it is evident that our Lord's coming is as a Rider on a white horse. The fact that the rider in the sixth chapter and the Rider in the nineteenth chapter are both on white horses has caused some to assume they are the same, but they are not. The events that follow the appearances of the two riders identify the differences between them.

When the rider in the sixth chapter of the Revelation comes, he will bring peace to the earth and then, as revealed with the opening of the next three seals, he will *take peace from the earth*; he will control the world's economy, so that a day's wages will be required to subsist (Revelation 6:5); and he will kill all who fail to worship him (Revelation 6:8; 13:7-8; and 14:12-

The Revelation of the Antichrist

13). These events do not correspond with the events in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation relating to the coming of our Lord. This can only mean that the riders in the two chapters are different riders.

This gives us the significance of the *white horses*. Since our Lord is the Rider on the white horse in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, the rider in the sixth chapter must be a counterfeit of our Lord. This is confirmed by the apostle Paul in his second epistle to the Thessalonians:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day [the second coming of Christ] shall not come, except there come a falling away first [the apostasy of the churches], and that man of sin be revealed [the antichrist], the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (II Thessalonians 2:3-4)

Paul described how the antichrist will do this. *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved* (II Thessalonians 2:9).

This hoax will be unhindered because all of the redeemed will have been removed from the earth by the first resurrection. This means that for a brief period of time there will not be anyone on the earth who will be able to discern the truth of the Scriptures, because ... *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned* (I Corinthians 2:14).

Even so there will be those upon this earth who will claim authority from God in these matters. The primary authority will be the false prophet (who will probably be the Roman pope

The Revelation of the Antichrist

at the time of these events), and the secondary authority will be the heads of the apostate churches (counterfeit Christians who have settled the differences that caused them to be fractured from the Roman church at the time of the protestant reformation movement). These two sources will assure the world that the antichrist is the Christ.

Later, after the hoax has been perpetrated and the world has embraced the antichrist as the Christ, God will bring the one hundred and forty-four thousand witnesses to mount Zion to testify to the truth and to preach the everlasting gospel to the world during the great tribulation period. These will be Jews, twelve thousand of each of the twelve tribes of Israel. They will be virgins in the sense that in their lives they were not corrupted with all of the false teachings and idolatry that had corrupted the nation of Israel (see II Corinthians 11:2). It is a very good possibility that these will be those Jews who were raised from the dead at the time of our Lord's resurrection from the dead (compare Matthew 27:52-53 with Revelation 14:4-5).

The opening of the first seal of the seven-sealed book reveals the antichrist as Paul has revealed him: he is a counterfeit of the Lord Jesus Christ who would deceive (*if it were possible*) the very elect. His conquest is bloodless. He has a bow in his hand, but no arrow. He is after the minds of men (like Absalom, the apostate churches, and all of the false religious systems of this world). Therefore David wrote:

In the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain? For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they make ready their arrow upon the string, that they may privily shoot at the upright in heart. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? (Psalm 11:1-3)

The spirit of antichrist has always had one mission. It is to destroy the foundations of the truth of the Word of God so that subsequent generations of those who have been the custodians

The Revelation of the Antichrist

of the truth *are destroyed for lack of knowledge*. This was done to Israel by the counsel of Balaam. Balaam could not curse Israel, though it was his desire to do so for reward, but he had an ingenious idea. It is not stated in Scripture, though it is implied, that he taught Israel to violate their separation from the Moabites and other inhabitants of the land. He taught them there was no difference between them and the people of the land. He did this by emphasizing that the Moabites were their brothers through Lot, Abraham's nephew.

It did not take long for Balaam's counsel to produce the desired results. The young people in Israel began to marry the people of the land and to embrace their gods. The result was that Israel became steeped in idolatry and fell under the curse of God. Throughout the church age, similar counsel to that of Balaam has produced generations of professing Christians who are (and have been) *destroyed for lack of knowledge*.

The opening of the second seal reveals the antichrist in another aspect of his coming. When he first comes he will bring peace to the earth. Then, in an undetermined amount of time, he will take peace from the earth. Remember the warning of the apostle Paul, *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape* (I Thessalonians 5:3).

And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth. (Revelation 6:5-8)

The Revelation of the Antichrist

The antichrist will be the man for all seasons that the world has been looking for. The opening of the first four seals reveals that he will rule the world religiously, politically, and economically. In Scripture he has been represented in two previous empires called Babel (ruled by Nimrod), and Babylon (ruled by Nebuchadnezzar). He will reign over the fourth world empire (Rome) as its eighth ruler. This empire is called Babylon in the Revelation of John.

The revelation of the antichrist continues in the thirteenth chapter of the book of the Revelation. There it is revealed that his empire will be a composite of the four world empires of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and of Daniel's vision in the seventh chapter of Daniel.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. (Revelation 13:1-2)

This fourfold aspect of the antichrist's reign was seen in the third chapter of the book of Daniel when Nebuchadnezzar was lifted up in pride and saw his empire (the empire of Babylon) as the only empire in the future of mankind. Nebuchadnezzar ignored Daniel's interpretation of his dream and made an image all of gold instead of the four metals of the dream. It was sixty cubits tall and six cubits wide and at the sound of six instruments of music he demanded that all in his kingdom worship the image which he had made (compare Revelation 13:18).

He did this despite the fact that Daniel had clearly shown him that there were to be four world empires according to the details of his dream. God judged Nebuchadnezzar for his self-willed pride and caused him to go insane for a period of time. He did this so that Nebuchadnezzar, and all future generations, would recognize that *the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men,*

The Revelation of the Antichrist

and giveth it to whomsoever he will (Daniel 4:17).

Nebuchadnezzar's image was a portrayal of the empire of the antichrist, *BABYLON THE GREAT, the mother of harlots*. It represents the reign of the antichrist, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego represent those in the nation of Israel who will refuse to worship the image of the beast and to receive his mark in their foreheads or in their hands. (See Daniel 3:1-25)

And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? (Revelation 13:3-4)

What is this head that was wounded to death? Some have suggested that it is imperial Rome, which died in 1453 A.D. (Scofield Reference Bible, note 1, page 1342) This is a possible explanation of the wounded head, for the imperial aspect of Rome will be revived when the antichrist becomes the eighth ruler over the fourth world empire. Nevertheless it is my personal belief that this is a reference to Judas Iscariot, who I believe will be the antichrist.

The antichrist is described by the apostle John as *the beast that was, and is not, and yet is* (Revelation 17:8). Judas Iscariot lived during the ministry of our Lord (he was), he is presently dead (he is not), and if he is the antichrist, he will be upon the earth once again. A comparison between the description of the dragon (the devil) in the twelfth chapter of the Revelation and the description of the antichrist in the thirteenth chapter is the same. Paul described the antichrist as the son of perdition. In the sixth chapter of the gospel of John, our Lord called Judas the devil, and in his intercessory prayer (in the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of John) our Lord called Judas the son of perdition.

If Judas is the antichrist, there is not another person (known to us) who has lived, who

The Revelation of the Antichrist

presently does not exist, and who could come in the future and counterfeit the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ more convincingly than Judas Iscariot. Consider this. After three years of ministry with our Lord, when our Lord indicated that one of the twelve would betray Him, they all asked, *Is it I?* Even when our Lord dipped the sop and gave it to Judas, none of the disciples understood what He had done. They thought Judas (because he held the purse) was being sent to buy something they needed for the feast of the Passover. This means that what the eleven did, they did by the power of God, but what Judas did, he did by the power of the devil. This, indeed, fits the Biblical description of the antichrist.

And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. (Revelation 13:5-10)

In our study of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will of necessity continue in our consideration of the antichrist, but this concludes this chapter on *The Revelation of the Antichrist*.