



A HISTORY OF ANTI-CHRIST PART I - THE ANTEDELUVIAN AGE

By Albert James Dager

When the term “anti-Christ” is mentioned, there immediately comes to the minds of most Christians an image of a last-days man possessed of unimaginable evil—a man who will plunge the world into a time of great tribulation and will persecute the saints of God and, especially, the Jews living during his time. The truth is that anti-Christ has been at work since the foundation of creation. Anti-Christ is a spirit as much as, if not more than, any individual person. There have been many anti-Christes throughout history.

This does not negate the biblical prophecy of a last-days “man of sin.” It is merely to point out that the spirit of anti-Christ is far more prevalent than most would imagine, insinuating itself into every area of human endeavor including the media, government, and economics, as well as social, political, and military institutions, and every religion including even the Christian churches. This is why John, in warning about the impending last-days anti-Christ, stated:

Little children, it is the last time, and as you have heard that anti-Christ shall come, even now there are many anti-Christes, whereby we know that it is the last time. (1 John 2:18)

As history has progressed, and especially since the time of Jesus’ death on the cross and His resurrection, both of which resulted in the spiritual defeat of Satan and the conquest of sin and death, the anti-Christ spirit has increased its efforts to destroy the work of Christ in the hearts and minds of men, as well as to hinder the effect of the Gospel upon the nations. To understand how the anti-Christ spirit works, and its purpose, we



will look at its major implications upon God’s creation and, particularly, upon mankind. In order to do this we will be consulting history as well as Scripture. The Hebrew Scriptures were among the earliest histories of mankind. This is important because Scripture is so often dismissed as a viable source of historical information.

Many ancient civilizations have produced records of mankind’s achievements and there is no reason to question these records. Yet when it comes to the biblical records of the Hebrews and their civilization, they are dismissed as unworthy of study by historians simply because they contain spiritual guidelines and prophecies which unregenerate men choose to ignore to their own hurt. Although skeptics ridicule the Hebrew Scriptures and attempt to paint them as fantasies written by imaginative men, the truth is that they have proven themselves reliable historical records as well as accurate prophetic

indicators of the mind of God. Without these historical records there would be no reliable witnesses to the existence of the anti-Christ spirit, let alone prophetic warnings of its role in the future of the earth and mankind. Those who rely solely upon secular records for understanding man’s history are missing the most important elements that explain the reasons man’s history has progressed as it has. More important, they are missing the elements that explain man’s future and how individuals can avoid the spiritual pitfalls that drive mankind to the brink of destruction.

No history outside of the Bible records events that transpired at the very beginning of man’s existence and, in fact, at the very beginning of creation. The earliest secular histories go back in time no further than the ancient Etruscan civilizations of the Middle East. Those post-flood civilizations arose almost two thousand years after the creation of man. There are no records extant that are contemporary to the antediluvian (pre-flood) period. The only history of that time is found in the writings of Moses, which date to about 2600 years after Adam’s creation.

The question arises, and is certainly posed by skeptics, as to why we should believe Moses’ accounts. How could he have known of events that transpired almost three thousand years before he wrote? The answer lies in the genealogy of the Hebrew patriarchs.

It is fashionable in media representations of Christians reading the Scriptures to focus on the “begats” of that genealogy. Actors drone on about “Mahalaleel begat

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Jared; Jared begat Enoch; Enoch begat Methuselah," and-on-and-on. This gives the impression that the Bible is nothing more than an endless droning on of unimportant and boring data. The truth is that the genealogy of the Hebrew patriarchs contains a wealth of information important to the recognition of Israel's Messiah, and offers good reason to trust the Scriptures for their historical accuracy.

The chart below demonstrates that, although some two-and-a-half millennia passed between Adam and Moses, there

were close ties between the two that, for all practical purposes, link them over just a few generations.

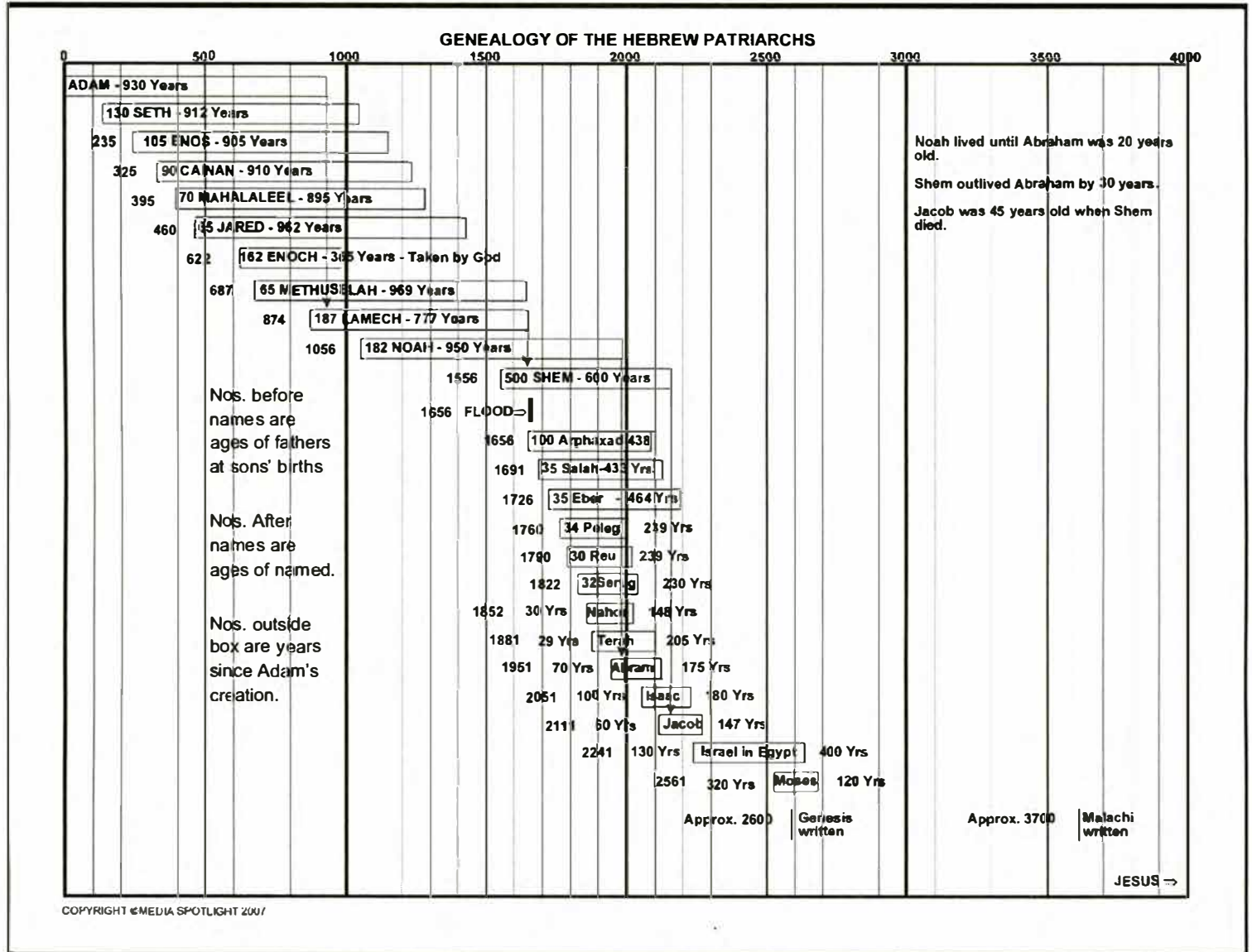
For example, Adam lived long enough to convey the history of the creation to Noah's father, Lamech. Lamech, in turn, was the grandfather of Shem. Shem lived long enough to be able to convey the truth to Jacob! Jacob was the patriarch of the nation of Israel to which Moses was born. Even discounting the proven prophetic nature of the Scriptures, Moses could certainly have recorded with accuracy the knowledge that would have been handed down to him by his elders.

Thus, from Adam to Jacob the information was as fresh as that of a man to his great-great-grandson. Add to this the accurate prophetic nature of Moses' writings, and we have excellent reason to put our trust in his account of man's earliest history.

Moses, writing about the earliest of man's history beginning with the first man, Adam, takes us back before man was even created. "In the beginning, God..." (Genesis 1:1).

The "beginning" refers to the dateless past, the time that the Word of God spoke into existence everything that would come to be—every atom and sub-atomic particle that would take on a form assigned it by the Creator.

It is a scientific given that (God aside) matter cannot be created or destroyed. All the matter that exists in the universe has been there since its inception and, although matter may take on different forms at different times, it cannot be destroyed. The nutrients that we take into our bodies build muscle, blood, skin, bone, and other essential elements. As we grow from newborns to adults the atoms



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in our bodies shift into different forms. When we die, those atoms convert to dust to be reused in the formation of other elements. The stability of matter contributes to the stability of the creation as a whole and, to a degree, allows for predictability and accuracy in science. Because the creation is stable, man has been able to calculate where heavenly bodies will be in relation to the earth (even particular spots on the earth), so that he has been able to send his machines to explore the outer reaches of the solar system and beyond. Every scientific discipline rests upon the important fact that the material universe is measurable and predictable in its composition and functioning.

These mundane aspects of the creation are important to us, but not as important as the spiritual aspects. And this is where the spirit of anti-Christ comes in. This spirit, which opposes everything that is of God, uses even the stability of the creation to fashion "science" so-called, that is at odds with the true science of God.

As we progress we will see exactly how this works. For now, we will begin with a definition of anti-Christ. From there we will go back to the earliest mentions of anti-Christ and begin our historical progression of its influences among us.

A DEFINITION OF ANTI-CHRIST

If we are to accomplish our study of anti-Christ's progression through history we must first define just what "anti-Christ" means.

It is said by some that the coming anti-Christ will not be against Christ, but will take the place of Christ. He will come as a false messiah to Israel. It is reasoned that the prefix, "anti" does not mean only "against," but also "instead of." But there is no scriptural evidence that the coming anti-Christ will be Jewish, let alone be accepted as Israel's Messiah. Scripture offers the most encompassing understanding of who is anti-Christ:

Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-Christ, that denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son, the same does not have the Father; he that acknowledges the Son has the Father also. (1 John 2:22-23)

For many deceivers have entered into the world, who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-Christ. (2 John 1:7)

Scripture indicates that anti-Christ is whoever denies that Jesus is the Messiah—the uniquely anointed, only-begotten Son of God. This definition of anti-Christ forms the basis for the biblical understanding of what "anti" means: to wit, "against." It also forms the basis for all the rebellion against God that occurs. Even religion (including Christianity to a large degree) is anti-Christ simply because all religions, including large numbers of professing Christians in the churches—among them church leaders—deny that Jesus is the Christ.

When John and all the writers of Scripture refer to "Christ" they are speaking of that unique anointing to which the title "Christ" refers. "Christ" means "anointed." But this is not just any anointing. No man was ever called "Christ" before modern men began to apply the title to any perceived "holy man" of their particular religious affiliation. It was first (and rightly) applied only to Yeshua (Jesus) of Nazareth, and this for two thousand years. He owns it; no man may rightfully usurp it.

Thus, to deny that Jesus is the only Christ or Messiah sent in human flesh through the virgin birth as an act of God is to be anti-Christ. It is to be against Christ.

But this is merely one expression of the anti-Christ spirit. The full definition of anti-Christ is anything or anyone that opposes the will of God to any degree. The reason it is called "anti-Christ," and not just "anti-God" is because God the Father chose to accomplish all things by and for His Son, the Word of God who came forth from Him, and who is the very essence and nature of the Father—God. Speaking of Jesus as the Son of God, the apostle Paul explains:

For by Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether

they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by Him, and for Him, and He existed before all things, and by Him all things consist. (Colossians 1:16-17)

Just as every man and woman today is of the same essence and nature of their father, man, so the Word of God, who came forth from the Father, and who existed with the Father from eternity, is of the same essence and nature as the Father (God). Likewise, every man and woman that has ever lived, and will live, was in Adam from the beginning:

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Corinthians 15:22)

We are born in sin, dead to God, because we were in Adam when he sinned. His genes are our genes. Even though we had no consciousness and, indeed, were not fashioned until the time our immediate fathers and mothers produced the life that germinated in the womb, we were still reckoned as in Adam by God.

In a similar manner the Word of God existed from eternity within the Father and came forth from the Father:

"For the Father Himself loves you because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." (John 16:27-28)

There is no explaining the Godhead beyond this. Nor do I profess to know anything about the Godhead beyond what the Scriptures have revealed. Theologians may argue back-and-forth about the meaning of the Trinity, or any other concept of God, but we cannot go beyond the Scriptures.

What we do know is that the Word of God, who became the man Jesus of Nazareth, is God in the flesh:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by Him, and nothing that was made was made without Him.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness did not understand it....

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-14)

The Word of God became the "Son of Man" in the flesh. Through the virgin birth He acquired the unique anointing as the only-begotten Son of God. All things were created by Jesus Christ, who existed as the Word of God in the beginning with the Father. He came forth from the Father. Just as important, all things were created *for* Jesus Christ according to the will of the Father. The creation is the Father's gift to His Son, fashioned in accordance with the Son's creative powers. Therefore, anything or anyone who opposes the will of the Father opposes the will of the Son who is pre-eminent in creation. All such opposition is anti-Christ.

Much of what we cover in our first two parts are found in the Scriptures with which most of our readers are familiar. Yet each time we consult God's Word we learn new things. It is my hope that this writing will shed some new light into corners of the Scriptures that some may have overlooked or taken for granted.

THE DATELESS PAST

The Word of God existed from the beginning with God the Father (John 1:1). The "beginning" of John 1:1 is not the same as that in Genesis 1:1. John's "beginning" speaks of the dateless past, the eternity in which God dwelt before He created the heavens and the earth "in the beginning" of Genesis 1:1. Obviously, God had to exist before that beginning.

Scripture does not dwell upon what transpired in the time between John 1:1 and Genesis 1:1. Certainly the creation has not stood as long as God has existed. So for all the ageless past in which God existed prior to the accounts of Genesis 1, there must be some history, unstated to man and unfathomable without at least some clues provided by God's Word.

God's abode, Heaven (not the heavens of creation), has existed from the dateless past. No doubt the angels whom He created as His messengers and aides for the

purpose of managing His creation were brought into being during that time. But when, exactly, did God create the heavens and the earth from nothingness? That is the mystery.

Two Theories

There are two theories on the age of the creation that are based on different understandings of Scripture. Both are opposed to the theory of evolution.

The first and most commonly held theory among Christians, is that of a "Young Earth," or "Young Creation." This theory posits that God created the universe about 6,000 years ago. Those who hold to this theory believe that Genesis 1:1 is inextricably tied to the following verses:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. (Genesis 1:1-5)

According to this theory God created the earth void and without form, that is, uninhabitable. He then began to make it habitable by planting a garden in "the east of Eden," and populating it with all forms of life including mankind.

This is considered by most Christians the only orthodox position. It is greatly cherished and defended by many solid believers in Christ, particularly among the "Creation Science" proponents. Among these are scientists of varied disciplines who argue well against evolutionary theory.

The second theory is that the earth is untold eons old, and separates Genesis 1:1 from the following verses. It posits that the six day "creation" was really a refurbishing of the original creation which fell into chaos due to the fall of Satan and the angels who followed him. Some believe also that there were inhabitants of the earth prior to Adam, but they were destroyed by an earth-wide flood similar to Noah's because they, too, followed Satan.

There are good arguments for both sides, although some on each side tend to deride those on the other side.

The young-earth proponents do seem to be more unforgiving of the ancient-earth theorists, some even insisting that believers who oppose them are guilty of heresy. The following is one example of this reasoning, as well as a general statement supporting the young earth theory from Charlie Liebert, a young earth proponent with Creation Science Resources:

Here are the two Biblical reasons why I believe the "young Earth" position is essential to Biblical belief. I do NOT take it because of science, since science is an interpretation of evidence and can and does change. I ONLY use Biblical reasoning when answering the question of the reason for my "young Earth" position. I believe science does, in fact, verify the young Earth but that's not our purpose here. Here are the Biblical reasons why a young Earth is essential:

1) Death Before Sin. The Bible is clear that death was a direct result of Adam's sin, yet all "old Earth" positions have death in the creation long before Adam's sin because they try to accommodate the long ages REQUIRED for evolution. They argue that the death that came by Adam was only spiritual death. If that's the case you then have to explain how we can have a better place in the new Heaven and Earth than Adam had in Eden. Remember in the new creation (I believe it is a restored Eden); "the lion will lie down with the lamb" animals will be herbivores... That could not happen in the worlds old Earthers describe before Adam appeared. God would have used death and struggle as a POSITIVE process to gain improvement in all the old Earth scenarios. Death then would be a creative process used by God. That is NOT the God of Scripture!!!

2) Very Good. At the end of each day God says his creative process is good and at the end of day six the scripture states; "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Genesis 1:31 (KJV). EVERYTHING was VERY GOOD. This expression implies a per-

fect Creation with no sin, death, rebellion... Most "old Earth" processes have the fall of Satan, death, sin, and all other kinds of imperfection present before the end of day six. That would imply that the clear statement of Scripture either wasn't "everything that He had made" or it really wasn't "very good". Thus the "old Earth" position is in direct conflict with the clear words of Scripture.

The old Earth position is heresy because of these two clear violations of God's word. These two conflicts are real and not just interpretation of the meaning of the words. Death before Adam's sin and an imperfect Creation before the end of Day six are concrete violation of the nature and character of God as He revealed Himself in Scripture. There are other indirect Biblical reasons, but they are not as compelling as these two. For example, why did God give us the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 and Luke and Matthew if daring weren't important? I don't believe that any particular believers that hold these positions are not truly saved but I believe the beliefs themselves are heretical. All believers understanding of God is imperfect and I would implore "old Earth" advocates to be receptive to the teaching of God's Word. I was first an atheistic evolutionist, then a theistic evolutionist, then I considered gap, day-age, long days, etc. and finally arrived at the "young Earth" position three years after my conversion and an extended study of both Scripture and science (perhaps a process of evolution in my life!!).¹

Others do posit scientific reasons for belief in a young earth, but the arguments both for and against that theory are plausible. The issue is not only what science says, but how science is interpreted.

Liebert's position is echoed by other young-earth proponents. However, there are a number of holes in this position as stated.

First, the idea that sin entered creation through Adam, and therefore there could not have been an existence of intelligent beings on the earth prior to Adam ignores the scriptural account of Satan's fall. Certainly Satan fell before Adam, because Satan was in the garden tempting Eve before Adam sinned. Young-earth proponents believe that Satan fell just prior to Adam. But there is no scriptural evidence for this. In any case, sin entered creation before Adam sinned. Death and corruption was pronounced upon man and his domain because of Adam's sin, but there is evidence of chaos in the universe that is exhibited in the heavens billions of light-years distant. The description of the earth as "void and without form," and the Garden of Eden being contrasted with the rest of the earth's condition of decay certainly indicates that something was remiss in the earth.

Second, that God confirmed as "very good," everything He did in the six days of Genesis does not negate the possibility of an ancient earth. The ancient-earth theory posits that Genesis 1:1 relates the actual creation of the universe, including the earth, but that it is separated from the refurbishing or "re-creating" of the earth out of chaos due to the fall of Satan and his minions that existed on the earth prior.

These points may be debatable, but it is wrong to accuse of heresy those who do not agree with the young-earth theory.

Another accusation is that those who believe in an ancient earth are trying to accommodate evolution and, therefore, they believe in evolution. This is an unreasonable charge. How and when God first brought the creation into being has nothing to do with evolution, either secular or theocratic. The vast majority of those who hold to an ancient-earth creation by God reject evolution, and affirm that Adam was a unique creation made in the image of God, not descended from lower primates. The age of the earth and the theory of evolution are mutually exclusive apart from secular "science." One has nothing to do with the other.

There are "theocratic evolutionists" who believe God used the evolutionary

process to create life on earth, but they are rejected by true believers in Jesus who believe in an ancient earth. To lump all ancient-earth proponents in the same category with evolutionists is dishonest. It's as if those who insist upon the young-earth belief have little or no grace toward those who believe otherwise. Their focus is primarily upon debunking evolutionary theory, and for that they are to be commended. But to imply (and often state unequivocally) that unless one believes as they do one is guilty of conforming to false science, or is promoting heresy, is a serious error.

One may reasonably ask what this has to do with a study on anti-Christ. In order to properly understand the history of anti-Christ we must at least consider the possibility of an ancient creation. For if Satan fell sometime during the dateless past, then his encroachment upon the earth is better understood.

From all indications in Scripture it appears as if the earth is Satan's domain, and was so even before the creation of Adam. The angels of God are often referred to as "stars" (Judges 5:18-19; Job 38:4-7; Daniel 8:10; Revelation 8:10-11; 9:1). Jesus is called the "Star out of Jacob" (Numbers 24:17), and "the bright and morning Star" (Revelation 22:16).

These references to Jesus and the angels as "stars" indicate that the angels have dominion over the stars and their solar systems. (Of course, Jesus is not an angel, but, as the Word of God, does have authority over all the angels.) One may not be dogmatic about this, but if Satan's star is our Sun, then it explains why he is the prince of the power of the air and the ruler of this world. When he sinned he brought chaos into our solar system, which is evidenced by the barren, pock-marked landscapes of the planets and their moons. His taking one-third of the angels with him would account for the chaotic state of the universe in general. All this could have taken place eons ago in the dateless past.

It isn't my intention to be dogmatic in favor of an ancient-earth belief, but to point out the unreasonableness of those

1 Charlie Liebert, "Why is a Young Earth Essential to Biblical Belief?" Creation Science Resources, www.sixdaycreation.com/

who call proponents of an ancient-earth theory “heretics.” One cannot insist that those who believe something are heretics, but may still be saved. This is simply because the term “heretic” denotes someone who has departed from the truth of God, and is proclaiming a different Gospel. Our salvation does not rest upon the age of the universe, but upon the atonement for our sins effected by Jesus Christ.

I personally believe in the ancient earth, but I will not break fellowship with those who disagree. Nor would I ever call them heretics. Scripture does give clues to the existence of a pre-Adamic world, which we address shortly.

This is not a new idea; it has been held by good brethren for many years. But it has been met with ridicule by those who insist upon a 6,000-year age for the universe.

What else besides an ancient creation can explain the fact that matter 15 billion light years distant can be detected from earth? This indicates that the universe spans at least 30 billion light years. A light year is the amount of time it takes light, travelling at 186,000 miles per second, to travel in one year. The distance of a light year is almost 6 trillion miles. Discounting the “Big Bang” theory, and relying solely upon the observation of stars 15 billion light years distant in one direction, the universe appears to be at least 180 trillion billion miles in diameter. If the young-earth theory is correct we should not be able to see stars beyond 6,000 light years distant, or 36 billion miles. That would not even take us outside our own galaxy which is about 100,000 light years across. There are billions upon billions of galaxies containing billions upon billions of stars.

The argument for a young earth insists that God created the light to reach the earth at the same time that He created the stars and the earth. This is certainly possible, and one can surmise that He may have done this in order to demonstrate His majesty.

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handywork. (Psalms 19:1)

However, it is not that simple. Did God also counterfeit radio-carbon dating? Did He manufacture the geologic strata that contain evidence of an ancient earth? Did He also create the illusion of millions of

years of erosion? Did He manufacture fossil evidence? Did He create supernovae (exploding stars) that would take billions of years to form? Young earthers say yes.

Yet supernovae, colliding galaxies, and other such forces in creation, indicate eons far beyond 6,000 years would need to have passed (they would have to move far greater distances through space than 6,000 light years). It would take more than 2 million light years for our galaxy to collide with its nearest neighbor, the Great Nebula in Andromeda, *if both were travelling at half the speed of light toward each other!*

This leaves open to reason the belief that some hold of a pre-Adamic existence upon the earth. Could it be that human-like creatures once had civilizations that God destroyed because of their rebellion? Might they have willfully followed Satan in his rebellion, and thus suffered the wrath of God upon their existence with no hope of a Redeemer? May these be the alleged “cave men” and other human-like creatures unearthed in ancient soil?

Warning Israel of impending judgment, God spoke through Jeremiah, reminding Israel of an earlier age:

I beheld the earth, and, look, it was without form, and void, and the heavens, and they had no light.

I beheld the mountains, and, look, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.

I beheld, and, look, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens had fled.

I beheld, and, look, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of YHWH, and by his fierce anger.

For thus has YHWH said, “The whole land shall be desolate; yet I will not make a full end.” (Jeremiah 4:23-27)

Of what cities was Jeremiah speaking? Were there cities prior to the earth becoming void and without form, and the heavens not giving their light? Was Jeremiah merely speaking allegorically? There is no evidence to suggest so.

Peter speaks as if his contemporaries understood and knew of an ancient world before man. Speaking of scoffers coming in the last days He says:

For this they are willingly ignorant of: that by the Word of God the heavens were ancient, and the earth was standing out of the water and in the water. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same Word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:5-7)

Genesis 1 tells us that the whole earth was under water before God commanded the dry land to appear. Why then does Peter speak of ancient heavens and the earth which perished standing both in the water and out of the water? Was he speaking of Noah’s flood? Not likely, since he continues by delineating between the heavens that then were, and the heavens that are now. The heavens during Noah’s time are the same heavens we have today. This suggests that some great calamity came upon the heavens and the earth. It suggests that there was a flood prior to Noah’s flood—a flood from which God caused the dry land to appear (Genesis 1:9).

When God divided the light from the darkness on the first day, the earth was already in existence, having become “void and without form.”

But wait. Does the Bible not say, “The earth *was* without form and void” right after it says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”? Didn’t God create the earth without form and void?

No. The Hebrew word, *hayah*, translated “was” in Genesis 1:1 could more properly be translated “became.” It is so translated in many other places in Scripture. One such place is Genesis 2:7:

And YHWH God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became (*hayah*) a living soul.

What the churches have believed about the age of the creation is inherited from the Dark Ages when so-called “science” was controlled by the Roman Catholic Church. It was also believed that the earth is flat. This lack of understanding leaves most Christians unable to carry on a meaningful evangelism with scientists who see clearly the evidence for an ancient creation. It is no wonder some sci-

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entists scoff at Christianity, thinking that it is in conflict with true science. Let us stretch our thinking without being dogmatic on either side, or accusing of heresy those on either side. And while evolutionary "science" has certainly misinterpreted some evidence (in many cases, willfully), it has not necessarily misinterpreted everything that points to an ancient creation.

Nor are all earth scientists evolutionists as we've been led to believe. Many scientists are ungodly, but not all reject the existence of God. Many prominent scientists have spoken against evolution, and even some evolutionists are honestly trying to understand the evidence set before them. Their misinterpretations must not blind us to legitimate science.

In any case, Satan was certainly created prior to Adam. He was able to enter into the Garden, already having fallen some time prior to Adam being placed there. How much time passed between his fall and his influence upon the new earth and its inhabitants?

Such questions cannot be answered definitively. Yet an intractable insistence that the earth is only 6,000 years old hinders the Gospel in the face of reason.

It is not my purpose to insist upon the ancient-earth theory. Rather, it is to establish a reasonable basis for understanding the working of Satan from ancient times without being dogmatic or accusing of heresy those who disagree with me.

True faith is reasonable; it does not insist on belief based upon nothing more than what a religion has held to be true. God has left it to our reason to come to conclusions about His creation based upon what His Word and physical evidence say. And while we know that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17), we understand that it is primarily for our spiritual benefit. Some things may be hinted at, but they are not essential for true faith in Jesus.

Still, there are reasons for those things that are hinted at, though not fully explained. The fact that there had to be an interim of time between the eternity in which God has existed and the creation of the earth, regardless of when that occurred, helps us understand that there were spiritual forces at work to undermine the purposes of God. Those forces are what we call anti-Christ.

Since all that exists was created by the Word of God, and for the Word of God, the very first rebellion against Him was the very first act of the anti-Christ spirit. That anti-Christ spirit is embodied most fully in God's enemy the devil, or Satan ("Adversary").

Ezekiel likens the king of Tyrus to the covering angel who was in the Garden of God, but who fell because of his pride:

"Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord YHWH: "You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. You have been in Eden, the garden of God. Every precious stone was your covering—the ruby, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold. The workmanship of your tambourines and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created.

"You are the anointed cherub that covers, and I have set you so. You were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

"You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you.

"By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled your midst with violence, and you have sinned. Therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God, and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness. I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you.

"You have defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your traffic. Therefore I will bring forth a fire from within your midst; it shall devour you, and I will bring you to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold you.

"All they that know you among the people will be astonished at you.

You shall be a terror, and never will you be anymore.'"" (Ezekiel 28:12-19)

While this is specifically addressed to the king of Tyrus, it is obvious that Ezekiel (or, more properly, YHWH) was equating him to Satan.

This may be directly referenced to Luke 10:18 where Jesus tells of seeing Satan fall from Heaven like lightning. Speaking to the unbelieving Jews of His day, Jesus said:

You are of your father the devil, and you will do what your father desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not abide in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, because he is a liar, and the father of it. (John 8:44)

Satan was a murderer from the beginning because he brought death into the creation. The angels who followed him died a spiritual death, as did Adam and Eve because of Satan's seduction.

It is considered quaint today to speak of "the devil," or "Satan," because he is thought to be a fabrication of Christianity. But if Jesus spoke of him, why would we not take His warning seriously? Jesus did not promulgate myths. He said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." If He is the Truth, then everything He said is truth. Just because we cannot see Satan in the flesh does not mean he does not exist. Jesus knew him in Heaven before he fell. The Book of Job tells of Satan's influence in Heaven even while he is fallen:

Now there was a day when the sons of God [angels or messengers—spirit beings] came to present themselves before YHWH, and Satan also came among them.

And YHWH said to Satan, "From where do you come?" Then Satan answered YHWH, and said, "From going back and forth in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

And YHWH said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that fears God, and resists evil?"

Then Satan answered YHWH, and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he has on every side?"

You have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

“But put forth Your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse You to Your face.”

And YHWH said to Satan, “Look, all that he has is in your power, only do not put your hand upon him.”

So Satan went forth from the presence of YHWH. (Job 1:6-12)

We see in this passage of Scripture Satan’s opposition to God and his desire to undo the work of God. Job’s faithfulness was proven in spite of Satan’s consistent efforts to break him. And while this is an inspiring story, for our purposes it reveals the spirit of anti-Christ that was at work in Heaven from the beginning.

We know also that Satan is not the only angelic anti-Christ. All who followed him in rebellion against God are his anti-Christ minions in the spirit realm working to destroy God’s Kingdom throughout the heavens and, especially, upon the earth.

The Book of Revelation tells of angels following after Satan:

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called “the Devil” and “Satan,” who deceives the whole world. He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:9)

It is assumed from Revelation 12:4 that one-third of all the angels followed Satan in his rebellion. This is because “stars” are thought by some to be a synonym for “angels” in Job 38:7. However, we cannot be dogmatic about this since it is not clearly stated. The important thing is that there are many, perhaps millions, or even billions, of angelic anti-Christ at work in the heavens and on the earth.

There also seem to be differences between fallen angels and demons. Some believe demons to be fallen angels of a lower order. But angels have bodies that are substantive. Demons appear to be wandering spirits driven to inhabit the bodies of men. They are called “unclean spirits” and exhibit all sorts of perverseness. The unclean and perverse angels are locked in chains awaiting their final judgment (Jude 1:6-7) while demons are free to roam the earth.

Could demons be disembodied spirits—remnants of a pre-Adamic race—that do the bidding of Satan with the hope of avoiding the final judgment of God?

Again, we cannot be dogmatic, but if the angels that did not keep their first estate are held in everlasting chains, who are these unclean spirits? Whatever they are, they contribute to the current condition of the fallen creation, and attack men as their primary targets. Angels seem to have a higher calling in Satan’s warfare upon God’s order. They are the principalities and powers in heavenly places, while demons appear to be earth-bound.

The natural calamities that occur upon the earth are the result of Satan’s fall. Before man was created, the earth had become chaotic—“void and without form”—due to Satan’s fall. God did not create the earth or the universe in a chaotic state. All He created was perfect. Because of Satan’s fall, and the resultant sin of Adam, the earth no longer gives of its fruits without hard labor.

And to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat of it,” the ground is cursed for your sake. In sorrow shall you eat from it all the days of your life. Thorns also, and thistles shall it bring forth to you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return. (Genesis 3:17-19)

It is not only the earth that will be refashioned by God for its place in eternity. I believe that the apparent chaotic state of the universe is the result of heavenly warfare. Colliding galaxies, supernovae, black holes, pock-marked planets and moons, and the generally desolate condition of space, are all evidence of that warfare. The entire universe will melt, and from its ashes will come forth new heavens and a new earth:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The earth also,

and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. (2 Peter 3:10)

And I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. (Revelation 21:1)

From this New Heaven and New Earth will be banished forever the anti-Christ spirit that currently rules in the heavenly places and on the earth:

And He has made you alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. (Ephesians 2:1-2)

That spirit, which is the prince of the power of the air, is the anti-Christ spirit of Satan. This is why we are told that our warfare is not earthly but heavenly.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Therefore take upon yourselves the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (Ephesians 6:12-13)

Jesus has destroyed these principalities and powers:

And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. (Colossians 2:15)

Yet while Christ has already destroyed the anti-Christ spirit, He yet allows it to work in the lives of unregenerate men and through man’s earthly institutions to test the hearts of those who might be saved. Just as we were saved, continue to be saved, and will ultimately reap the reward of our salvation, so the anti-Christ of this age were destroyed, continue to be destroyed, and will ultimately reap the future reward of their destruction in the lake of fire.

The battle has been raging for men’s souls for the past six thousand years. Our short time on this earth cannot be wasted as we continue that battle.

THE FIRST HUMAN ANTI-CHRISTS

Satan's anti-Christ efforts upon mankind were not first inflicted upon Job. From the time that God created Adam, Satan was at work to destroy mankind and thwart God's design for redeeming the earth. His first recruit was Eve, Adam's wife, who was beguiled into eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It wasn't the fruit itself that opened Eve's eyes to her rebellion, but the knowledge that she had disobeyed her Creator. God could have chosen any one of the numerous trees and designated it "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." It is sin itself that brings to one's consciousness the knowledge of good and evil. Had Eve resisted, she would never have known evil. By rebelling against the command of YHWH she became the first human anti-Christ. Adam, by his acquiescence to Eve's seduction, became the second human anti-Christ.

Does this mean that they were eternally damned? Not necessarily. Even though we love Christ, every time we sin we take on the role of an anti-Christ.

That is a sobering thought that should cause us to walk more circumspectly in this world. Every sin is an act of the anti-Christ spirit. It doesn't matter from where the temptation to sin comes, whether from the world (inordinate love of riches and power over others), the flesh (inordinate desire [lust] of all sorts), or the devil (following after anti-Christ philosophies and religions). All sin is the anti-Christ spirit in action.

It is alarming to think that even the most dedicated of God's servants at times display an anti-Christ spirit by sinning. Yet there is hope for all men who will repent of their sins and confess them to God:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:9-10)

There is not a man or woman on earth that has not been in the camp of the anti-Christ. Most will remain in that camp and will follow the anti-Christ to their destruction because they refuse to repent of their sins. But God has made a way for whomever will follow Him:

For God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through Him.

He that believes in Him is not condemned, but he that does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that does evil hates the light. Nor does he come to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are fashioned by God. (John 3:16-21)

Satan and his fallen angels have no opportunity for redemption because they sinned willfully and with knowledge. They knew the holiness and the power of God, yet they chose to rebel against Him. Adam, through whom sin was imparted to all mankind, was seduced into sin. Thus, all men are partakers of the anti-Christ spirit in their sin nature. God, in His mercy and love, determined that He would send a Redeemer to pay the price for man's sins. That price was death through the shedding of blood, because life is in the blood. Man cannot live without blood coursing through his veins.

Jesus paid that price on the cross. But because He is sinless, death could not hold Him. His resurrection opened the way for all who truly believe in Him to enter into His inheritance of the New Creation to come. True faith manifests itself in obedience to God's Word. Disobedience is a manifestation of the anti-Christ spirit, and must be confessed and forgiven each time it occurs.

After Adam manifested the anti-Christ spirit through disobedience, all of his offspring were infected by that spirit. It is called the sin nature. All men are born in sin and must submit to the will of God through faith in Jesus Christ in order to overcome that nature and be infused with the new nature:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who has called us to glory and virtue, whereby are given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

For if these things are in you, and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Therefore rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things, you will never fall. (2 Peter 1:2-10)

Being made partakers of the divine nature does not mean that we become God, or even little "gods." It means that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God who comforts us and convicts us of sin, leading us to repentance. He also empowers us to live according to God's Word, and to manifest the gifts of God for the edification of the Body of Christ.

The Spirit of God has replaced the spirit of anti-Christ in our spirits, making us alive to God. As partakers of the divine nature we have an awesome responsibility to resist sinning willfully in order to thwart the attempts of the anti-Christ spirit to use us against our Master's eternal plan of redemption. This is why we are warned:

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three

witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, shall he be thought worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the Covenant, by which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has despised the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:26-29)

I have digressed slightly in order to impress upon us all the seriousness of sin. It is anti-Christ to sin. Couched in those terms, perhaps we will be more cognizant not only of its seriousness, but of the magnitude of the sacrifice by which we have been sanctified.

ANTEDELUVIAN ANTI-CHRISTS

Prior to the flood in Noah's time there was no written history, at least none that has survived or been found. Moses' account of the pre-flood world is all we have, and it becomes increasingly verified through continual archaeological findings. If anyone knows of any other accounts of that history to refute Moses' account, then let them present it. Otherwise they should at least concede that Moses' record is the best (the only) thing we have to go on.

We are all familiar with the temptation of Eve and her seduction of Adam. There is no need to elaborate upon this event other than to say that Satan's presentation of the forbidden fruit was mankind's first encounter with the anti-Christ spirit. That spirit always challenges what God says:

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which YHWH God had made. And he said to the woman, "Yes, has God said, 'You shall not eat from every tree of the garden?'"

And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

And the serpent said to the woman, "Surely you will not die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes will be opened, and you will be as gods, knowing good and evil."

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it

was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:1-6)

It appears from these verses that Adam was with Eve when she was seduced by Satan. Yet he did nothing to prevent her from succumbing to the temptation. He seems eager to partake of the fruit with her. Perhaps he reasoned that if she took it first he could also take it and not be blamed. This, at least, seems to be his reason for blaming her:

And YHWH God called to Adam, and said to him, "Where are you?"

And he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

And the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate. (Genesis 3:9-12)

Notice that both Adam and Eve convoluted the truth. Eve elaborated upon God's prohibition, saying that they were commanded not even to touch the fruit. Adam blamed Eve in the hope of not incurring death for himself.

Of course, God saw through Adam's deception and laid upon him the death penalty.

Anti-Christ denies what God says. Men, exhibiting that same anti-Christ spirit, deny or change what God says. Even many Christians often deny what God says. They make excuses for any number of major or minor departures from Scripture, which essentially says God doesn't really mean what He says in His written Word. The world propagandizes against the Word of God and many Christians accept that propaganda because it is pleasant to their eyes and ears, and seems to make them wise.

Yet in spite of Adam's sin, God promised a Redeemer who would one day come to crush Satan and provide a sacrifice for man's sins.

It didn't take long in mankind's history for murder to be committed. When Cain failed to provide a proper sacrifice to God through the shedding of blood, it caused

God to reject his offering. This, in turn, caused Cain to envy his brother Abel, whose sacrifice was accepted. He further rebelled against God by killing Abel. This murder is the first anti-Christ act among men recorded in the Bible after Adam's first sin.

Scripture doesn't give many details about the antediluvian period of man's history. There are no secular histories from that time. Chapters 6 through 9 of Genesis offer the only accounts, Chapters 7 through 9 being devoted exclusively to Noah's experiences.

Knowing of God's promise to send a Redeemer, it became Satan's agenda to do all he could to thwart that promise in order to maintain his hold upon the world and to prevent his own final destruction. We see a concerted effort to that end in his fallen angels coming among men to pollute the race of man in an attempt to render it incapable of producing the promised Redeemer:

And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took them wives of all whom they chose.

And YHWH said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, because he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

There were giants in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. The same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.

And YHWH saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And God was sorrowful that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.

And YHWH said, "I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air—for it sorrows Me that I have made them. (Genesis 6:1-7)

There is much controversy as to what these passages mean. Some say that the sons of God were men descended from Seth—a godly line of men who married the ungodly women of other bloodlines. But this does not explain how these men could produce giants. Nor do we find that Seth’s line is any godlier than any other line. All men corrupted themselves in time.

There are only two other references to “the sons of God” in the writings of the prophets, and they are found in Job 2:1 and 38:7. Both refer to angels, the messengers of God. The only mention of men as “sons of God” refers to the redeemed who are sons *by adoption* into the family of God (John 1:12; Romans 8:14-19; Philippians 2:15; 1 John 3:1-2). No men were adopted into God’s family until after Jesus came. The saints who came before Him could not enter into the presence of God as sons until Jesus made the way open for them to be joint heirs with Him to the Kingdom of God. Before that time the saints were called “friends” of God.

It is understandable that the idea of angels cohabiting with men and producing an offspring of giants would boggle minds, but I charge this to the lack of teaching in the churches regarding these “controversial” matters. The fallen angels had perverted themselves in many ways after following Satan in his rebellion. It is these to whom Jude refers in his epistle:

I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that did not believe.

And the angels which did not keep their first estate, but left their own habitation, he has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day, even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set

forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. (Jude 1:5-7)

Jude likens the fallen angels to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah in their fornication and going after strange flesh. Not all of Satan’s angels are bound in chains, but only those that left their natural habitation and committed fornication upon the earth with the daughters of men. These produced giants called Nephilim—beings of extraordinary size and strength, so that men seemed as grasshoppers in their presence (Numbers 13:33). No doubt these Nephilim inspired the concepts of Titans and other gods for pagan religions such as those of the Greeks and Romans.

There are a number of giants mentioned by name, all of whom were enemies of God and Israel:

And YHWH said to me, “Do not bother the Moabites, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land for a possession, because I have given Ar to the children of Lot for a possession.

The Emims dwelt there in times past, a people great, and many, and tall, as the Anakims, who were also accounted giants as the Anakims, but the Moabites call them Emims. (Deuteronomy 2:9-11)

For only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of giants. Look, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron. Is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? Its length was nine cubits, and its width was four cubits, after the cubit of a man. (Deuteronomy 3:11)²

Some say that a cubit was about 18 inches, others say that it was anywhere from 18 inches to 24 inches. Even applying the most conservative measure, it is certain that the giants described in Scripture were of enormous size. Og’s bed was at least thirteen and one-half feet long and six feet wide, made of iron.

Goliath, the most famous giant in Scripture, is described in 1 Samuel 17:3-7:

And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, and there was a valley between them.

And there went out from the camp of the Philistines, a giant named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

And he had a helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

And he had shin guards of brass on his legs, and a shield of brass between his shoulders.

And the staff of his spear was like a weaver’s beam; and his spear’s head weighed six hundred shekels of iron. And one bearing a shield went before him.

Using the 18-inch equation, Goliath stood at least ten feet tall. His coat of mail weighed no less than 500 lbs. The head of his spear alone weighed no less than 22 lbs., heavier than the Olympic shot put. These giants were far greater in size and strength than pure-bred men.

Many scoff at the idea of angels breeding with men. They ask, what about Jesus’ words that in our immortal bodies we will be like the angels, neither marrying, nor giving in marriage?

For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven. (Matthew 22:30)

Doesn’t this mean that angels cannot procreate?

Well, are men who do not marry incapable of producing offspring? Catholic priests who take the vow of celibacy (originally meaning unmarried) maintain that vow even though they commit fornication.

2 “cubit a historic unit of distance frequently mentioned in the Bible. The word comes from the Latin *cubitus*, “elbow,” because the unit represents the length of a man’s forearm from his elbow to the tip of his outstretched middle finger. This distance tends to be about 18 inches or roughly 45 centimeters.” *A Dictionary of Units of Measurement*
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Angels do not marry, but that does not mean they are sexless beings. They are, after all, male in their anatomy.

Some would argue that they are spirit beings, not physical, so how can they marry women? The spirit body of angels is just as tangible as that of men. There is nothing in Scripture to say that spirit bodies do not have substance. It is a different substance to be sure, capable of being invisible and moving through the heavenlies, but substance nevertheless. Spirit beings are not nothingness.

There are several accounts in Scripture in which angels appear as men. They eat, drink, and feel the heat of the sun:

And YHWH appeared to him [Abraham] in the plains of Mamre, and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day. And he lifted his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him. And when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground and said, "My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, do not pass away, I pray You, from Your servant.

"Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.

"And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort your hearts. After that you shall pass on, for therefore you have come to your servant."

And they said, "So do as you have said." (Genesis 18:1-5)

And there came two angels to Sodom at evening, and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. And Lot seeing them, rose up to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. And he said, "Look now, my lords, turn in, I ask you, into your servant's house, and stay all night, and wash your feet, and you shall rise up early, and go on your way."

And they said, "No, but we will stay in the street all night."

And he pressed on them greatly, and they turned to him, and entered into his house, and he made them a feast. And they baked unleavened bread, and they ate. (Genesis 19:1-3)

Angels are not limited more than men. Anything men can do, angels can do as

well. In view of the Scriptures which indicate that some fallen angels did leave their proper habitation and dwelt with men, there is no reason to think otherwise.

These angelic beings were all anti-Christ in their attempts to pollute the race of man in order to prevent the Redeemer from coming. If they could infect man's DNA sufficiently so that no one would be fully human, pure-bred from Adam, then no Redeemer could come from that lineage.

This is why it was necessary for God to command Israel to destroy entire tribes, including women and children. Those tribes had become polluted in their generations. Had Israel cohabited with them, Israel herself would most likely have become polluted in the same manner. This was God's way of cleansing the Land of the corruption from these ungodly offspring of fallen angels.

For those who disagree, I understand how you might not be able to accept this. If that is the case, just shelve it for now and continue through the remainder of this article. I do not wish to be argumentative.

In any case, the entire race of man became so corrupt through the influence of satanic entities that God was sorry that He had made man. Except for one man's faithfulness mankind would have been wiped from the face of the earth.

And YHWH said, "I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air—for it sorrows Me that I have made them.

But Noah found grace in the eyes of YHWH.

These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. (Genesis 6:6-9)

God preserved Noah in order to defeat the schemes of Satan to destroy the race of man, and to ensure that a pure bloodline would continue. The reference to Noah being perfect in his generations indicates that his lineage had not become corrupted by the Nephilim. This doesn't necessarily mean that all other men had become hybrids. Many others may have been perfect in their generations as well, but they were not righteous and did not walk with God. They had become corrupted spiritually at least. This required

that God start over with Noah who is the patriarch of all men living today.

Yet God gave man one hundred twenty years to repent and save himself:

And YHWH said, "My spirit shall not always strive with man, because he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."

Some believe this means that God shortened man's lifespan to one hundred twenty years. But the lifespans of the Hebrew patriarchs after the flood reflect hundreds of years, though not as long as their forebears. God has set the average age of a man at seventy years:

The days of our years are seventy, and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their strength is labor and sorrow, for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. (Psalms 90:10)

Thus, the 120 years allotted man was the time He decided to destroy them until the time He sent the flood.

That there was a time for repentance granted man is found in 1 Peter 3:18-20:

For Christ has also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison, who at some time were disobedient, when once the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

The patience of God caused Him to wait in the days of Noah before sending the deluge. His patience is still manifested in His holding off of judgment upon the present ungodly generation.

As we see evil abounding in the world true believers in Jesus Christ are left with two choices: 1) work for our own comfort and ignore the warning signs of impending judgment; 2) work for the Kingdom of God, warning our sleeping brethren and the lost of the coming tribulation upon the inhabitants of the earth.

We may choose sides on the age of the earth, but there are consequences to choosing sides on this issue. ❖



A HISTORY OF ANTI-CHRIST PART II - AFTER THE FLOOD



Satan sitting on the throne next to God would mean he has become victorious against God. And that would de facto place him above God. To the victor go the spoils:

When an armed strong man protects his palace, his goods are in peace, but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. (Luke 11:21-22)

This has been the eons-long conflict between Satan and God. God's part has been to determine the beginning from the end, and then to implement His plan of redemption for His Creation, establishing it in righteousness as it was from the beginning. Satan's part has been to thwart God's plan of redemption, thus rendering God impotent in defending His household.

The final victory does not rest in the battles won and lost, but in whose will has triumphed over that of the other at the last. Throughout the ages God has proven Himself omnipotent, even though Satan has gained the victory in some skirmishes. But we are not so foolish as to think otherwise than this: that God allows Satan to gain victories in order to accomplish His ultimate purpose of bringing His Creation into perfection.

Some would balk at the proposal that Satan can gain any victory at all. But all we need do is witness the increase of evil in the earth to perceive Satan's victories. Yes, they will be short-lived, and they will eventually be turned to defeat. But in the meantime we must not close our eyes to the reality of

As we address the spirit of anti-Christ that has prevailed in Creation since the fall of Satan, we discover a single underlying theme to its purpose: to denigrate the person of the one, true, living God, YHWH, thus allowing for Satan to be exalted above even God Himself. This is not readily discernible in Isaiah 14:12-14, where Lucifer (equated with the king of Babylon) is quoted as saying nothing more than that he would be *like* the most High:

"How you have fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you, who did weaken the

nations, are cut down to the ground! For you have said in your 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.'"

Although Satan has said that he would be only *like* the most high, that "like" is deceptive. There can be no equality of rule. Either YHWH or Satan must be supreme. For if Satan could attain equality with YHWH then YHWH's very nature and authority would be compromised. To have

A HISTORY OF ANTI-CHRIST PART II



the battle that rages around us in both the spiritual and temporal realms.

At one point the evil fomented by Satan had attained such dominance over mankind that God saw it necessary to destroy the earth and everything that breathed air, with the exception of Noah and those he saved on the Ark. The Flood was a victory for God. But immediately after the Flood, Satan again began to wage warfare against God's plan of redemption.

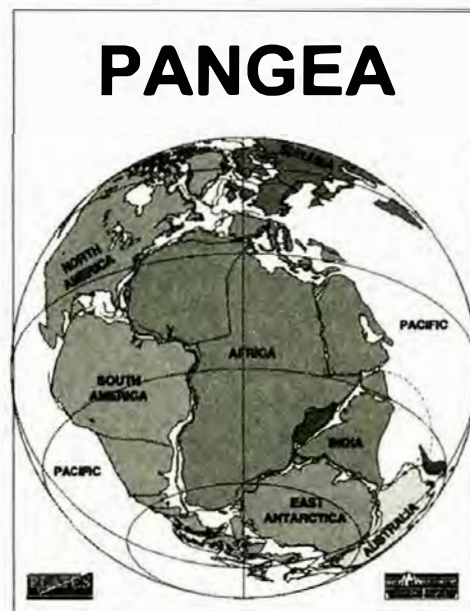
Although Noah found favor in the eyes of God, no such thing was said about his sons. They were saved by virtue of their relationship to Noah, and the need to repopulate the earth after the rest of mankind was destroyed. Within Noah's descendents resided the seed of evil that would again engulf mankind. The intervening millennia from the time of Noah's Flood to the present day testify to this evil and to the ability of Satan to wage effective warfare.

The giants and their progeny that existed on earth prior to Noah's Flood were destroyed, but the angels that had left their first estate had not yet been reserved in chains awaiting the judgment (Jude 1:6). We find in Scripture that the fallen angels resumed their attempt to pollute the race of man (Genesis 6:4), and their descendents were found in the earth even up to the time of Israel's conquest of the Land of Canaan (Numbers 13:33; Deuteronomy 2:11-20; 3:11-13; Joshua 12:4; 13:12; 15:8; 12:17; 18:16). They again produced a race of giants in the earth after Noah's Flood and mankind was again polluted.

Accordingly, God had these fallen angels restrained after allowing them to

work their evil. Their hybrid descendents were destroyed by Israel and other warfare in order to keep them from further polluting the human race. Why God did not prevent such perversion in the first place we cannot speculate upon, except to say that the giants figured in the testing of Israel's faith. It was because of the giants that the Israelites disobeyed God's command to take the land of Canaan under Moses' leadership. For that reason the giants remained in the land until the time of Israel's King David.

As we look at the history of anti-Christ on earth we see that it is essentially the history of mankind. Other than the writings of Moses there is no history of mankind prior to circa 3500-3000 B.C., when writing was invented by the Sumerians in the Middle East. But the dating of this is



an educated guess at best. Scripture places Noah's Flood at around 2400 B.C. The first city, Babel, was built by Nimrod, Noah's grandson through Ham, probably no earlier than 2350 B.C. Anthropologists and Archaeologists place the first cities in Sumer prior to that time (around 3,000 B.C.), but they have erred in the dating of remains from ancient human activity. In many cases they admit that dating can be widespread. For example, the dating of Stonehenge is said to be anywhere from c.3000 B.C. to 1500 B.C.

So either the dating of civilizations is off by about five hundred years, or our dating according to our understanding of Scripture might be off a bit. The important thing is that by the best secular estimates there is no evidence of human civilization prior to the time the Bible says mankind was created. One thing is certain: all who live today are offspring of Noah. Noah's Flood covered the entire earth which, at one time consisted of a single super continent as well as any islands off its coasts.

This super continent came to be known as "Pangea" ("all the earth"), the name given by Alfred Wegner, the father of the theory of continental drift. Wegner cited geographical, geological, and paleontological evidence to support his theory that the earth began to separate into continental blocks some 130-100 million years ago.¹

To those who believe in an ancient earth/universe, it is not a problem to think that the process began that long ago; to those who believe in a young earth/universe, Wegner's theory is evidently flawed. In any case, whether the earth was a single continent or a conglomerate of continental masses joined together, they did not *fully* separate until the time of Peleg, Shem's great-great-great-grandson, approximately 2300 B.C.:

And to Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg, because in his days the earth was divided, and his brother's name was Joktan. (Genesis 10:25)

That land mass split into two major land masses: North and South America in the Western Hemisphere, and Europe, Africa, and Asia in the Eastern Hemisphere. Australia, Greenland and other large portions also split from Pangea. Such a cataclysmic event would have either destroyed any existing civilizations, or seriously set them back in development. This presents good reason to suspect dating of any substantial civilization prior to 2200 B.C.

As far as solid evidence of any significant civilization is concerned, that goes

¹ M. Alan Kazlev, "Pangea," Palaeos, <http://www.palaeos.com/Earth/Geography/Pangea.htm>.

A HISTORY OF ANTI-CHRIST PART II



back no further than the Old Kingdom of Egypt, said to have existed around 2700 B.C. According to scientists, a rudimentary civilization began in Mesopotamia among the Sumerians. This would equate with the area in which Babel was under construction. It would also place the beginning of civilization around the time of Noah's Flood. Allowing for the inaccuracies of archaeological dating, it's possible that Egypt's Old Kingdom actually began around 2200 B.C. while Shem was still living. Considering that Noah's Flood occurred around 2400 B.C., and the continents split off from one another about one hundred years after, the dating of the Egyptian Kingdom could be off by 600 years.

Some may think that it would be impossible for a great kingdom to rise in such a short time since Noah's Flood. However, the exponential growth of the offspring from Noah's son Ham alone (beginning with his four sons Cush, Mizraim, Phut, and Canaan) might well have resulted in tens of thousands, perhaps millions, inhabiting Egypt within a scant 200 years. If each son had an average of only four sons whose firstborn came to them at the age of 16 (common in ancient times) within twelve generations (approximately 200 years) there would have been some 17 million offspring of Ham alone.

We know from Scripture that Ham's offspring dispersed into what became the Land of Canaan. From there they flowed into Africa, first Egypt. The migration of Shem's people was in the opposite direction into the Caucasus and Mediterranean areas. Japheth's tribes evidently spread further to the East as well as to the West and North.

Yet there most likely remained in the Middle East remnants from all three tribes that came out of Noah.

THE FIRST CITIES

It was not long after our first parents were driven from the Garden that man began attempts to overcome the curse that God placed upon Adam and his offspring due to Adam's sin: 1) death; 2) laboring to earn his keep by the sweat of his brow. Ever since that time, both prior to and after Noah's Flood, man has been trying to achieve immortality through his own efforts, and to make a name for himself—to exalt himself above the stars (the servant angels) of God, as did Satan.

This began with the innovation of cities. And it seems fitting that it was the offspring of Ham, who was cursed by Noah for having seen him naked after Noah became drunk, that the rebellion became widespread:

And Noah woke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. And he said, "Cursed be Canaan [Ham]; he shall be a servant of servants to his brethren."

And he said, "Blessed be YHWH, God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." (Gen 9:24-27)

The first mention of cities in Scripture reveals that Ham's descendants were the builders:

And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.

And the sons of Cush: Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha.

And the sons of Raamah: Sheba, and Dedan.

And Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before YHWH. Therefore it is said, "Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before YHWH."

And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

Out of that land Asshur went forth and built Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah—the same is a great city.

And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtulim, and Pathrusim, and

Casluhim (out of whom came Philistim), and Caphtorim.

And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, and the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, and the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite; and afterward the families of the Canaanites were spread abroad. (Genesis 10:6-18)

Ham and Japheth produced most of the Gentile nations, but Ham's legacy is especially noteworthy as testified by the genealogy above.

Out of Ham came Nimrod who built several cities, the most notorious being Babel. The very motivation for the building of Babel was to exalt man above God:

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said to one another, "Look, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and for mortar they had slime.

And they said, "Look, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach to Heaven, and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

And YHWH came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built.

And YHWH said, "Behold, the people are one, and they all have one language. And this they begin to do, and now nothing that they have imagined to do will be restrained from them. Look, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

So YHWH scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the earth, and they stopped building the city.

Therefore the name of it is called "Babel," because YHWH confounded the language of all the earth there. And from there YHWH scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:1-9)

It is possible that Nimrod's children became polluted with the race of giants. Nimrod was Ham's grandson, and it was he who began to build cities. Out of his loins came the Canaanites (Ham is called Canaan by Noah [Genesis 9:25]), who produced the latter giants, and who became so corrupted that God commanded Israel to destroy every living thing among those who inhabited the Land that He was to give to Abraham and His seed through Isaac and Jacob. It was from the sons of Ham that the Philistines came to be, some of whom were giants.

As righteous as Noah was, his grandsons through Ham became the first human anti-Christians after the Flood. Not much is said about Japheth in this regard except that his offspring would be named among the last-days anti-Christians (Ezekiel 38; Revelation 20:8):

The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

And the sons of Javan: Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands, every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations. (Genesis 10:2-5)

Scripture tells us that at the time of the Lord's coming again the world's armies will be gathered at Armageddon to war against Him. The only certain exception is Israel who will be in mourning after looking upon Him whom they had pierced (Zechariah 12:1-14). At that time Israel will be the target of the last-days anti-Christ's rage.

In order for events to come to this, it is necessary for mankind to be united in a global community. That has been the most intensively-sought goal of Satan. Thus, from the start of man's repopulating the earth, Satan inspired the Gentiles to build cities and states and nations. As long as men were scattered and without human government on a large scale, there was no way for them to be united against God's Kingdom. The kingdoms of this world are under Satan's control, governed by ungodly men, and must one day be united in a common purpose against our Lord's return. Although God is the ultimate decider of how and when

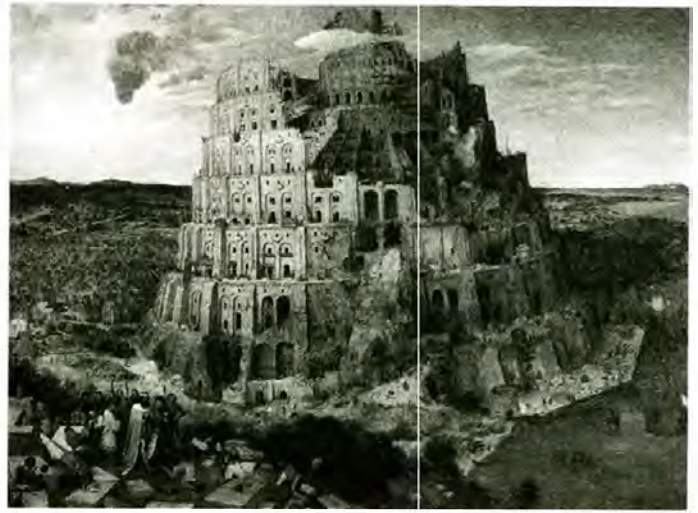
kingdoms rise and fall, He allows Satan to control them in order to test the men's hearts in choosing whom they will follow.

There have been times when godly men have held authority within the nations, but that is a rare exception. And so it must be if God's plan to bring the nations to the place of justified destruction is to be accomplished.

The anti-Christ spirit was alive in Nimrod when he determined to disobey God and to keep men from replenishing the whole earth. When men are confined to small areas such as cities, Satan can more easily deceive them and control their actions. Sin is much more rampant where men are crowded together than where there is room to live. Man's cities are melting pots of iniquity. The more men leave the natural environs of God's creation, the more they succumb to the evils that the world, the flesh, and the devil offer. And the more they pollute God's creation. (In the developed world agriculture is no longer profitable for family farms. Huge, multi-national conglomerates now raise crops that have been genetically altered, contaminated with pesticides and growth hormones, and divested of most of their nutrients.)

As well, a malaise settles over the people as they become accustomed to their more leisurely lifestyle. That malaise translates into loss of faith in the true God, and a reversion back to the paganism that infected all mankind before the Living God intervened. Whereas once the Gospel spread faith in God's redemption throughout the whole world, we are now in a faithless age where only a small remnant hold to God's Word. Even in "Christian" America, the churches are fast becoming faithless, substituting man's wisdom and carnal activities for God's Word and biblical practices.

Does this mean that Christians who live in cities are disobedient to God? Not at all. The whole world lies in iniquity (1 John 5:19). God's people are everywhere, and needed everywhere. We are strangers



The Tower of Babel, by Pieter Bruegel (c. 1525-69)
Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. Vienna.

and pilgrims in this land regardless where we live. Because someone lives in a rural area makes him no more righteous than someone who lives in a city. It's just that cities are more conducive to ungodliness because of all the trafficking in sin that occurs there. There are many more temptations and pitfalls for city dwellers than there are for country folk.

Today, however, with the long reach of communications, especially television, all forms of evil are brought into the homes of the far-flung regardless where they live. Mankind is linked in a common bond that is largely humanistic and even satanic in its nature due to the anti-Christ influences upon the world system.

Still, from where do the mass communications emanate, but from the cities?

This is the legacy of Babel, the first city to be built by the ancient Sumerians who established the first known civilization, located in lower Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). Sumer, and afterwards ancient Egypt, were the world's first societies to qualify as "civilizations."

From the time of Babel until the advent of Western Civilization, mankind was largely scattered and out of communion with one another. The only contacts they had were through commerce and warfare, with occasional treaties. Each nation was autonomous and ruled by kings, emperors, and the like. Most men comprised two classes: royalty and peasantry. A modicum of industry existed and began to grow as tradesmen developed their own class. These were largely ensconced in the cities.

The great civilizations that arose in ancient times apart from the Holy Land are little addressed in Scripture. But it is clear from archaeological evidence that the God of Creation had been forgotten. All, with the exception of ancient Israel, became entirely polluted with idol worship. Even Israel succumbed to that sin to some degree (though not entirely) under certain unrighteous kings.

The anti-Christ spirit has been behind the building of civilizations extending back in time to Babel. For if the people can be brought into subjugation to ungodly rulers Satan's work is made easier in propagandizing them against the Living God. Yet it has been by God's hand that each major civilization has arisen to bring mankind to the proper place at the end of days.

THE FIRST WAR

The first recorded war in Scripture is found in Genesis 14:1-12:

And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations, that these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

All these were joined together in the valley of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea.

Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and struck the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mount Seir, up to Elparan, which is by the wilderness.

And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and struck all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazon-tamar.

And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle

with them in the valley of Siddim with Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings with five.

And the valley of Siddim was full of slimepits, and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountain.

And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who lived in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

None of the kings or kingdoms are identified as either righteous or unrighteous. Shinar is believed to be equated with Babylonia, Elam was located around the southern area of what is present-day Iran and Iraq (a portion of ancient Persia).

Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim, and Zoar were located in the Valley of Siddim. All but Zoar (to where Lot fled) were destroyed by God shortly after this. These cities had corrupted themselves sufficiently to beg God's judgment. Before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, along with these other cities, He allowed the pre-Persian kings to conquer them.

ABRAHAM

Even the righteous chosen of God were instrumental in allowing anti-Christ to gain victories through the ages. One such righteous—the most notable man chosen by God to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven—was Abram from Ur of the Chaldees. Abram was a Syrian, a "Shemite," chosen by God and renamed Abraham ("father of the Faithful"). Through the telling of Isaac's marriage to Rebekah, the Bible reveals Abraham's Syrian roots:

And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. (Genesis 25:20)

Rebecca was the daughter of the Syrian, Bethuel, son of Abraham's brother Nahor. Among His instructions to Israel, YHWH said:

"And it shall be, when you have come into the land which YHWH

your God gives you for an inheritance, and possess it, and dwell therein, that you shall take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which you shall bring from your land that YHWH your God gives you, and shall put it in a basket, and shall go to the place which YHWH your God shall choose to place his name." And you shall go to the priest that shall be in those days, and say to him, 'I profess this day to YHWH your God, that I have come to the country which YHWH swore to give to our fathers.'

"And the priest shall take the basket out of your hand, and set it down before the altar of YHWH your God.

"And you shall speak and say before YHWH your God, 'A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous.'" (Deuteronomy 26:1-5)

This Syrian father, of course, was Jacob, the grandson of Abraham.

Over the centuries the Syrians have been among Israel's greatest enemies, serving in the anti-Christ's camp to destroy God's chosen nation. This animosity began with the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac:

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children, and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Look now, YHWH has restrained me from bearing. I plead with you, go in to my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her." And Abram heeded the words of Sarai.

And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her eyes despised her mistress.

And Sarai said to Abram, "My wrong is upon you. I have given my maid into your bosom, and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes. YHWH judge between me and you."

But Abram said to Sarai, "Look, your maid is in your hand; do to her as it pleases you. And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her face.

And the angel of YHWH found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, from where did you come, and where will you go?"

And she said, "I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai."

And the angel of YHWH said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hands."

And the angel of YHWH said to her, "I will multiply your seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude." And the angel of YHWH said to her, "Look, you are with child, and shall bear a son, and shall call his name 'Ishmael,' because YHWH has heard your affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and he will dwell in the presence of all his brethren."...

And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bore, "Ishmael." (Genesis 16:1-15)

It is said by some that Abram displayed a lack of faith in heeding Sarai's plea to bear a son through Hagar. But God had not told Abram prior to this that he would have a son by Sarai. Abram used his reason to think that God's promise would be fulfilled through Hagar. Granted, his reasoning was flawed, but his faith cannot be impugned because he believed God for a son, regardless of how that son might be born. It was common for the patriarchs to have several wives and concubines, so Abram did not sin in taking Hagar as his second wife. Yet his

tory bears out the evil that came through Ishmael's seed—an evil that has warred against God's people almost from the beginning. Ishmael is credited with being the patriarch of today's Arabs. His mother Hagar was an Egyptian, as was his wife. Thus, the Arabs, both Christians and Muslims, rightly look to Abraham as their father. But the anti-Christ spirit throughout the millennia pitted Abraham's children by Hagar against his children by Sarai, the latter being the heirs to the promises of God.



Sacrifice of Isaac by Caravaggio 1603.
the Uffizzi Gallery, Florence, Italy

THE SPREAD OF CIVILIZATION

It was during Abraham's time that the great civilizations of the ancient world began to come into existence. On every continent the effect of man's migration from Babel was felt. The great civilization in Egypt was followed by others which, in many cases, reflected the influences of Babel. In Asia arose the cities of the Indus Valley in what would become the nation of India. The Chinese dynasties began and spread their influences throughout Asia and its islands.

In the Mediterranean, King Minos established the Minoan civilization which flourished on the Greek island of Crete. The first empire was established when King Sargon of Akkad conquered neighboring Sumer and other lands in the Middle East.

In the Americas no such progress was seen as yet, but the Maya of Central America began to form villages among their agricultural bases.

As mankind migrated further from his roots he also strayed further from the faith of Noah. Every ancient civilization developed spiritual communities of priests and priestesses who gained control over the minds of the people. Most began as primitive superstitions revolving around birth, death, and nature. But they also carried with them some of the truths of Noah's faith. God had revealed to Adam that He would send a Redeemer for mankind. The idea of a Redeemer is found in many religions, and there are even similarities of theology.

It is no accident that the ancient Babylonians regarded their goddess Ishtar as a virgin who gave birth to a redeemer son, Tammuz, who was killed and then resurrected to new life. This myth is repeated in several of the world's religions.

Noted theosophist Manley Palmer Hall offers a comprehensive account of the Savior-God myths of ancient religions:

The myth of *Tammuz* and *Ishtar* is one of the earliest examples of the dying-god allegory, probably antedating 4000 B.C.... Being the esoteric god of the sun, Tammuz did not occupy a position among the deities venerated by the Babylonians, who for lack of deeper knowledge looked upon him as a god of agriculture or a vegetation spirit. Originally he was described as being one of the guardians of the gates of the underworld. Like many other Savior-Gods, he is referred to as a "shepherd" or "the lord of the shepherd seat." Tammuz occupies the remarkable position of son and husband of Ishtar, the Babylonian and Assyrian Mother-goddess. Ishtar—to whom the planet Venus was sacred—was the most widely venerated deity of the Babylonian and Assyrian pantheon. She was probably identical with Ashteroth, Astarte, and Aphrodite. The story of her descent into the underworld in search presumably for the sacred elixir which alone could restore Tammuz to life is the key to the ritual of her Mysteries. Tammuz, whose annual festival took place just before the summer solstice, died in midsummer in the ancient month which bore his name and was mourned with elaborate ceremonies. The manner of his death is

unknown, but some of the accusations made against Ishtar by Izdubar (Nimrod) would indicate that she, indirectly at least, had contributed to his demise. The resurrection of Tammuz was the occasion of great rejoicing, at which time he was hailed as a "redeemer:" of his people.²

Corresponding allegories to Ishtar and the "Dying-God/Redeemer," Tammuz, are those of Isis and Osiris in Egypt, Astarte and Adonis in Greece, and Venus and Apollo in Rome, to name a few. These, though coming later in history, drew from more ancient myths that migrated with the dispersion from Babel.

Unbelievers use this fact to impugn the Gospel of Jesus Christ as merely a retelling of these ancient myths. But although all these false gods are products of pagan myths, Jesus is a historical person. And His death, burial and resurrection are well-documented. In truth, the ancient pagan myths developed as corrupted versions of God's promise. In this way God's truth was corrupted by the anti-Christ spirit and transformed into earthy, hedonistic religious systems which allegorized these myths as representative of nature and the "cycle of life."

Whether or not the mother-goddess was actually the earliest attempt to give expression to the concept of deity, as we have seen, her symbolism was the most prominent feature in this aspect of prehistoric religion in the Upper Palaeolithic Age with its sculptured 'Venuses' and other emblems in the decorated caves. Subsequently, this life-symbol became the central feature in the cult of the Great Mother in the Ancient Near East, the Aegean, Crete and Western Asia, and when the king was identified with the sky as the source of transcendental vitality and beneficence, the queen was equated with the earth as the immanent principle es-

sential to the bestowal of providential bounty.

As the Great Mother became more clearly defined, and consciousness of the duality of male and female in procreation was recognized increasingly, from being the Unmarried Mother personifying the divine principle in maternity she became associated with the young god as her son and consort. Then, while she remained the crucial figure, the goddess cult assumed a twofold aspect in the ancient respective roles of creative energy, the one female and receptive, the other male and active. From Neolithic times onward phallic emblems were increasingly prevalent, though maternal imagery was predominant in Western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean, where in the first instance the male god was subordinate to the goddess.³

It is commonly believed that these allegories of death and resurrection allude to the apparent "death" of nature during the winter and the "resurrection" of nature during the spring. Pagan rituals that revolve around this belief are evident in virtually every religion, including some aspects of Christianity. However, these are merely the exoteric, or apparent, aspects of religion, made available to those outside the initiate class. The esoteric, or hidden, meanings are explained by Manly Palmer Hall:

There are, however, but few mature minds in the world; and thus it was that the philosophic-religious doctrines of the pagans were divided to meet the needs of these two fundamental groups of human intellect—one philosophic, the other incapable of appreciating the deeper mysteries of life. To the discerning few were revealed the esoteric, or spiritual, teachings, while the unqualified many received only the literal, or exoteric,

interpretations. In order to make simple the great truths of Nature and the abstract principles of natural law, the vital forces of the universe were personified, becoming the gods and goddesses of the ancient mythologies. While the ignorant multitudes brought their offerings to the altars of Priapus and Pan (deities representing the procreative energies), the wise recognized in these marble statues only symbolic concretions of great abstract truths.

In all cities of the ancient world were temples for public worship and offering. In every community also were philosophers and mystics, deeply versed in Nature's lore. These individuals were usually banded together, forming seclusive philosophic and religious schools. The more important of these groups were known as the Mysteries. Many of the great minds of antiquity were initiated into these secret fraternities by strange and mysterious rites, some of which were extremely cruel. Alexander Wilder defines the Mysteries as "Sacred dramas performed at stated periods. The most celebrated were those of Isis, Sabazius, Cybele, and Eleusis." After being admitted, the initiates were instructed in the secret wisdom which had been preserved for ages. Plato, an initiate of one of these sacred orders, was severely criticized because in his writings he revealed to the public many of the secret philosophic principles of the Mysteries.

Every pagan nation had (and has) not only its state religion, but another into which the philosophic elect alone have gained entrance. Many of these ancient cults vanished from the earth without revealing their secrets, but a few have survived the test of ages and their mysterious symbols are still preserved. Much of

2 Manly Palmer Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages: An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy, Being an Interpretation of the Secret Teachings concealed within the Rituals, Allegories and Mysteries of all Ages* (Los Angeles: Philosophical Research Society, 1962), p. XXXV.

3 *World Religions From Ancient History to the Present*, Ed. Geoffrey Parrinder (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1983), p. 33.

the ritualism of Freemasonry is based on the trials to which candidates were subjected by the ancient hierophants before the keys of wisdom were entrusted to them.⁴

So while the uninitiated in paganism work themselves over to appease their gods for healing, good crops, fertility, or any number of petitions, the shamans, witchdoctors, and priests, are exercising their spiritual prowess to attain to a higher consciousness.

To the initiated, the myths of the Mother-Goddess and the Dying God symbolize the descent of the human spirit into ignorance, which reaps misery and sorrow upon the imprisoned consciousness. The secret doctrine cures the disease of ignorance for the initiated, and the human spirit ascends again to its divine source, and gains immortality in one form or another, depending upon the particular philosophy.

This is the basis of Gnosticism, and is as ancient as mankind. For those initiated into the Mysteries, knowledge equals salvation, but only if that knowledge is applied to one's life. The hidden knowledge of the Mystery religions is really satanic in origin, granting to man the ability to rise above the mundane. That hidden knowledge is what has been behind man's civilizations from ancient times. The arts and sciences that allow man to build his monuments to the human spirit, even to reach into space, have been allowed through the system of universities to be spread to the uninitiated as well. Yet behind all of the advances attained by the uninitiated, are those who remain hidden, directing the course of human history according to the desires of their master, Satan.

This isn't to say that many or even most of those initiated into the Mysteries are conscious of their satanic influences.

Already predisposed to rebel against righteousness, mankind embraced the occult sciences that underpinned their religious societies believing that they were working for a greater good. They were (and are) largely ignorant of the path to

spiritual destruction upon which their philosophical/religious leaders are taking them.

Witchdoctors, shamans, and similar practitioners of satanic arts controlled not only the people, but the leaders of the budding nations. Kings ruled in accordance with what their seers told them the stars determined. Fate took the place of faith. The satanic influences among the religious leaders of the various civilizations guided them into supernatural knowledge of science. Gaining insights into nature through astronomy, the elements of the universe—the sun, moon, and stars—became not only objects of worship, but astrological guides which determined courses of action. Divination took many forms, but most all forms can be found among all civilizations. There is little difference between the shamans of the American Indians, the witches of the Celts in the British Isles, the witchdoctors of Africa, or their counterparts in China and India.

While civilizations rose and fell throughout the millennia, these satanic arts continued to influence leaders of even the most "advanced" of those civilizations.

These all ensconced the anti-Christ spirit within the nations, and turned men further from the truth of YHWH. This was Satan's design: to erase from men's consciousness any knowledge or remembrance of the God of Adam and Noah.

The knowledge of YHWH remained almost exclusively within the family line of Abraham, and then only through the lineage of Isaac and Jacob. Isaac's brother Ishmael, and Jacob's brother Esau, were not faithful in maintaining the faith of their fathers. Scripture demonstrates that every branch of every godly patriarch, except those to whom YHWH revealed Himself, specifically the lineage that would produce the promised Seed—the Redeemer, Jesus Christ—fell wholly into the anti-Christ's camp.

Some outside that lineage remained faithful to their patriarch's faith, but their numbers were few. In most cases where remembrance of YHWH remained, they mingled faith in YHWH with their

own brand of paganism. This is why idols were found among Abraham's descendents even through Isaac and Jacob.

Yet God allowed these things because of man's ignorance. He saw that man was enslaved to his own sin and that the anti-Christ spirit of Satan knew how to manipulate that sin nature. Thus God determined that He would provide the Redeemer who would reconcile to Himself all who believe in Him.

We see how God's supernatural intervention has been required throughout the ages in order to assure that His redemptive plan would be accomplished. Without His supernatural power holding together the weak-willed among His chosen people, all of mankind would have again been totally engulfed in rebellion as before Noah's Flood. The vast majority of man's efforts in the fields of science, art, literature, and religion are geared for the glorification of man. Satan is too clever to ask man to worship him at this point in time. Although a few have done so, virtually all of mankind has taken to worshipping nature, which includes mankind itself:

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves, who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. (Romans 1:22-25)

Following the pattern of Satan, man has sought to exalt himself above the stars of God, making a god of himself.

Nearly all major religions teach that, whether in this life or in the life to come, man will either become a god, or will meld with the "Universal Mind," or achieve some sort of exaltation to deity other than what Scripture promises: to be

resurrected to stand as joint heirs with Jesus Christ in a New Heaven and a New Earth—not as gods, but as sons of the only true God. Even among many Christian sects man is expected to be exalted to the status of godhood.

Man strives for immortality through his own efforts. The revelations of fallen angels have played a major role in helping man achieve longer life and comfort in this life. Consider how miniscule is the portion of man's achievements that truly glorify God. Compare that miniscule portion to the vast majority that glorify man and, in some cases, Satan.

It is to be expected that mankind would stray from God's truth and succumb to Satan's devices. Thus, the history of the nations is a history of rebellion against God—a plunging into darkness that would remain so for millennia until the light of the Gospel would penetrate and bring salvation to all nations.

For this reason the true battleground for the anti-Christ has always been, and will always be, in the midst of God's people. The history of Israel, then, reveals the anti-Christ at work to destroy God's plan of redemption. Until Israel became a nation of sufficient size to be reckoned with, Satan did little against God's chosen patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Their families were too small, and their influence in the world at large virtually nil. It was in Egypt that Satan began to get serious in his war against God's chosen people and His plan of redemption.

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Most believers in Jesus know the history of Israel in Egypt, how God preserved Joseph and exalted him second to Pharaoh. How his brothers came to him for provisions, not knowing it was he whom they had sold into slavery.

When, some 400 years later, Israel became a nation too great for the Egyptians to tolerate in their midst, the stage was set for the Exodus, and for the persecution by anti-Christ through the person of Egypt's Pharaoh at that time. The events that led Pharaoh to kill the newborn sons of the Hebrews were orchestrated by the anti-Christ spirit. Here we see God's supernatural intervention at work to save Moses so that he might one day deliver Israel out of Egypt. The harsh treatment of the Hebrews was meant by Satan as a way

to destroy them. But God meant it as a way to get them out of Egypt. As long as they had a good life in Egypt there would be no reason for them to follow God's leading from there so that they could enter into the Promised Land. It takes drastic action to move an entire nation.

Having failed to prevent Israel's deliverer from being born, and, in fact, having unwittingly raised the deliverer in his own palace, Pharaoh was faced with the prospect of losing the labor force provided by the Hebrews. Rather than befriending the Hebrews, Pharaoh determined to enslave them, thus sowing the seeds of his own destruction.

MOSES

About the time of Moses, the great empires of the ancient world began to form through which the anti-Christ further enslaved men's minds.

In Asia, Hinduism began to overtake the consciousness of the people.

In the northern countries the Celts began to gather in communities ruled by the Druidic priesthood.

In the Americas the first known civilization there rose among the Olmec Indians. They built temples to their gods and carved enormous sculptures. The Mayas and Incas of Central America developed their civilizations, building their mysterious pyramids, much the same as those of Babel and Egypt. Throughout the world false religions flourished.

This was a natural progression set in motion by Satan's spiritual emissaries. But it was among the Hebrews that the anti-Christ's real spiritual warfare was concentrated. It was his purpose to destroy the Hebrews in order to negate God's promise of the Messiah. But God had other plans. It was He who hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let Israel go.

It appears as if Satan is unable to control or grant wisdom to those he manipulates. Pharaoh, unaware of his role in the anti-Christ's scheme, wished only to enslave Israel, not to destroy them utterly. That is, until Moses successfully completed God's plan of redemption for the nation and took the Hebrews out of Egypt with great power. Only then did Pharaoh seek to bring Israel back into bondage or, failing that, utterly destroy them. Having agreed to let God's people

go, Pharaoh was seduced by Satan into thinking that, in spite of all he and his nation had endured in trying to hold on to the Israelites, he could still challenge Israel's God.

At the same time the anti-Christ was working in Pharaoh to chase after Israel, there were many anti-Christ's within the Israelites' camp who stirred up the people against the deliverance at hand:

And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them, and they were very afraid. And the children of Israel cried out to YHWH.

And they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you dealt with us this way, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." (Exodus 14:10-12)

Even after beholding the parting of the sea which allowed them to cross on dry ground, and seeing Pharaoh's army destroyed at the hand of God, the anti-Christ's among the people murmured against Moses at every difficult turn of events.

God's power to protect and guide Israel, evident in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, did not dissuade the anti-Christ's from trying to wrest control from Moses. They found fault with all Moses did, thus finding fault with the God who delivered them. The manna wasn't enough; the water from a rock wasn't enough; even the provisions for life and protection from every evil on their journey wasn't enough. Their love of Egypt was greater than their love of freedom in Christ:

And when the people complained, it displeased YHWH. And YHWH heard it, and His anger was ignited. And the fire of YHWH burned among them, and consumed them that were in the farthest parts of the camp.

And the people cried to Moses, and when Moses prayed to YHWH, the fire was quenched.

And he called the name of the place “Taberah,” because the fire of YHWH burned among them.

And the mixed multitude that was among them fell to desire, and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, “Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we ate in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.” (Numbers 11:1-6)

It was this attitude of despair at losing their perceived blessings in Egypt—even though in slavery—that led the congregation to implore Aaron to fashion a golden calf, emblematic of the gods of Egypt, when Moses was long on Mount Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments from YHWH:

And when the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down out of the mountain, the people gathered themselves together before Aaron, and said to him, “Up! Make us gods, which shall go before us, because as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

And Aaron said to them, “Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them to me.”

And all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a carving tool, after he had made it a molten calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, “Tomorrow is a feast to YHWH.”

And they rose up early the next day, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings, and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. (Exodus 32:1-6)

Amazing, is it not, that even Aaron was seduced into believing that he could fash-

ion an image of YHWH that would resemble a calf? Yet so powerful is the anti-Christ spirit that it will lead even the godly to believe they are serving God when they are, in truth, serving the flesh. The people did not claim to be worshipping any other god than the God that led them out of Egypt. Yet it is strange that they would want to have an idol to worship while continuing to complain about the God that led them out of Egypt. It is clear that they were merely looking for an excuse to exhibit the hedonism that lay beneath their façade of holiness.

More important, they were looking for a god to lead them back to Egypt. Thus, they formed a golden calf. In Egypt, Pharaoh was worshiped as a god, symbolized



Moses with the Tablets of the Law
by Rembrandt

by a calf. With Moses away, the people longed for Pharaoh to replace him. Had anti-Christ succeeded in getting the people to return to Egypt he would have gained a great victory, at the least delaying God’s plan of redemption. But God has His timetable, and no one or nothing can prevent Him from accomplishing what He has purposed to do in the time He has allotted to do it.

Is there much difference between the ancient Israelites under Moses and those today who profess (and even take pride) that they are sons of God? In many churches is not a different Jesus proclaimed—a “Jesus” that allows for all forms of unseemly (even hedonistic) behavior under the pretext of worship? A “Jesus”

who does not care about sin as much as He cares about the environment or civil rights? A “Jesus” who accepts those engaged in sinful lifestyles under the pretext of “love”? A “Jesus” who compels his people to bark like dogs crawl like serpents, and roar like lions? A Jesus who changes His mind about what is truth?

Among God’s people today are found many golden calves that lead them back to the world from which they had at one time escaped. May we not learn from Israel’s folly that resulted in the destruction of thousands of souls in their camp for this blasphemy?

May we not also learn from Israel’s complaining against God? We were told by the Lord that our journey to the final Promised Land would be fraught with hardship and persecution:

“Should the world hate you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you.

“If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘The servant is not greater than his lord.’ If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent me.” (John 15:18-21)

Yes, we know intellectually that the world hates us. We know that we are merely pilgrims in a hostile land. We know that we are in the world but not of the world. But do we not often long for our former lives when, perhaps, life was easier and there were no spiritual demands placed upon us? Do we not sometimes long for the slavery of Pharaoh which can guarantee us the comforts of the world? Is the anti-Christ spirit not at work in our own hearts at times to destroy the work that the Lord has placed in our hands?

Lest we think that this spirit cannot work in God’s people, let us remember how even Aaron and Miriam murmured against Moses, bringing upon themselves God’s wrath. There may have been no

evil intent in their hearts, but all men's hearts are deceptively wicked and must be guarded at all times. To say otherwise would be to say that we have no sin, thus making God a liar (1 John 1:5-10).

Because we, as believers in Jesus are indwelt by the Holy Spirit does not mean that we have escaped the penchant to sin. It merely means that we have His conscience within us to guide us away from sin. Let us remember Paul's admonition on restoration of a brother in Christ:

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in a sin, you who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted." (Galatians 6:1)

"And if any man does not obey our word by this letter, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

"Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

The choice to sin or to obey resides within us. To give in to sin is to give in to the anti-Christ spirit. To long for the pleasures of the world is to long for the slavery of Egypt. And to succumb to the pride of life is also to give in to the anti-Christ spirit.

So it was with Aaron and Miriam. Their prior steadfast support for Moses meant nothing to God when their pride got the best of them. It fell to Moses to ask God not to destroy them.

And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married, for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

And they said, "Has YHWH indeed spoken only by Moses? Has he not spoken also by us?" And YHWH heard it.

(Now the man Moses was very humble, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth.)

And YHWH spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam, "Come out you three to the tabernacle of the congregation." And they three came out.

And YHWH came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forth.

And He said, "Hear now my words: If there is a prophet among you, I YHWH will make Myself known to him in a vision, and will speak to him in a dream.

"My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all My house. With him I will speak mouth-to-mouth, even openly, and not in dark speeches, and he shall behold the person of YHWH. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?"

And the anger of YHWH was kindled against them, and He departed.

And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle, and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow. And Aaron looked at Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous.

And Aaron said to Moses, "Alas, my lord, I beseech you, do not lay the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb."

And Moses cried to YHWH, saying, "Heal her now, O God, I beseech You."

And YHWH said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again."

And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days, and the people did not journey until Miriam was brought in again. (Numbers 12:1-15)

God's favor rests with His anointed, not with those who follow His anointed except to the degree that they obey Him. Jesus Christ is God's anointed Messiah. Disobedience to Jesus' commands places us in the anti-Christ's camp, even if temporarily, until we repent.

During the Israelites' journey in the wilderness there was a band of particularly anti-Christ people who consistently and determinedly sought to undermine Moses' authority.

Now Korah, the son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, [all] sons of Reuben, took men, and they rose up before Moses, with certain of the

children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation—men of renown, and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourself, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and YHWH is among them. Why then do you lift up yourselves above the congregation of YHWH?"

And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face.

And he spoke to Korah and to all his company, saying, "Even tomorrow YHWH will show who are His, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near to Him—even him whom He has chosen will He cause to come near to him.

"Do this: you take censers, Korah, and all his company, and put fire in them, and put incense in them before YHWH tomorrow. And it shall be that the man whom YHWH chooses, he shall be holy. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi."

And Moses said to Korah, "Listen, I ask you, you sons of Levi: Does it seem but a small thing to you, that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of YHWH, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them? And He has brought you near to Him, and all your brethren the sons of Levi with you. And do you seek the priesthood also?

"For which cause are both you and all your company gathered together against YHWH, and what is Aaron, that you murmur against him?"

And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, who said, "We will not come up. Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land that flows with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except you make yourself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, you have not brought us into a land that flows with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and

vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up."

And Moses was very angry, and said to YHWH, "Do not respect their offering; I have not taken one ass from them, nor have I hurt one of them."

And Moses said to Korah, "You and all your company be before YHWH—you, and they, and Aaron, tomorrow. And every man take his censer, and put incense in them, and bring yourselves before YHWH—every man his censer, two hundred and fifty censers, you also, and Aaron, each of you his censer."

And every man took his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense on them, and stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron.

And Korah gathered all the congregation against them to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the glory of YHWH appeared to all the congregation.

And YHWH spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

And they fell upon their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will You be angry with all the congregation?"

And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get yourselves away from around the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.'"

And Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him.

And he spoke to the congregation, saying, "Depart, I ask you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins."

So they got up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side. And Dathan and Abiram, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children, came out and stood in the door of their tents.

And Moses said, "By this you will know that YHWH has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own mind. If these men

die the common death of all men, or if they are visited after the visitation of all men, then YHWH has not sent me. But if YHWH makes a new thing, and the earth opens her mouth, and swallows them up, with all that belong to them, and they go down quick into the pit, then you shall understand that these men have provoked YHWH."

And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground that was under them broke asunder, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up them and their houses, and all the men that belonged to Korah, and all their goods.

They, and all that belonged to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation.

And all Israel that were round about them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up also."

And there came out a fire from YHWH, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense. (Numbers 16:1-35)

Korah was Moses' cousin, the son of Moses' father's brother, Izhar. No doubt he was deluded by the anti-Christ spirit to think that because of his position he should have as much authority as did Moses. Again, the anti-Christ spirit did not seek greater authority, but merely authority on par with God's authority. But, again, there can be no parity with God's authority.

As an additional slap in the face of God, Dathan and Abiram claimed that Egypt was the land which "flowed with milk and honey," as if to say that God had led them astray.

Had these anti-Christ's succeeded in overtaking Moses, they would have at worst destroyed Israel and negated God's promise; at best they would have hindered greatly the fulfillment of that promise. But God would not allow them to succeed.

After putting up with one rebellion and complaint after another, Moses brought the people to the Promised Land. Yet because of their fear and continued rebellion they were not allowed to enter in:

And they returned from searching out the land after forty days. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, to the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh, and brought back word to them, and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land.

And they told him, and said, "We came to the land where you sent us, and surely it flows with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people are strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great, and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south, and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains, and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan."

And Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it."

But the men that went up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we." And they brought to the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had searched, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eats up its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are men of great size. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, who come from the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight. (Numbers 13:25-33)

The anti-Christ's among the Israelites again murmured against Moses and accused God of leading them to their deaths. For their unfaithfulness in heeding the words of the naysayers, God led Israel through the wilderness until all of the original sojourners had died, with the exception of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb. Upon Moses' death only Joshua and Caleb entered into the land with a new generation of Israelites.

In our next installment we will see anti-Christ at work in Ancient Israel's struggles against her enemies as she dwelt in the Land. ❖

A HISTORY OF ANTI-CHRIST PART III

— ANCIENT ISRAEL THE WILDERNESS JOURNEY



The anti-Christ spirit that disheartened the Israelite scouts who spied out the Promised Land (with the exception of Joshua and Caleb) inflamed the hearts of the people as well. They began to murmur and to accuse Moses and Aaron of leading them to their deaths:

And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried, and the people wept that night.

And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt!" or "Would God we had died in this wilderness!" And, "Why has YHWH brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

And they said to one another, "Let us make a captain, and let us return to Egypt." (Numbers 14:1-4)

It is nothing short of amazing that the entire congregation—all the people, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb—lost heart and desired to return to Egypt rather than face the prospect of taking the Promised Land. This, in spite of the many miracles that had sustained them in their journey to this point. This demonstrates the seductive nature of anti-Christ, and how an entire nation can be beguiled away from God's promises and protection through loss of faith. Although they accused Moses and Aaron of leading them astray, their accusation re-

ally struck at God Himself. So much did they reject God that the entire camp called for Joshua and Caleb to be stoned after they implored them to trust YHWH. Had it not been for Moses' intervention, God would have destroyed the entire nation and begun again with Moses. But He relented upon Moses' plea for the people, and swore that none but Joshua and Caleb would enter into the Promised Land.

And YHWH spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmurs against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say to them, 'As truly as I live, says YHWH, as you have spoken in My ears, so I will do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, without doubt you shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

"But your little ones, which you said should be a prey, them I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear

your whoredoms, until your carcasses are wasted in the wilderness. After the number of the days in which you searched the land—even forty days; each day for a year—shall you bear your iniquities. Even forty years, and you shall know my breach of promise.

"I YHWH have said, 'I will surely do it to all this evil congregation that are gathered together against me; in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.'" (Numbers 14:26-35)

Upon hearing the words of YHWH conveyed to them by Moses, and witnessing the destruction by the plague of the unfaithful spies, the people cried out in repentance. But the anti-Christ spirit among them took another tack to destroy them:

And they rose up early in the morning, and got them up into the top of the mountain, saying, "Look, we are here, and will go up to the place which YHWH has promised, for we have sinned."

And Moses said, "Why now do you transgress the commandment of YHWH? But it shall not prosper. Do not go up, for YHWH is not among you, that you be not killed before your enemies. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword, because you are turned away from YHWH; therefore YHWH will not be with you."

But they presumed to go up to the hill top. Nevertheless the ark of the covenant of YHWH, and Moses, did not leave the camp.

Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and crushed them, even unto Hormah. (Numbers 14:40-45)

The anti-Christ spirit is so deceptive as to make God's people think they are doing right when, in truth, they are acting presumptuously. No doubt these men thought they were obeying YHWH by acting on His original command. But they were now acting in disobedience, all the while hoping that YHWH would rescind His declaration to make them wander in the wilderness for forty years.

The lesson to be learned here is that, regardless of what God says, we must submit to it, even if it seems hard for us to bear. We cannot go against His Word even if we think we are serving Him in doing so.

This deceptive spirit is alive in today's churches that presume to serve God by means of their own reasoning according to how they think God thinks, rather than by obedience to His written Word. But just as God used the anti-Christ, ungodly Amalekites and Canaanites to destroy the rebellious Israelites in their presumption, so He will use the anti-Christ elements of today's world to destroy those who call themselves by the name of "Christian" while continuing to offer strange fire to Him. It is the presumptuousness of today's major movements within Christianity—the Purpose-Driven, Emergent, and myriad other false movements—that are leading the people to disobey God, thinking they are doing Him service. It is the feel-good mentality of the religious anti-Christ spirit that is deceiving the vast majority of "the congregation" today just as it did in Moses' time.

It was after this that Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On exhibited their anti-Christ spirit in challenging Moses' authority, as we delineated in Part 2. Yet even after God destroyed these rebels in such a spectacular fashion, the Israelites continued to be infected by the anti-Christ spirit:

But the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of YHWH."

And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of YHWH appeared.

And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation.

And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, "Get yourself up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment."

And they fell upon their faces, and Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer, and put fire in it from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly to the congregation, and make atonement for them, for wrath has gone out from YHWH; the plague has begun."

And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation, and, behold, the plague had begun among the people. And he put on incense, and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.

Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. (Numbers 16:41-49)

Again God showed Himself mighty in His wrath, yet merciful in accepting Aaron's atonement.

Yet it never occurred to the Israelites that their spiritual enemy was forcing their hand in causing them to rebel against God. His plan to utterly destroy God's chosen people in order to prevent God's promise from being fulfilled was hidden to them. It's possible that Moses alone understood the spiritual battle taking place, since he had interceded on Israel's behalf with the plea that God's promise to His people would be looked upon by their enemies as evidence of

God's inability to accomplish His purpose.

The peoples' ignorance and fear continued to plague them as, time and again, they provoked God. Even after God's supernatural power was again evidenced through the budding of Aaron's rod to prove the Levites as the chosen priesthood, the people succumbed to fear:

And YHWH said to Moses, "Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and You shall quite take away their murmurings from me, so that they do not die."

And Moses did so. As YHWH commanded him, so he did.

And the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish! Whoever comes anything near to the tabernacle of YHWH will die; will we be consumed with dying?" (Numbers 17:10-13)

After all that YHWH had brought them through, the Israelites continued to act in unbelief and fear.

Is it any different with God's people today? How often have we accused God of plotting against us? How often have we blamed Him for our troubles? "Why me, God?" is a familiar lament of so many who claim to be His children. Fear and faith cannot abide together. We must cling to one or the other. And although circumstances may be difficult—even perilous—they are meant to test our faith and to help us grow in grace. Death cannot part us from our Savior if we remain in the faith:

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

As it is written, "For your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present,

nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

Let us take a lesson from the Israelites' unfaithfulness and fear. Let us not look upon them as foolish as long as we continue in unbelief ourselves.

God's enemy seeks to discourage His people from trusting Him. Every time we succumb to faithlessness we succumb to the anti-Christ spirit working against the purposes of God.

FROM KADESH TO MOAB

Throughout Israel's forty-year banishment in the wilderness they continually tested God's love and patience. Their first recorded stop at Kadish, where Miriam died, saw them again accusing God and Moses of leading them to their deaths:

And there was no water for the congregation. And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron. And the people quarreled with Moses, and spoke, saying, "Would God that we had died when our brethren died before YHWH! And why have you brought the congregation of YHWH into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us in to this evil place? It is no place of seed, or of figs, or of vines, or of pomegranates; neither is there any water to drink." (Numbers 20:2-5)

Again, the Israelites lamented the loss of Egypt. And, again, they present for us today an example of our own conflicted natures: that of the flesh and of the spirit. We want to revel in our position of salvation, but often desire the sins from which we have been delivered. Perhaps we don't have as many material possessions today because we willingly gave up striving in an ungodly, and even sinful, manner to have them. Perhaps our trials to bring us to perfection have cost us our health or our popularity, or some other precious element that appeals to the flesh. Do we ac-

cuse God of trying to destroy us, as if He doesn't love us? Or do we lament our former life in which we had so much more enjoyment (but less joy, if we will be truthful)?

The believer's life in this world is our wilderness journey. We are bound for the Promised Land, but in the meantime we must endure the rigors that come with following Jesus Christ:

"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

"Remember the word that I said to you, 'The servant is not greater than his lord.' If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also.

"But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent me." (John 15:18-21)

"These things I have spoken to you so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Dearly beloved, I implore you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly desires, which war against the soul, having your conduct honest among the Gentiles so that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they will see, glorify God in the day of visitation. (1 Peter 2:11-12)

Fleshly desires are not only those that tend toward sexual sin, but anything contrary to God's will.

Were the leeks and garlic of Egypt evil? Of course not.

Was the desire of the Israelites to return to Egypt in order to have them evil? Absolutely.

What do you desire that would require you to return to your old life to have it?

We must continually be on our guard against subtle temptations to give in to our sin nature. Even Moses failed and, in doing so, cost himself the pleasure of entering into the Promised Land with the people in due time:

And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying, "Take the rod, and gather the assembly together, you, and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes. And it shall give forth its water, and you shall bring forth to them water out of the rock. So you shall give the congregation and their beasts drink.

And Moses took the rod from before YHWH, as He commanded him.

And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said to them, "Listen now, you rebels! Must we fetch you water out of this rock?"

And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he struck the rock twice. And the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.

And YHWH spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Numbers 20:7-12)

What unbelief did Moses exhibit? He certainly believed that water would flow from the rock. But unbelief takes many forms. Moses' unbelief was manifested in his disobedience as to how he was to bring forth the water. God told him to speak to the rock, but instead he struck the rock not once, but twice.

Rather than tell the people that YHWH had told him to give them water from the rock he chastised them and made it appear as if he, himself, were performing a miracle.

Could this have been self-pride? It certainly appears so.

And self-pride is an example of serious unbelief. It is the sin of Satan. It is the sin of anti-Christ manifested even through God's greatest prophet.

This is another example of a godly man doing God's work in his own flesh. The consequences affected not only Moses, but Aaron as well, since Aaron shared in Moses' ministry.

How we must guard against succumbing to that same anti-Christ spirit that plagues us all as long as we remain in the flesh.

It serves no real purpose to detail every single instance of the anti-Christ spirit raising its head during Israel's journey in the wilderness. That journey is a history of continual contention against God's plan of redemption. As long as things went according to the people's perception of good they were relatively compliant; when things got difficult they murmured against Moses and sought to return to Egypt and to worship false Gods. Even as God sustained them with manna and kept their clothing from deteriorating for the entire forty years of their wilderness journey, the people continued to complain. Even victory after victory over their enemies, impelled by the anti-Christ spirit to destroy them along their way, did not quell the Israelites' discontent.

In the midst of their victories the anti-Christ spirit seduced many to engage in idolatry:

And Israel camped in Shittim, and the people began to commit fornication with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate, and bowed down to their gods.

And Israel joined itself to Baal Peor: and the anger of YHWH was kindled against Israel. (Numbers 25:1-3)

Astonishingly, it was Balaam whom anti-Christ used to lure the Israelites into idolatry with the Midianites. Balaam, though a Midianite, was a prophet of YHWH who had previously obeyed YHWH in refusing to curse Israel at the behest of Balak, king of Moab (Numbers

22:1-24:25). Yet even then he vacillated, trying again and again to see if YHWH would honor his sorceries. Eventually he was held responsible for Israel's idolatry with Moab and Midian, and was slain (Numbers 31:8).

Clearly, had God's hand not been on Israel it would have gone the way of all nations—into total idolatry. That is the human condition. Without the guiding hand of God upon one's life one is going to go after false gods—gods that are made in the image of man.

At the same time Israel was wandering in the desert—approximately 1400 BC—the first of today's "great world religions," Hinduism, was beginning to take root. The *Rig Veda*, believed to be the oldest living religious literature of the world¹ was being composed.

The *Rig Veda* is a collection of over one thousand hymns to a pantheon of deities—the vedic deities—that evolved into Hinduism within the Indian culture on the sub-continent of Asia. It was composed by Aryans that migrated to India and settled in the Punjab region.² These were most likely descendants of Noah's son Japheth.

Prior to the rise of Hinduism the nations—apart from Israel—had succumbed to the anti-Christ spirit through localized religious systems that gradually erased the memory of the true God and Creator, YHWH, from the minds of the people. Today a large portion of humanity still adheres to local superstitions, but the vast majority belongs to one of five major religious systems: Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam (named in order of their development). Older than all these, of course, is the original Faith first vested in Adam, then in order in Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and culminating in the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. The pure Faith of YHWH is adherence to God's Word without regard to human tradition and religious understanding. It transcends even Christianity which comprises many and varied philosophies which, though

centered on the person of Jesus, depart from biblical faith according to the teachings of particular Christian institutions called churches.

Judaism began its slide into apostasy even during the time of Moses through those who followed his detractors and sought to subvert God's plan for Israel. Through the blending of the Hebrew Scriptures with the ancient mystery religion of Egypt these anti-Christ's subverted the faith of many in Israel. They developed a rabbinic system of religion that outwardly espoused the Law of Moses, but inwardly contrived to use it to bring the people into submission to their religious rule for personal gain. Over the centuries this developed into the Kabbalah—a mystery religion based on Jewish tradition blended with the ancient mysteries of Egypt and Babylon. When Jesus came, this is what He had to contend with.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

As Israel approached the Promised Land, it was time for Moses to die. Although his one indiscretion kept him from entering the land with Israel, his faithfulness in leading them for forty years was rewarded by his being able to climb a mountain and see the land from afar. Anti-Christ—Satan—had failed to destroy Israel or to dissuade the nation from its purpose. His anger was so great that he sought Moses' body, most likely so he could desecrate it in some manner. But God's archangel, Michael, fought with Satan and prevailed, calling upon YHWH to rebuke him (Jude 1:9).

Thus, Israel's wilderness journey was completed, and they prepared for battle to conquer the land God had led them to for an everlasting inheritance.

ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND

The next evidence of anti-Christ's influence among God's chosen nation after its journey in the wilderness came almost immediately upon its entrance into the Promised Land.

1 *World Religions From Ancient History to the Present*, Ed., Geoffrey Parrinder (New York: Facts on File, 1983), p. 193.

2 *Ibid.*

Even as God gave Jericho into Israel's hand in miraculous fashion, with hardly a battle fought, Achan, son of Carmi, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the plunder, all of which had been devoted to destruction along with the city and its inhabitants.

Satan knew God's manner of dealing with Israel's sins was to hold the entire nation accountable for even one man's rebellion. The anti-Christ spirit within Achan led him to disobey the command to destroy everything within Jericho, thus bringing God's wrath upon Israel, which caused defeat at Ai:

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing, for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing, and the anger of YHWH was kindled against the children of Israel.

And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and view the country."

And the men went up and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said to him, Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and strike Ai. And do not make all the people to become weary there, for they are but few."

So of the people about three thousand men went up there, and they fled from the men of Ai.

And the men of Ai struck of them about thirty-six men, for they chased them from before the gate even to Shebarim, and struck them in the going down. Therefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

And Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of YHWH until the evening—he and the elders of Israel—and put dust on their heads.

And Joshua said, "Alas, O Lord GOD, why have You at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to

God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turns their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear of it, and will surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. And what will You do to Your great name?"

And YHWH said to Joshua, "Get yourself up! Why do you lie thus upon your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them, for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and deceived also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.

Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed. Neither will I be with you anymore, except you destroy the accursed from among you." (Joshua 7:1-12)

Some, using their human reasoning, would fault God for holding the entire nation accountable for one man's sin. But there is more to this than meets the eye. God knows the hearts of all men. And he knew Joshua's heart and how even he would succumb to the same anti-Christ spirit that caused Israel to accuse God of leading them to their destruction in the wilderness. For here he laments that it would have been better to have stayed on the other side of Jordan than to obey God in taking possession of the Promised Land. Thus, one man's sin exposed the sin latent in Moses' successor—the leader of the nation. This is why YHWH spoke harshly with Joshua, asking him why he was lying upon his face. Joshua should have known that any defeat of Israel would be the result of secret sin, and should have been on his way to deal with it, rather than lying on his face lamenting God's direction.

The more we walk with the Lord the more we ought to be able to see how events in our lives reveal the sins and failures within our character that we might not even be aware of. How often, though,

do we accuse God for our misfortune rather than search for the evil within that has caused us to fail.

But here we must have discernment to know when God is testing us as opposed to when He is chastising us. This takes serious contemplation upon our lives and how they measure up to His Word.

If we find God is dealing with sin in our lives then we must do as Joshua did: root it out and destroy it. Otherwise we will suffer one defeat after another.

God did not cause Israel to fail at Ai in order to destroy the nation, but to awaken it to its secret sin. Unfortunately, it cost the lives of otherwise innocent men. The consequences of sin often affect others besides the one sinning.

After faithfully dealing with Achan by putting him to death, Joshua led Israel to take Ai. All the kings west of the Jordan heard about it and were compelled to attack Israel. Anti-Christ, failing to destroy Israel to this point, sought to bring the united force of all the western cities in the Promised Land against Israel in one fell swoop (Joshua 9:1-2). Israel defeated them, then turned its campaign against the southern cities, then the northern cities, in that order. In all, Israel defeated thirty-one cities, keeping only the inhabitants of Gibeon as slaves, only because of Gibeon's ability to trick Joshua into granting it safety (Joshua 9:3-10:4).

Still, Israel was not able to conquer all the territory, as certain Canaanites remained in the land. This was probably due to Israel's lack of resolve to utterly destroy every aspect of pagan culture in order to purify the land completely. While the nation as a whole at the time was dedicated to conquest, there evidently were pockets of resistance that found the hedonism of the pagans in their midst appealing.

Yet Israel was able to settle in the Promised Land and to allot to each tribe its portion. The anti-Christ spirit had failed to prevent God from keeping this promise that was crucial to His plan of redemption.

A HISTORY OF ANTI-CHRIST PART IV

ISRAEL IN THE LAND THE TIME OF JUDGES



Dividing The Land - Raphael

Israel entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua around the year 2700 according to the Hebrew calendar, or approximately 1300 B.C. Of course there is no way to accurately pinpoint the exact year, let alone the exact day. But the dating of Scripture according to the lineage that led to Moses' birth and his age when he died, allows us to closely approximate the time.

By the time Joshua fought the battle of Jericho, the Trojan Wars among the Greek city states Troy and Mycenae had ended, and the glory of Egypt's New Kingdom had passed. It was about this time that the boy-king, Tutankhamen, died and was buried, his tomb to lie undisturbed until the early 20th century.

Anti-Christ had been working in human history for almost three millennia, having erased the memory of YHWH from the nations that populated the earth since Noah's Flood. Only Israel retained devotion to YHWH, and then only because of a few men who would not allow the nation to forget.

God told Moses that after he died the people would turn from YHWH to worship the foreign gods of the lands they would conquer (Deuteronomy 31:16-18):

And YHWH said to Moses, "Look, you will sleep with your fathers, and these people will rise up and go whoring after the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and will forsake Me, and break My covenant which I have made with them. Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day,

and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them so that they will say in that day, 'Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?'

"And I will surely hide My face in that day for all the evils which they will have committed, in that they have turned to other gods."

Even so, God was faithful to His promise in helping Israel to conquer the Land (Joshua 21:43-45). Israel was not so faithful in driving out all of God's enemies, but allowed many to survive in their midst. Joshua knew the people's hearts were easily turned against God. He made them swear that they would not forget YHWH, but would resist the foreign gods of the people left among them:

And Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve YHWH, for He is a holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If you forsake YHWH and serve strange gods, then He will turn and hurt you, and consume you, after He has done you good."

And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve YHWH."

And Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen YHWH, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses."

"Now therefore," he said, "put away the strange gods that are

among you, and incline your heart to YHWH God of Israel."

And the people said to Joshua, "YHWH our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey."

So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and established for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. (Joshua 24:19-25)

This was the last time Israel would be united on the side of the True God. The subsequent history of the nation reveals warfare among themselves and constant turning away from YHWH. The anti-Christ spirit never left the Land, largely because the Israelites allowed those who worshipped false gods to remain among them. For example, the eastern tribes (Judah, Issachar and Zebulun) failed to drive out the Geshurites and the Maachathites (Joshua 13:13). Ephraim failed to eliminate the Canaanites, and Manasseh allowed several heathen peoples to remain in their midst. Every Israelite tribe, including Judah, failed to fulfill YHWH's command to thoroughly purge the Land of the pagan influences that would eventually cause Israel twice to stumble to the point where God would have to drive them out of the Land. This failure was a breach of the covenant God made with Israel to prosper them as long as they obeyed:

And an angel of YHWH came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, "I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you into the land which I swore to your fathers, and I said, 'I will never

break my covenant with you. And you shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; you shall throw down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this?

"Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out from before you, but they will be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'"

And it came to pass, when the angel of YHWH spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept. And they called the name of that place "Bochim," and they sacrificed there to YHWH. (Judges 2:1-5)

The failure, of course, was Israel. They couldn't say, "The devil made me do it." However, while each individual bears responsibility for his part in the nation's failure, the collective failure is a result of the work of the anti-Christ spirit conspiring against God's plan. Nations don't move in any particular direction without being guided there. The people may succumb to anti-Christ's agenda ministered through his agents, but his plan succeeds only when the people as a whole, or in significant numbers, are seduced into following that agenda. Not every individual in Israel failed; Joshua and Caleb certainly didn't. But the nation largely failed, so all paid the price.

We see this playing out today in every nation that became "Christianized" over the centuries. Western Europe and the entire Western Hemisphere had adopted the biblical ethics of the Faith, even though not all the people have been true believers in Jesus. Yet the outward form of righteousness at least gave us God's protection and resulted in much prosperity. But just like Israel, we have allowed our prosperity to lull us into carelessness and overt sinfulness. Christendom is quickly succumbing to the paganism and hedonism that once characterized the lands it has occupied.

This, too, is the result of anti-Christ's concerted attempts to seduce entire nations through the gradual corruption of individuals. Israel's history should have been a warning to us, but we have failed to learn.

As we look at Israel's failures we see that our ever-merciful God forgave them time and time again. Each time He forgave, anti-Christ was quickly at work to subvert His plan of redemption by hoping to destroy Israel. His methods changed from time to time, as did God's way of guiding the nation. We will look at those methods with the hope that we will learn from them.

THE TIME OF JUDGES

As long as Joshua and Caleb lived, Israel held more closely, if not perfectly, to YHWH's commandments:

And the people served YHWH all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of YHWH, that He did for Israel.

And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of YHWH, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all of that generation were gathered to their fathers. (Judges 2:7-10a)

In time, however, the Israelites succumbed to anti-Christ's calling to worship other gods. Having developed into an agricultural society upon putting down roots in the Land, the Israelites became attracted to the Canaanite cult of Baal and other gods and goddesses associated with fertility and the growing of crops.

And there arose another generation after them, which did not know YHWH, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel.

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of YHWH, and served Baalim. And they forsook YHWH, God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods—the gods of the people that were round about them—and bowed themselves to them, and provoked YHWH to anger.

And they abandoned YHWH, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. (Judges 2:10b-13)

In His anger, YHWH allowed the Israelites to be plundered by invaders who raided their homes and fields. Although they tried to fight, God's hand was against them, and their efforts were futile.

In His desire to save Israel, God raised up certain judges who guided them and helped them resist the invaders. Yet even then, they continued to rebel against YHWH.

Nevertheless YHWH raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those that looted them. And yet they would not listen to their judges, but they went whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves to them. They quickly turned from the way in which their fathers walked, obeying the commandments of YHWH, but they did not do so.

And when YHWH raised up judges for them, then YHWH was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge, for YHWH turned due to their groanings because of them that oppressed them and troubled them.

And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings, or from their stubborn way.

And the anger of YHWH was hot against Israel, and He said, "Because these people have transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not listened to My voice, I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died." (Judges 2:16-21)

These righteous judges were somehow able to guide Israel in the ways of God, at least sufficiently that God stayed



A HISTORY OF ANTI-CHRIST

His judgment upon the nation. But the struggle was a see-saw effort that resulted in judgment, then mercy, with the cycle repeated innumerable times.

Among the judges of Israel, the first mentioned by name was Othniel, a nephew of Caleb. Under Othniel Israel had peace for forty years. But the anti-Christ spirit that drove the majority of Israelites to rebel against God from the time of the Exodus continued to thrive, waiting for Othniel's death. So God again gave Israel into the hands of an oppressor, Eglon, king of Moab, for eighteen years.

Then arose Ehud who assassinated Eglon, then led Israel to victory over the Moabites. God granted Israel peace for eighty years.

After Ehud's death, the Israelites again succumbed to the anti-Christ spirit and did evil in following after the false gods in their land. So, again, they were oppressed, this time by Jabin, a king of Canaan, for twenty years.

At this time came Shamgar whose brief history mentions only that he slew six hundred Philistines with an ox goad and delivered Israel (Judges 3:31).

Ask most Christians to name the judges of Israel, and the first (and perhaps the only) name they will offer is that of Deborah, probably because, being a woman, she was unique as a judge in Israel.

Because she was a woman, "Christian" feminists like to point to Deborah as an example of how God has no preferences for leadership between men and

women—that a woman may rule over a nation just as well with God's blessing.

But the only reason Deborah was anointed as a judge and a prophetess was because the men of Israel had become weak and spiritually impotent. Even so, it was God's design that Barak lead Israel's army against Jabin's general, Sisera. Because Barak was fearful and lacking trust in God, he would go only if Deborah accompanied him. He knew that Deborah, as a prophetess, would give him God's truth, but he feared not having her alongside in order to know for certain that God was with him. There is no mention of Barak being anyone other than the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali. There is no record of his being royalty, since there were no kings in Israel to this point. Yet God chose him to lead Israel's army to victory over the Canaanites. But he had to share the glory of that victory with Deborah who did not actually lead the army or engage in the battle.

After Barak's victory Israel had peace again for forty years. Yet, again, the nation fell into idolatry, demonstrating that the anti-Christ spirit among men does not sleep for long. This time God gave them into the hands of the Midians. But He also raised up Gideon, a reluctant hero who, with God's power and a mere three hundred men, destroyed the Midianite, Amalekite, and other eastern people's armies, whose numbers were beyond counting (Judges 7:12).

In their pursuit of the remnant of their enemies' armies, Gideon and his men encountered resistance from anti-Christ in the men of Succoth and Peniel who refused to give food to them in order that they might be refreshed. But God gave Gideon's army the strength to continue, and to eventually overtake and kill the Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna. Again, anti-Christ's designs were thwarted by God. Yet he was allowed to remain in order to continue testing Israel after God gave the nation peace for another forty years.

Upon Gideon's death, Israel again prostituted themselves to the Baals and forgot YHWH and all that Gideon had done for them.

Up to this time Israel had no king, but God administered His direction of the nation through His prophets and

judges. Satan knew that as long as Israel depended upon God's direct prophecies to guide them the nation could not be totally subverted. It was necessary to place the nation's directions in the hands of fallen men. The first attempt to set a king over Israel came in the person of Gideon's son Abimelech, who was born to Gideon's concubine. Abimelech gained the support of his uncles on his mother's side, who convinced the people of Shechem to follow Abimelech. They slew all but one of Gideon's seventy sons—Abimelech's half brothers by Gideon's wives—and set about to crown Abimelech king. Only Jotham escaped, and he fled to Beer in fear of Abimelech, but only after pronouncing a curse upon Abimelech and Shechem.

Abimelech's reign over Israel lasted only three years, when God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem. This evil spirit seduced the people to support Gaal, son of Ebed.

This is an interesting passage. It demonstrates how God uses the anti-Christ spirit to accomplish God's will. These evil spirits, including Satan himself, have no allegiance to anyone. Yet they are bound to accomplish God's purposes if God so demands. Even though Jesus was to later ask his adversaries how Satan's kingdom could stand if Satan's house were divided among itself, it is obvious that Satan's house is divided. Thus it must be assumed that Jesus was speaking facetiously, causing his detractors to stumble upon their own ill-conceived assumptions.

So this evil spirit sent from God set in motion events that would bring down the illegitimate reign of Abimelech as self-appointed king over Israel. Although Gaal's prideful attempt to depose Abimelech failed, Abimelech was killed in the battle at Thebez when a woman who had fled with all the citizens into the city's tower dropped an upper millstone on his head. Rather than have the people say he was killed by a woman, Abimelech called upon his armor-bearer to kill him with his sword.

Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by murdering his seventy brothers. And God repaid all the evil of the men of

Shechem upon their heads. And the curse of Jotham, son of Jerubbaal came on them. (Judges 9:56-57)

After Abimelech's illegitimate reign several more judges took up YHWH's work in leading Israel by prophecy. It appears as if Israel escaped the anti-Christ's attempts to drive it back into idolatry between the time of Tola and Jair. There is no mention of backsliding then. But Scripture tells us that upon Jair's death the Israelites again served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Sidon, Moab, the Ammonites, and the Philistines (Judges 10:6-9).

Every time prior to this, when the Israelites confessed their sins of idolatry because of oppression by their enemies, YHWH was gracious in sending them help in the form of a judge who would lead them to victory. This time, however, YHWH tells them to go ask their false gods to deliver them because He would no longer do so. Could it be that anti-Christ would finally gain the conquest of Israel and defeat God's plan of redemption?

It was not to be. The Israelites continued to plead to YHWH and got rid of the foreign gods among them. Eventually, God raised up Jephthah, Gilead's son by a prostitute who was ostracized by Gilead's legitimate sons. When they saw they were powerless against their enemies they pleaded with Jephthah to lead them against the Ammonites, which he did.

Thus, anti-Christ's designs were again thwarted by God and His plan of redemption continued on.

After Gilead died Ibzan of Bethlehem led Israel for seven years, followed by Elon for ten years. After him came Abdon, son of Hillel, from Pirathon, who led Israel for eight years.

There is no mention of Israel's defecation to idolatry during these times. But, true to form, upon Abdon's death, Israel again fell victim to the anti-Christ's seduction into idolatry, and YHWH gave them over to the Philistines for forty years.

It is at this juncture in Israel's history that God performed a mighty miracle through the birth of Samson to Manoah and his wife who had been infertile.

The history of Samson reveals one of the most incredible displays of God's power against the anti-Christ enemies of

Israel. Space doesn't allow for a detailed retelling of these displays of power; read them for yourself in chapters 14 and 15 in the Book of Judges. But there is a lesson for us all in Samson's failure and ultimate triumph over the Philistines.

Most people are familiar with the account of Delilah's deception and betrayal of Samson. Although his heart was toward God and he was used mightily by God, the weak spot in his spiritual armor was his lust which anti-Christ was able to exploit. His attraction to Philistine women was especially crucial. His Philistine wife was instrumental in starting his warfare against the Philistines. Although it appears as if Samson was playing into the anti-Christ's hands by urging his parents to get him the woman he chose from among the Philistines, it was really from YHWH who was establishing a reason to confront the Philistines in order to deliver Israel from them (Judges 14:1-4). This is another example of God using man's weaknesses and Satan's plans, to accomplish His own will.

Although Satan gained a temporary victory over Samson through Delilah's treachery, the secret of God's strength through Samson's Nazirite vow was revived when his hair again grew out, and he was able to gain the final victory by destroying the leaders of the Philistines in Dagon's temple.

Samson's rule over Israel lasted twenty years.

Civil War

After anti-Christ's efforts to destroy Israel through its heathen inhabitants had failed over a period of a few hundred years, he attempted a new strategy: destroy Israel from within through civil war. This began with the experience of a Levite who is unnamed in Scripture.

This Levite, journeying from Bethlehem after retrieving his unfaithful concubine from her father, came to Gibeah where Benjamites were living. There he accepted the hospitality of a man to spend the night. In an account reminiscent of Lot in Sodom, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house and demanded that the man send out the Levite so they could have sex with him. In response to the custom of protecting one's guests, the man offered to send his virgin daughter and the Levite's concu-

bine to them. The Levite sent out his concubine who was raped and abused throughout the night, resulting in her death. The Levite cut up his concubine and sent her parts throughout the tribes of Israel in order to rile them against the Benjamites. This created the condition for the rest of Israel to respond with a vow to destroy their Benjamite brethren for the horror of what had been done.

At first the Benjamites were able to gain a victory by slaying twenty-two thousand Israelites at Gibeah. The Israelites wept at their defeat and inquired of YHWH whether they should pursue their cause. Thus began a see-saw battle of loss and victory which, at first, seemed to demonstrate God's misjudgment:

And the children of Israel went up and wept before YHWH until evening, and asked counsel of YHWH, asking, "Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother?" And YHWH said, "Go up against him."

And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day.

And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword. (Judges 20:23-25)

The question arises, "Why would YHWH tell Israel to go against the Benjamites, then allow the Benjamites to kill eighteen thousand more Israelites? The answer lies in the next few verses of Judges 20:

Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came to Bethel, and wept, and sat there before YHWH, and fasted that day until evening, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before YHWH.

And the children of Israel inquired of YHWH (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days, and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days) asking, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of

Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease?" And YHWH said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand." (Judges 20:26-28)

This time, Israel defeated Benjamin, killing some twenty-five thousand Benjamites and destroying the town of Gibeah.

While anti-Christ gained some ground in causing Israel to fight against one of its brethren, YHWH used this as a means to teach Israel several lessons. The first lesson was not to go into battle without the Ark of the Covenant. Although YHWH told Israel to go against Benjamin in the first two instances, He did so in response to their self-assurance that they could win without His presence in their midst. After they went to Bethel where the Ark was kept, His presence went with them. This lesson should have been unnecessary, for they had the history of the Ark's role in their previous battles in taking the Land in the first place. So in spite of Satan's ability to deceive Israel into civil war, God used these circumstances to chastise Israel and to teach the nation the importance of its reliance upon Him alone.

Another lesson was the importance of maintaining unity among the tribes. After defeating the Benjamites the other tribes of Israel lamented that they had allowed their anger to bring such devastation upon their brethren. Although they had sworn in anger to never allow their women to marry into the tribe of Benjamin, their repentance was demonstrated by killing the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead and kidnapping four hundred virgins to give to the Benjamites for wives. Also, the elders of Israel conspired with the Benjamites to kidnap young women from the town of Shiloh when they went out to celebrate the annual festival to YHWH.

This subterfuge, though done as a means to avoid the consequences of breaking an oath, demonstrated how men compromise their consciences in order to circumvent the legality of a commitment to God. Yet God honored this as a means to allow Benjamin to survive within the Israelite nation. Still, Israel continued to live in moral compromise, each man a law unto himself. ❖



ANTI-CHRIST

PART V

ISRAEL IN THE LAND THE MONARCHY – SAUL

For some 350 years after Joshua died Israel continually fell into idolatry. The history of that period reveals that God delivered Israel into bondage to the heathen tribes that were left in the land. Each time that happened, Israel cried out to God for deliverance, professing repentance for its sins of spiritual prostitution and the sinful perversions that came with it. And each time, God raised up a leader or “judge” to deliver Israel. By the end of the age of judges, around the year 1000 B.C., the darkness of anti-Christ’s kingdom was expanding throughout the rest of the world. Various religions were finding greater expression and were developing into major influences as the anti-Christ spirit drove humanity deeper and deeper into spiritual darkness, having erased the memory of YHWH from its consciousness.

Hinduism (which teaches that everything is part of a universal spirit) especially grows to encompass the entire sub-continent of Asia, most of which would eventually become the nation of India. The people are seduced into worshipping nature to the degree that humans are subordinated in stature to animals and even insects. The caste system becomes ingrained into the consciousness of the Hindu devotees, resulting in terrible living conditions for the poor. While cattle, monkeys, and other animals are protected and cared for, the lower castes are treated as unworthy of compassion. The lie that perpetrates this evil is predicated upon the false religious belief that they are living out their reincarnation according to the quality of their former lives; to help them would hinder their spiritual progression. But not only are the lower castes considered “untouchables,” they are actually exploited and persecuted by some in the upper classes of Hindu society. If there is anywhere that the anti-Christ spirit has been able to subjugate mankind to the darkness of idolatry it has been in the Hindu culture.

In Europe the Iron Age proliferates, as iron goods are made more readily available. Iron weapons prove far superior to the bronze weapons that had been in use for almost two-and-a-half

millennia. Soon Rome would arise, depicted in Daniel’s vision of the world’s empires in the form of a great idol as a nation so great and terrible that it is represented as legs of iron (Daniel 2:33).

Even before the Iron Age, however, iron was in use to some degree. The first mention of iron is found in Genesis 4:22 where we are told of Tubalcain being an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.

There is no dating of Israel’s first use of iron weapons, but iron is mentioned often throughout the writings of the prophets.

As the world marches inexorably toward the darkness of anti-Christ’s kingdom, Israel struggles to keep its identity with YHWH. Not content with God’s judges, Israel eventually began to seek a permanent leader – a king – to whom they could look for protection and guidance. The last of Israel’s judges would be Samuel, upon whom would fall the duty of anointing Israel’s first king.

Samuel was born as the result of his mother Hannah’s prayers and her promise that if YHWH gave her a son she would offer him to be brought up in the house of God. After Samuel was weaned Hannah took him to Eli the priest and left him there to be brought up in the knowledge of YHWH.

God had promised Eli’s ancestor Levi that his house would minister before Him forever. But the anti-Christ spirit had corrupted Eli’s own sons who did not esteem their inheritance, but abused the people and committed fornication with the women. Their evil had grown to the degree that God rescinded His promise to Eli’s house:

And a man of God came to Eli, and said to him, “Thus says YHWH, ‘Did I plainly appear to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh’s house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before Me? And did I give to the house of your father all the offerings made by fire from the children of Israel?’

Why do you despise My sacrifice and My offering, which I have commanded in My tabernacle, and honor

your sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of My people Israel?"

"Therefore YHWH God of Israel says, 'I indeed said that your house, and the house of your father, should walk before Me forever.' But now YHWH says, 'Be it far from Me, for them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days come that I will cut off your arm, and the arm of your father's house, so that there shall not be an old man in your house, and you shall see an enemy in My tabernacle, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. And the man of yours, whom I shall not cut off from My altar, shall be to consume your eyes, and to grieve your heart. And all the increase of your house shall die in the flower of their age. And this shall be a sign to you that shall come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day both of them shall die. And I will raise Me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in My heart and in My mind, and I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in your house shall come and bow to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, "Put me, I ask you, into one of the priests' offices, so that I may eat a piece of bread."'" (1 Samuel 2:27-36)

Eli's sons fell from grace and were destroyed, but God raised up Samuel to be His priest and prophet to the nation. And all Israel recognized Samuel's anointing.

Even as Samuel led Israel, God allowed Israel's enemies, the Philistines, to plague them. After suffering defeat at the hands of the Philistines in a battle near Ebenezer and Aphek, the Israelites decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh where it was kept in the Tabernacle of God. They were aware that Israel had previously gained victory by the presence of the Ark. Yet they did not understand that they were not motivated by God's Spirit, but by another spirit. This led to a greater defeat and the capturing of the Ark by the Philistines. It also resulted in the deaths of Hophni and Phinehas, as prophesied by the man of God to Eli. It also resulted in the death of Eli that same day:

And the Philistines fought, and Israel was struck down, and they fled every man into his tent. And there was a very great slaughter, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

And a man of Benjamin ran out of the army and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn, and with dirt upon his head. And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching, for his heart trembled for the Ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told it, all of the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, "What does the noise of this tumult mean?"

And the man came in quickly and told Eli.

Now Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see. And the man said to Eli, "I

am he that came out of the army, and I fled today out of the army."

And he said, "What is done there my son?"

And the messenger answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has also been a great slaughter among the people, and your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are also dead, and the Ark of God was taken."

And it happened, when he made mention of the Ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck broke, and he died, for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years. (1 Samuel 4:10-18)

Eli's heart was distressed not for his wayward sons (he knew God's judgment upon them), but for the Ark of the Covenant. For he knew that the presence of God went with the Ark, and that without it Israel had no contact with YHWH for atonement or protection.

This is reflected in the lament of Phinehas' wife upon her deathbed after giving birth that same day:

And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, close to being delivered. And when she heard the news that the Ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bent herself and brought forth, for her labor pains came upon her.

And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her said to her, "Do not be afraid, for you have born a son." But she did not answer, nor did she regard it.

And she named the child Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," because the Ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the Ark of God was taken." (1 Samuel 4:19-22)

The Philistines, driven by the anti-Christ spirit, thought that they would be invincible because they now had the Ark. The same spirit that seduced Israel into thinking that the mere presence of the Ark would protect them, seduced the Philistines into thinking the same.

The Ark had become an object of superstition to Israel; that is why the nation suffered this defeat. They were not looking to YHWH, but to the Ark for their protection. Now the Ark had become a source of cursing for the Philistines who also thought that the gods of Israel would protect them because they possessed the Ark. But YHWH demonstrated that He is the true God in a most remarkable way:

When the Philistines took the Ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early the next day, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the Ark of YHWH. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

And when they arose early on the next morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the Ark of YHWH, and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into

Dagon's house, walk on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

But the hand of YHWH was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and He destroyed them, and struck them with tumors - even Ashdod and its borders.

And when the men of Ashdod saw this, they said, "The Ark of the God of Israel shall not dwell with us, for His hand is hard upon us, and upon Dagon our god." (1 Samuel 5:2-7)

The people of Ashdod sent the Ark to Gath, but God struck Gath as He had Ashdod. So they sent the Ark to Ekron. But the people of Ekron were also plagued with death, and they panicked. Those who did not die were stricken with tumors. So they called for the Ark to be returned to Israel.

The Philistines put along side the Ark guilt offerings of five golden tumors and five golden mice to represent the plagues upon the five Philistine rulers and their people. They then placed the Ark on a new cart, hitched two cows that had calved and never been yoked, and sent it on its way to Beth Shemesh.

When the Ark arrived in Beth Shemesh the people rejoiced at first. But then seventy men who dared to look into the Ark were struck down by God. The people then sent messengers to Kiriath Jearim, telling them that the Ark had been returned, and to take the Ark to their place. The men of Kiriath Jearim took the Ark to Abinadab's house and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard it.

In all, the Philistines retained the Ark for seven months. After it was returned to Israel it stayed in Kiriath Jearim for twenty years. After that, Samuel called for Israel to rededicate itself to YHWH:

And Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you return to YHWH with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts to YHWH, and serve Him only, and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

Then the children of Israel put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served only YHWH.

And Samuel said, "Gather all Israel in Mizpeh, and I will pray for you to YHWH."

And they gathered together in Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before YHWH, and fasted on that day, and said there, "We have sinned against YHWH."

And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together in Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to YHWH our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines."

And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it wholly for a burnt offering to YHWH. And Samuel cried out to YHWH for Israel, and YHWH heard him.

And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But YHWH thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines on

that day, and crushed them, and they were struck down before Israel.

And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh and pursued the Philistines, and struck them until they came under Bethcar. Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, "Yet here has YHWH helped us."

So the Philistines were subdued, and they no longer came into the border of Israel, and the hand of YHWH was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. (1 Samuel 7:3-13)

This period in Israel's history reveals that the true God is a jealous God who does not respect the religions of men - even the religion of His own chosen. Israel thought that as long as it possessed the Ark God would protect the nation. So it became complacent and succumbed to the seduction of the anti-Christ spirit to engage in idolatry. The nation learned that the same destruction that God wreaks upon the enemies of Israel He will wreak upon Israel regardless of how much lip service Israel gives to Him. Israel had to repent of its idolatry before God would grant it victory over the Philistines. The presence of the Ark meant nothing if God was to share His glory with the false gods of the other nations.

God destroyed Dagon in his temple, and punished the Philistines for their idolatry and superstitions. Likewise, He punished Israel for its idolatry and superstitions pertaining to the Ark. Even the Ark had become an idol competing with the God whose presence went with it.

God's people today should learn from this even as we enter into communion with one another and with the Lord Jesus Christ:

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you demonstrate the Lord's death till He comes.

Therefore whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and then let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks judgment upon himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

For this reason many are weak and sickly among you, and many die. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord so that we would not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:26-32)

Even our communion can become an idol if we think the elements in themselves somehow draw us closer to God, or if they are worthy of worship. Only the true God Himself is worthy of worship, and our service to Him in truth is the best worship we have to offer.

But just as Israel did, Christians today do. Not discerning the Body of Christ, they look to men to lead them and to be their mediators to God. Priests, ministers, pastors - they are often looked to as mediators in place of Jesus, even against the wishes of some of them. And while many relish that adoration of men,

some try to point the people back to God's Word as their source for truth and healing.

"If you return to YHWH with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroah from among you, and prepare your hearts to YHWH, and serve Him only, and He will deliver you," said Samuel to Israel. God says the same thing to us today. Our Philistines are the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world entices us with money, power, and prestige; the flesh entices us with illicit sex, gluttony, drunkenness, and other lusts; the devil entices us with false teachings, and religious attitudes and beliefs that enslave us to idols - many of the human variety that beguile the foolish in the name of Jesus Christ.

Saul Is Chosen

Israel never fully surrendered to God and to His Word. They rejected God as their King and demanded a man to rule them:

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk your ways. Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

But this displeased Samuel, when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." And Samuel prayed to YHWH. And YHWH said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not rule over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, they have forsaken Me and served other gods, so do they also to you. Now therefore listen to their voice. But protest solemnly to them, and show them the kind of king that shall rule over them."

And Samuel told all the words of YHWH to the people that asked a king of him. And he said, "This will be the kind of king that shall rule over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint himself captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, and will set them to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

"And he will take your daughters to be confectioners, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive gardens, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give it to his officers and to his servants.

"And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep, and you shall be his servants. And you will cry out in that day because of your king which you shall have chosen for yourselves, and YHWH will not hear you in that day."

Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, so that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." (1 Samuel 8:4-20)

It is clear that Israel no longer trusted God to be their King. The anti-Christ spirit had confused their reasoning and blinded their eyes to their lack of faith. On the one hand they acknowledged that God spoke to them through Samuel; they thought that they trusted God to lead them in their battles with their enemies. On the other hand, they didn't understand that their trust in the Ark rather than in God was the cause of their defeat at the hands of the Philistines. Rather than continue in faith and repentance, they chose to reject God in favor of a man to lead them. By doing so, they made it easier for anti-Christ to plague Israel. If the man Israel chose over God failed, Israel would suffer as a consequence of his sins. Before, when every man was a law unto himself, each man suffered for his own sins; now the nation would suffer for the sins of its kings.

Yet God did not leave it to Israel to choose their first king; He made the choice and brought Samuel into contact with Saul, a Benjamite who entered into Samuel's area in search of his father's donkeys.

Saul was confused that someone of his low estate should be chosen to rule over all Israel.

It was sometime around the year 3100 by the Hebrew calendar, or 1000-900 B.C., that Israel's first king, Saul, was anointed by the prophet Samuel to rule over Israel. At first Saul exhibited the humility necessary to serve God and nation. Yet within two years of being crowned king he acted faithlessly. Early in his instructions to Saul, Samuel told him to wait seven days for Samuel to come to him after Saul went to Gilgal. There Samuel would sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings (1 Samuel 10:8). After Saul initially defeated the Ammonites in battle, he led Israel to victories for two years. When he got to Gilgal he waited for Samuel as he had been instructed. But his men were in fear because Saul's son Jonathan had attacked a Philistine outpost and stirred the Philistines to come against Israel with a great army. In response to the fear of his men, and with Samuel not appearing at the appointed time, Saul became impatient and decided to offer the sacrifices himself - something he was not anointed to do:

When the men of Israel saw that they were in trouble (for the people were distressed) then the people hid themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he stayed in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

And he waited seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him.

And Saul said, "Bring here a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings."

And he offered the burnt offering. And it happened that as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came. And Saul went out to meet him, that he might bless him. And Samuel said, "What have you done?"

And Saul said, "Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash, therefore I said, 'The

Philistines will now come down on me in Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to YHWH,' I therefore forced myself and offered a burnt offering."

And Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of YHWH your God, which he commanded you, or now YHWH would have established your kingdom upon Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. YHWH has sought Himself a man after His own heart, and YHWH has commanded him to be captain over his people, because you have not kept that which YHWH commanded you. (1 Samuel 13:6-14)

Although Saul ruled Israel for forty-two years, all that time was spent in fear and anger for having lost his kingdom to another. He knew his days were numbered, but he didn't know when they would come to an end.

In this tragic saga we see the anti-Christ spirit creating conditions to tempt Saul to disobey God. The idea was to thwart God's anointed king and hopefully destroy Israel as a result. From that time on Saul's kingship was cursed, and the anti-Christ spirit came against him in force. Yet God blessed Saul with victory after victory. But the anti-Christ spirit, which always acts contrary to God's Word, infected Saul and his army. They proved faithless when, after defeating the Amalekites, they did not destroy all life among them, but kept the better livestock, as well as sparing Agag, king of the Amalekites. For Saul's part, he lied to Samuel, first about performing all of God's commands, and then by telling him that the livestock were taken in order to sacrifice them to YHWH:

Then the word of YHWH came to Samuel, saying, "It sorrows Me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments."

And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to YHWH all night.

And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, and, look, he set himself up a place, and has gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal."

And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you by YHWH. I have performed the commandment of YHWH."

And Samuel said, "Then what does this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear, mean?"

And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to sacrifice to YHWH your God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stay, and I will tell you what YHWH has said to me this night."

And he said to him, "Say on."

And Samuel said, "When you were little in your own sight, were you not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and YHWH anointed you king over Israel? And YHWH sent you on a journey, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until

they are consumed. Why then did you not obey the voice of YHWH, but flew upon the spoil, and did evil in the sight of YHWH?"

And Saul said to Samuel, "Yes, I have obeyed the voice of YHWH, and have gone the way which YHWH sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to YHWH your God in Gilgal."

And Samuel said, "Has YHWH as great a delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of YHWH? Look, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of YHWH, he has also rejected you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:10-23)

Saul blamed his army for his own sin. He had the authority to demand total obedience to God's command, but he gave in to his men. Whether or not they took the livestock to sacrifice to YHWH, or Saul said this in an attempt to appease Samuel, the truth remains that this was an act of disobedience. We cannot assume that the intent of our hearts is sufficient reason to act contrary to God's Word. We may think that a "good work" will please God, but if it is contrary to His Word we would be in rebellion.

An example prevalent in the Body of Christ today is that of women teaching in and/or taking authority over God's assemblies, and even to the Body of Christ at large. Many teach in the Christian media, some thinking that because they have their husband's or pastor's approval it must be acceptable to God. Women may have a natural talent to teach, but they are not anointed to teach God's Word. Scripture restricts the elder women to teaching the younger women to be good wives and stewards at home. They may certainly disciple other women, evangelize, prophesy and join in discipling individual new believers, as did Priscilla with her husband Aquila. But beyond this, women are not to teach, certainly not in the assembly or to the Body of Christ in general.

I mention this not to denigrate women, but because it is such a prevalent form of rebellion today. Nor should we neglect the same sin of rebellion in men who assume authority over God's people without His anointing - who lead them astray through glib oratory and flattery. All these are succumbing to the same anti-Christ spirit that seduced Saul. Theirs is the same sin Saul committed, thinking that his sacrifices were worthy when they were offered contrary to God's commands. Both at Gilgal and after defeating the Amalekites Saul exhibited self-pride; the humility that he possessed at the start of his rule over Israel had given way to the anti-Christ spirit of rebellion. Even though he confessed his sin, Saul was never to find favor with God again. God had someone else in store - someone of whom God would say, "He is a man after My own heart." The stage was set for Saul's departure, but it would not be until David had been tested by God to show his worthiness to be king. That testing took several years, during which the anti-Christ spirit in Israel as well as in Israel's enemies repeatedly manifested itself.

David's Anointing

Even while Saul continued to reign as king in Israel, Samuel was commissioned by God to seek out God's choice to replace him. Following God's direction, Samuel was led to a small shepherd boy, the son of Jesse of Bethlehem. The transition of the throne from Saul to David would involve the anti-Christ spirit's attempts to kill David through Saul, even though that spirit was sent by God Himself:

But the Spirit of YHWH departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from YHWH vexed him. And Saul's servants said to him, "Now look, an evil spirit from God vexes you. Let our lord now command your servants, who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on a harp, and it will be, when the evil spirit from God is upon you, that he shall play with his hand, and you will be well."

And Saul said to his servants, "Now provide me a man that can play well, and bring him to me."

Then one of the servants answered, and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is skillful in playing, and a mighty, valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a handsome person, and YHWH is with him."

Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep."

And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son to Saul. And David came to Saul and stood before him. And he had great affection for him, and he became his armor bearer.

And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David, I ask you, stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight."

And it happened that when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, David took a harp and played with his hand. So Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit left him. (1 Samuel 16:14-23)

David went back-and-forth between his father and Saul. He was with his father, tending sheep, while his three older brothers followed Saul to war. At that time the Philistines were stirred up by anti-Christ to threaten Israel. They sent their champion, Goliath to challenge Israel to send its champion to meet him in combat. The terms set forth by Goliath were that if he won, Israel would be subject to the Philistines; if the Israelite won, the Philistines would become subject to Israel. Because Goliath was a descendant of the Rapha – the giants of that day – he was a fearsome opponent. No one in Israel came close to him in size and strength. Surely the challenge could not be withstood with any assurance of victory on the part of Israel. Anti-Christ was convinced that if Israel attempted to stand up to this challenge he would gain a significant victory, causing God's people to become subjected to him through the Philistines.

But God's people do not stand by human strength, but by the Spirit of God (Zechariah 4:6). And God sent David to face Goliath. Coming to the Valley of Elah, where both armies had drawn battle lines, David heard Goliath's challenge. He was filled with righteous anger at this giant taunting the armies of the living God, and told Saul that he would face Goliath.

Rejecting the armor that Saul placed upon him, David went to meet Goliath with only his staff and his sling:

And the Philistine came on and drew near to David, and the man that bore the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he scorned him because he was only a youth, and tanned and handsome.

And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the field."

Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield. But I come to you in the name of YHWH of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day YHWH will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And I will give the carcasses of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that YHWH saves not with sword and spear, for the battle is YHWH's, and He will give you into our hands."

And it happened, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. And David put his hand in his bag and took from it a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine in his forehead so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell upon his face to the earth.

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and slew him, but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath, and slew him, and cut off his head with it.

And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines until you come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even as far as Gath, and to Ekron. And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they plundered their tents. (1 Samuel 17:41-53)

David repelled the anti-Christ's new attempt to destroy Israel. But this also set in place the groundwork for Saul's bitterness to take root in his heart. At first Saul rewarded David for his successes in leading his army, even giving David his daughter Michal. When the army returned home after its campaign against the Philistines, the women came out from all the towns to meet Saul with singing and dancing. But their song displeased Saul:

And the women answered one another as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

And Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him. And he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thou-

sands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands. And what more can he have but the kingdom?"

And Saul kept his eye on David from that day and on. (1 Samuel 18:7-9)

Saul's words were prophetic. For David was chosen by God to inherit the kingdom of Israel. The anti-Christ spirit that God sent upon Saul stirred him up to kill David:

And it came to pass the next day, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house, and David played with his hand as at other times. And there was a javelin in Saul's hand, and Saul hurled the javelin, for he said, "I will strike David even to the wall with it."

And twice David escaped out of his presence. And Saul was afraid of David because YHWH was with him, and had left Saul. (1 Samuel 18:10-12)

Had anti-Christ been able to kill David by Saul's hand, God's prophecies of the Redeemer would have been seriously hindered if not completely thwarted. But God's hand was upon David to protect him by any means.

The more success David had in his army campaigns, the more Saul feared him and sought to kill him. He overplayed his hand on one occasion by telling his son Jonathan to kill David. Jonathan loved David and warned him to stay away. In David's absence Jonathan pleaded with Saul to spare David:

And Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul, and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good for you. For he put his life in his hand and slew the Philistine, and YHWH wrought a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?"

And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, "As YHWH lives, he shall not be slain."

And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan showed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past. (1 Samuel 19:4-7)

But anti-Christ again tempted Saul to kill David, even against the oath that Saul swore before God:

And there was war again, and David went out and fought with the Philistines and slew them with a great slaughter, and they fled from him.

And the evil spirit from YHWH was upon Saul as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand, and David played with his hand. And Saul sought to strike David even to the wall with the javelin, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he struck the javelin into the wall. And David fled, and escaped that night.

Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him, and to slay him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be slain."

So Michal let David down through a window, and he went and fled, and escaped. And Michal took an idol and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for its bolster, and covered it with a cloth. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick."

And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed so that I may kill him."

And when the messengers came in, behold, there was an idol in the bed, with a pillow of goat's hair for its bolster.

And Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me so, and sent my enemy away so that he escaped?"

And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go; why should I kill you?'"

So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. (1 Samuel 19:8-18)

By breaking his oath to spare David, Saul became an anti-Christ himself. He no longer needed the evil spirit to goad him into killing David; it became an obsession within his own spirit. Yet God imposed His own Spirit upon Saul so that, even in his pursuit of David, he fell on his face and prophesied. Following this, the anti-Christ Saul commanded Doeg the Edomite to slay Ahimelech, the priest who gave David the show bread and Goliath's sword, ignorant of David's flight from Saul. Not only did he command the killing of Ahimelech, but he commanded that all 85 priests in Ahimelech's household, as well as all the men, women, children, and livestock of the priests' town, Nob, be put to the sword.

Here is a great lesson for us today. Because one retains the gift of prophecy does not mean that one is obedient to God, or is in God's favor. The gifts and callings of God are without repentance (Romans 11:29). Saul's calling as king was not ended; God was still preparing David to take his place. In the interim, Saul's anointing remained and, as he had in the past when his heart was right with God, he still prophesied even while breaking his oath with God to spare David's life.

There are many today who were at one time anointed by God to ministry, but have fallen away into damnable heresies. They still retain the gifts that God bestowed upon them, but they are God's enemies, and blasphemers against His Word. This is why all things must be tested by Scripture to see if they are true. We cannot trust the words or deeds of men no matter how miraculous they may appear, or how faithful the men were in the past..

In truth, these people have deluded even themselves to think that God is still with them, just as Saul thought that God had delivered David into his hands when David went to save the town of Keilah from the Philistines:

And it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. And Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he is shut in by entering into a town that has gates and bars."

And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

And David knew that Saul secretly practiced mischief against him, and he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here."

Then David said, O YHWH, God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O YHWH, God of Israel, I beseech you, tell Your servant." And YHWH said, "He will come down."

Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?"

And YHWH said, "They will deliver you up."

Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and left Keilah, and went wherever they could go. And it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, so he did not go there. (1 Samuel 23:7-13)

Once again, the anti-Christ was thwarted in trying to destroy God's plans.

Saul made it his lifelong passion to kill David, going from place to place in search of him. Yet David acted honorably in every encounter with Saul, even twice sparing Saul his life when David could easily have taken it. Each time, Saul swore he would not seek David's life, but each time, he broke that vow. The end for Saul came when he decided to pierce the veil of death and practice necromancy, demonstrating how far he had fallen from trusting God for his spiritual and temporal welfare. He turned to the anti-Christ for direction.

The anti-Christ spirit led Saul to fear greatly when the Philistines came to confront his army at Gilboa, driving him to seek the witch of Endor so he could enquire of the deceased Samuel what he should do. This was the final rebellious act of Saul, and sealed his death and that of his sons, thus ending his kingdom in Israel.

Just as Samuel prophesied to him, the next day Saul died on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines also killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua.

One might ask why the righteous Jonathan had to die. Why did God not spare him for his faithfulness? He had acknowledged that David would rule, and gladly acquiesced to be by David's side.

God's justice and rule of law is inviolable. As long as Jonathan lived, the crown could not be given to David. Legally, it must pass from father to son, or to the next male of kin. Jonathan will not lose his eternal reward, but he would have been in David's way - albeit unintentionally - if he had lived.

Throughout David's ordeal in eluding Saul, and in his exile, David wrote many of his psalms with which we are blessed today. His affliction was used by God to minister His Word to His people for all time. ❖



ANTI-CHRIST

ISRAEL IN THE LAND THE MONARCHY – DAVID & SOLOMON

Saul ruled over both Judah and Israel. Although Judah was part of the whole nation of Israel, eventually Judah would become distinct from Israel, at least as a civil community. The tribe of Judah occupied the southernmost portion of the Land, sharing a major portion of its northern border with the tribe of Benjamin.

At the time of Saul's death David was staying in Ziklag, a city located somewhere in the Negev within Judah's southern district. He sent word to Jabesh-Gilead, blessing the people there for burying Saul and encouraging them to be strong, and announcing to them that Saul had anointed him king over Judah.

But Abner, the captain of Saul's army, made Saul's son Ish-bosheth king over Israel.

David inquired of YHWH where he should go. YHWH instructed him to go to the town of Hebron, approximately 18 miles southwest of Jerusalem. There, the men of Judah came and anointed David king over the house of Judah.

With Saul's downfall the anti-Christ spirit gained another temporary victory by dividing the two nations. Judah received David as its king, but Israel did not. It would be some seven years before David would rule over Israel, reuniting the twelve tribes as one nation. In the meantime, he would experience numerous conflicts with the anti-Christ spirit in those men and women who succumbed to Satan's deceptions.

The first conflict came with civil war between Israel and Judah, which began with a border skirmish between Judah and Benjamin:

And Abner the son of Ner, and the men of Saul's son Ish-bosheth [Hebrew: "Man of shame"], went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon, and Zeruiah's son Joab and the servants of David went out, and all met together by the pool of Gibeon, and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

And Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men get up now and sport before us."

And Joab said, "Let them get up."

Then there arose and were counted from Benjamin twelve who followed Saul's son Ish-bosheth, and twelve of David's men.

Then each caught the other by the head and thrust his sword into the other's side so that they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Chelqath hats-Tsu-riym ["field of the swords"], which is in Gibeon.

And there was a very severe battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David's men. (2 Samuel 2:12-17)

From this battle nine of David's men were lost, but three-hundred and sixty Benjamites fell. We don't know if Satan knew specifically that God's plan of salvation rested upon Judah (it was later prophesied by Micah (5:2) that out of Judah the Redeemer would come), but he did know that Israel as a whole fitted into that plan. Therefore he pitted brother against brother beginning with this civil war between the house of Saul (Ish-bosheth) and the house of David.

Abner knew that Saul's house was rejected by God, and that David had been chosen by God to deliver all Israel from its enemies (2 Samuel 3:18), but he chose to side with Saul's son against David until Ish-bosheth angered him with what he claimed was a false accusation (2 Samuel 3:6-11).

Even after Abner went to David promising to deliver Israel to him, David respected Ish-bosheth as the heir to Saul's throne. When the sons of Rimmon, Baanah and Rechab, killed Ish-bosheth on his bed and brought his head to David they expected a reward. But David accused them of murdering an innocent man and had them put to death.

The lesson for us in this act of David is that all authority, even that which opposes God, is established by God and must be respected. David knew that his time would come in which he would be king over all Israel; he did not want that time to come through ungodly means. Yet it was Ish-bosheth's death that occasioned the elders from every tribe of Israel to come to David and make him king over all the nation (2 Samuel 5:1-3)

Even so, the Jebusites, a tribe of Canaanites that lived in and around Jebus (which would be renamed Jerusalem ["God's peace"]), refused to accept David as their king. The anti-Christ spirit in them defied God's order and they even mocked David, claiming that their blind and lame could keep him out of their fortified city (2 Samuel 5:6). But David's army prevailed and he made the city his place of residence. Thus it was called "the City of David."

During Saul's reign the Ark of the Covenant had been taken to Abinadab's house in Kiriath Jearim and remained largely ignored by Israel. David conferred with the officers of his army and decided to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, and this was agreed to by all the people. But it had been so long since the Israelites had handled the Ark that the memory of God's instructions on how it must be carried by priests of the Levites had also been forgotten. Even as Israel believed in YHWH, the anti-Christ spirit had succeeded in erasing the memory of His commandments among the people, though not as thoroughly as he had with all the other nations over the centuries. It was the people's lack of diligence to God's commands that they used an ox cart to bring the Ark to Jerusalem:

Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from there the Ark of God, whose name is called by the name of YHWH of hosts who dwells between the cherubim.

And they set the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah, accompanying the Ark of God, and Ahio went ahead of the Ark.

And David and all the house of Israel played before YHWH on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the Ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it.

And the anger of YHWH was kindled against Uzzah, and God killed him there for his error, and there he died by the Ark of God.

And David was displeased because YHWH had broken out upon Uzzah, and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day.

And David was afraid of YHWH that day, and said, "How will the Ark of YHWH come to me?"

So David would not move the Ark of YHWH to himself into the city of David, but David carried it aside into the house of Obededom the Gittite. And the Ark of YHWH continued in the house of Obededom the Gittite three months, and YHWH blessed Obededom and all his household. (2 Samuel 6:1-11)

Even David did not understand the holiness of God's commandments pertaining to the Ark. The presence of God dwelt within the Ark; this was understood. But that it must be treated with special honor according to God's commands was not un-

derstood because anti-Christ had removed the memory of those commands from even the Levites. At the least, Israel had become complacent toward them. Whatever the reason, this is why God's anger broke out upon them (1 Chronicles 15:11-16), and Uzzah paid with his life.

God's anger is not so palpable today because of His grace upon His Son whose death atoned for the sins of the whole world (although only those who believe in Jesus have His grace applied to their sins). Yet as long as that grace abounds, the Father's mercy demonstrates that He is slow to anger.

Even in Uzzah's case God was slow to anger. As soon as the Ark was placed upon the ox cart He could have killed those involved. But He waited for His anger to be manifested until Uzzah touched the Ark with his unwashed hands.

We are blessed today to have Jesus as our Intercessor and to enjoy the Father's love and mercy because of our faith in His dear Son. Yet how we must be careful to approach God with pure hearts, attuned to His Word and led by His Spirit. We may not be struck dead by our sins, but we offend Him just the same.

The anti-Christ spirit does not allow us to rest just because we have conquered sin through our faith in Jesus Christ. The battle for our souls continues.

Just so, it did not allow David to rest just because he had conquered the walled city of Jebus and made it the seat of his kingdom. Immediately upon hearing the news that David had been anointed king over all Israel, the Philistines went up in full force to defeat him. But God gave David the assurance of victory and, again, his army prevailed (2 Samuel 5:17-25)

Then David commanded that the Ark of the Covenant be brought to Jerusalem in the proper manner, carried by Levites, with all Israel singing and dancing before the Ark. It is at this point that the anti-Christ spirit welled up in his wife Michal's heart to despise him:

So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went with joy to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH out of the house of Obededom.

And it happened, when God helped the Levites that bore the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams.

And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites that bore the Ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers. David also wore an ephod of linen.

Thus all Israel brought up the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH with shouting, and with the sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.

And it happened, as the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH came to the City of David, that Saul's daughter Michal, looking out a window, saw king David dancing and playing, and she despised him in her heart. (1 Chronicles 15:25-29)

Sometimes Satan's greatest victories come on the small battle fronts. Unable to destroy David through all the time of Saul's reign, now upon David's ascension to the throne of Israel he sought to harm him through his wife:

Then David returned to bless his household. And Saul's daughter Michal came out to meet David and said, "How glorious the king of Israel was today, who uncovered himself today in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"

And David said to Michal, "It was before YHWH, who chose me above your father, and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of YHWH, over Israel. Therefore I will play before YHWH. And I will still be more vile than this, and will be base in my own sight, and of the maidservants of which you have spoken. I will be held in honor by them."

Therefore Saul's daughter Michal had no child to the day of her death. (2 Samuel 6:20-23)

No matter how great a man may be, those closest to his heart are the ones who can wound him the most. An unloving wife can cause a man to lose heart and give up on life - even give up on serving the Lord. It seems that from that time onward David and Michal no longer had relations. Scripture doesn't go into detail, but certainly this must have hurt him. Fortunately he had other wives and concubines, but his love for Michal must have caused him great pain, and the anti-Christ spirit great joy at seeing that love crushed. Yet David chose to honor God above his wife, which was the proper thing to do, and which was a victory over the enemy.

(As a side note, I've heard people who misunderstand Scripture joke that "David danced naked before the Ark." David was not naked; he wore a linen garment and a linen ephod. Michal's snobby remark insinuated that he had "unclothed" himself by removing his kingly apparel and exposing his human nature to the least of servants, as if that were unfitting for a king.)

David's reign was marked by constant battles with the enemies of Israel. Because Israel had not obeyed God in the past, but allowed His enemies to remain in the land unconverted, the anti-Christ had many opportunities to try to destroy the man to whom God promised an eternal kingdom (2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17). If Satan could destroy David before the promised son (Solomon) could be born, then God's promise could not come to pass. He came close to accomplishing the task but for one man whose heroism is greatly overlooked in biblical history:

Moreover, the Philistines had war yet again with Israel, and David and his men went down and fought against the Philistines. And David grew faint. And Ishbi-Benob, who was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, being equipped with a new sword, thought to slay David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah protected him, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall no longer go out with us to battle, so that you do not quench the light of Israel." (2 Samuel 21:15-17)

Every time Satan seems to get the upper hand, God finds a man of valor to stand in the gap. Abishai saved Israel that day.

Under David, Israel compiled victory upon victory over its adversaries. Still, the anti-Christ's design to unravel God's purpose for redemption continued unabated. An overwhelming number of Israel's battles were defensive rather than offensive. As long as a heathen tribe did not attack Israel's army it was pretty much left

alone. Some kings, such as the Ammonite Nahash, even treated David kindly. And David was always gracious to return the favor.

One notable attack by anti-Christ came against David even as he attempted to show kindness to Nahash's son Hanun after Nahash's death:

And it happened after this that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son ruled in his place. Then David said, "I will show kindness to Nahash's son Hanun as his father showed kindness to me." And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

And the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David honors your father, that he has sent comforters to you? Has not David rather sent his servants to you in order to search the city and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"

Therefore Hanun took David's servants and shaved off one half of their beards, and cut off their clothes in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away.

When they told it to David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards are grown, and then return."

And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Bethrehab, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the army of the mighty men. (2 Samuel 10:1-7)

Men infected with the anti-Christ spirit do not accept kindness without suspicion. As their hearts are evil, so they believe the hearts of all men are evil, particularly the hearts of godly men. Hanun's evil returned to him through Israel's defeat of the Ammonite and Syrian armies. So great was the defeat that the Syrian king Hadadezer made peace with David and was no longer willing to help the Ammonites. The way was made for Israel to later destroy the Ammonites without having to watch their flank for the Syrians.

Every attempt by Satan to destroy Israel was thwarted. But one of the tactics of warfare is to kill or at the least incapacitate the leader of the army in order to throw it into confusion and weaken its ability to defend itself. Unable to shake David's righteousness by any other means, Satan set the stage for an attack on his flank in a more subtle manner. His weapon was named Bathsheba.

The story of David and Bathsheba is known well enough that we needn't go into great detail. Whether or not David's initial encounter with Bathsheba was accidental or contrived on either or both their parts we cannot know. But this we do know: even the man who was so virtuous that God would call him "a man after My own heart" had a weakness of the flesh, and Satan knew it.

It was bad enough that David committed adultery with Bathsheba, which was punishable by death under Moses' law. But to manipulate circumstances to have her husband Uriah killed compounded his sin.

For a brief time, even David succumbed to the anti-Christ spirit. Perhaps he justified his actions because Uriah and Bathsheba were not Hebrews but Hittites. (Bathsheba would not have been a Hebrew because Hebrew women were constrained from marrying non-Hebrew men, although in captivity some, such as Esther, were taken as wives by the heathens. Hebrew men could marry non-Hebrew women since it is the man's seed that determines the lineage of the offspring.)

But where Satan meant it for evil, God turned it to good. Upon Uriah's death, and after Bathsheba's time of mourning, David married her, continuing to cover up his crime. But he couldn't hide it from God. The prophet Nathan came to David with a story about a rich man who had many sheep but stole the one sheep of a poor man. David responded with righteous anger, declaring that that rich man should die for his crime.

And Nathan said to David, "You are the man. Thus says YHWH God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of Saul's hand, and I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if that had been too little, I would moreover have given to you such and such things. Why have you despised the commandment of YHWH, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword by the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

"Thus says YHWH, 'Look, I will raise up evil against you from out of your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.'" (2 Samuel 12:7-12)

Confronted with his sins, David repented and accepted God's chastisement. The price was the life of his son born to Bathsheba. Although David had sinned greatly and suffered the consequences, his heart remained steadfast for YHWH. And God blessed him with another son through Bathsheba - Solomon, through whom the lineage to the Messiah would continue.

How often Christians sin and then let the guilt of that sin keep them from continuing to serve the Lord. This is not meant to minimize the sin, but to remind us that if we confess our sins, as David did (albeit after confrontation by Nathan), God is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us anew from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

The anti-Christ spirit will not let us forget our sins, and that's okay. But he also will do all he can to keep us from trusting God's forgiveness in order to hinder our service to our Lord. We have to confess our sin, suck it up, and go on, even if we feel like a hypocrite. After all, we are hypocrites to some degree. No one lives their public life exactly the same as they live their private life. Convention, particularly in polite western society, requires that we keep the evil in our hearts unexposed. But we cannot keep it unexposed to our Lord. We all sin daily in some way - of

ten several times daily. The knowledge of our sinfulness is used by Satan to keep us from confidently continuing on in our spiritual service.

Let us learn a lesson from David. Once he confessed his sin he continued steadfastly for the Lord, recognizing the justice of the consequences, yet not letting those consequences keep him from the love of God. His lamentations in the Psalms tell his story and reveal the purity of his heart while acknowledging the sinfulness of his nature.

Sadly, David's sin was such that God accused him of despising Him. God's judgment upon David's house gave the anti-Christ spirit inroads into David's life which were not only sanctioned by God, but directed by Him. This was necessary in order to show Israel then, and us today, the seriousness of sin.

Even though God pronounced a judgment upon David's house, He did not judge the nation for David's sins. David's armies continued to defeat and subjugate the nations that opposed Israel: Rabbah of the Ammonites; Moab; Zobah; Damascus; Edom; Hamath - all fell easily and were plundered by the Israelites.

God's judgment upon David's house was stayed for awhile with the birth of Solomon (Heb: *Shelomoh* - "Peaceful") whom Scripture says God loved. Because God loved Solomon He wanted him called *Jedediah* (Heb: *Yedydeyah* - "Beloved by Yah"). As it turned out, Solomon was aptly named in both cases. He was loved by God, and his kingdom was at peace throughout his reign.

In the meantime, though, Israel under David saw no peace. Least of all did David find peace after his son Absalom came of age. Absalom was David's third son, born to him by Maacah the Geshurite (2 Samuel 3:3). The real trouble began when Absalom killed Amnon his half-brother who had seduced Absalom's sister Tamar then discarded her, disgracing her all the more.

This evil was done with the complicity of David's nephew Jonadab who counseled Amnon to fake illness and request that Tamar bring him something to eat. He was infatuated with her beauty, but after taking advantage of her he despised her. Absalom bided his time until he could find opportunity to kill Amnon. Two years later he invited all of David's sons to join him in a feast at Baal Hazor. There he ordered his men to kill Amnon in the presence of David's sons. Upon seeing Amnon slain they all fled in fear. A rumor began (one of Satan's best tactics) that Absalom had killed all of David's sons. Absalom fled in fear and remained in exile until David was persuaded by Joab to allow Absalom to return. David agreed as long as Absalom remained out of his presence.

Through all this intrigue the anti-Christ spirit wormed its way into the household of David and set the stage for David's conflict with one of his most beloved sons.

After some two years Absalom asked Joab to approach David for permission to live in his household. David relented, and Absalom again lived as a prince in his father's palace. But just as God prophesied through Nathan, Absalom - one from within David's own house - would scheme to capture the hearts of the people away from David. While this was part of God's chastisement of David for his murder of Uriah and adultery with Bathsheba, it also exposed the anti-Christ spirit in Absalom's heart.

Jesus said, "Woe to the world because of offenses, for it is necessary that offenses come. But woe to that man by whom the offense comes!" (Matthew 18:7).

We see in Absalom the same spirit that was in Judas. Just as one closest to Jesus betrayed Him with the hope of enriching himself, so Absalom betrayed David with the same hope. Both succeeded for awhile, but both were destroyed. And the ones they betrayed were resurrected - David to reign over the kingdom of Israel; Jesus to reign over the Kingdom of Heaven.

The account of Absalom's death and David's restoration to the throne makes fascinating reading. I will leave it to you to read this for yourself in 2 Samuel 15:1-19:8. There you will see how God uses the evil of Satan and men for His own purposes.

Just as prophesied, conflict remained with David throughout all his years as anti-Christ was given opportunity to cause division among God's chosen people.

Even after David was restored to the throne a dispute arose between the men of Israel and the men of Judah as to which nation should be favored by the king. Because David returned to Judah, the men of Israel were persuaded by Sheba, son of Bicri, a Benjamite, to rebel against David. Joab pursued Sheba to Abel Beth Maacah and threatened to destroy the city. But a wise woman counseled with Joab to spare the city in return for Sheba's head. She then persuaded the people to kill Sheba and have his head thrown to Joab outside the city wall. Joab spared the city, and Sheba's death resulted in Israel again vowing allegiance to David.

The history of Israel under David is much like the history of believers throughout the ages. The fickleness of our flesh leads us to sin against our Lord; difficulties lead us back to Him. It seems that we are more inclined to live for Him when life's circumstances leave us most vulnerable to troubles. It is the seesaw character of fallen man that causes us to waver. We should take a lesson from David whose character was much like that of the apostle Paul who said, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:12-13).

Unfortunately, many Christians take this verse to mean that "all things" includes things of the flesh - overcoming opponents in athletics; gaining advantage in business; winning office in politics; gaining health and wealth. But the true meaning is that, whatever situation we find ourselves, we must be content, trusting God to work for and through us. It is a spiritual conquest, not a physical or carnal conquest to which Paul is referring.

David had two particular calamities upon Israel with which he had to deal - one due to Saul's sin; another due to David's sin.

The first was a famine in the land which YHWH sent because Saul had broken the oath that Joshua had made with the Gibeonites to spare their lives in the land:

Then there was a famine for three consecutive years in the days of David, and David inquired of YHWH. And YHWH answered, "It is because of Saul, and because of his bloody house - because he slew the Gibeonites."

And the king called the Gibeonites, and said to them (now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel,

but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn to them, and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.), therefore David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you and how shall I make the atonement so that you may bless the inheritance of YHWH?"

And the Gibeonites said to him, "We will have no silver or gold from Saul, or from his house. Nor shall you kill any man of Israel for us."

And he said, "Whatever you say, that I will do for you."

And they answered the king, "The man who consumed us, and who devised against us that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel, let seven men of his sons be delivered to us, and we will hang them up to YHWH in Gibeah of Saul, whom YHWH chose."

And the king said, "I will give them."

But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of YHWH's oath that was between them - between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. But the king took the two sons of Aiah's daughter Rizpah, whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth, and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite. And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before YHWH. And all seven together fell and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest. (2 Samuel 21:1-9)

The number of sons - seven - has significance in many ways. In Pharaoh's dream, which was interpreted by Joseph, the number seven was prominent regarding that famine. The number seven is also prominent in terms of atonement and restoration (Leviticus 4:6 - 26:28; Numbers 23:1-29; the vial and trumpet judgments of Revelation, etc.). The idea is that YHWH Himself may have inspired the Gibeonites to ask for the seven men from Saul's house in order to make the sacrifice perfect.

Through David's atonement on behalf of Israel for Saul's sins God relieved the famine. By today's western standards this seems like an injustice. To the unbelieving it also seems unloving of God to allow or honor such deaths. But YHWH's justice demands atonement for every evil deed. In this case He punished His own people for the wrong done to the heathen Gibeonites, and allowed the Gibeonites to bless Israel. Understand that the heathen in the land acknowledged YHWH as the God of Israel, just as they honored their own gods. They were not part of Israel, but they knew of YHWH's power being greater than that of their own gods.

Here is what seems like a dichotomy. God had commanded Israel to destroy all the people in the Land He had given to Israel. Israel sinned by making a treaty with the Gibeonites (even though the Gibeonites had tricked them into the treaty). But as long as they had made that treaty God held them to it. For Israel to break that treaty was to bring shame upon YHWH by whom they had sworn the treaty. It wasn't Israel's reputation that was at stake but YHWH's. Thus YHWH exacted a penalty that was required by the injured party. It wasn't YHWH's decision to

destroy the men of Saul's house; it was the Gibeonites' decision. But the wronged party had the right to demand whatever atonement they wished, and YHWH's reputation required that Israel comply. So in this case, the heathen were honored over Israel by Israel's own God.

This demonstrates the holiness of God and His perfect justice which confounds men. It also demonstrates God's love for the Gentiles, which would later be manifested in the proclaiming of the Gospel throughout all nations.

The other calamity specifically involved the anti-Christ's influence of David:

And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel. And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan, and bring the number of them to me so that I may know it."

And Joab answered, "YHWH make His people a hundred times so many more as they are! But, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?"

Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore Joab departed and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. (1 Chronicles 21:1-4)

The second book of Samuel records this differently:

And again the anger of YHWH was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah." (2 Samuel 24:1)

Was it YHWH or Satan that moved David? The answer is both. The reason for YHWH's anger against Israel isn't stated in this instance. But whatever the reason, He employed Satan to prompt David into calling for a census of the men who could be mustered for his army. Joab tried to reason with David from the position of YHWH's righteousness, but David did not listen to him. Now here's the twist that confounds men's minds:

YHWH wanted to punish Israel but for some unstated reason He used David, the man after His own heart, to accomplish this. Even though Satan is God's enemy and the enemy of God's people, he must comply with God's wishes. He cannot touch God's anointed without God's permission or order. The account of his attacks against Job reveals this. In this case Satan is moved by YHWH to tempt David. David could have resisted the temptation, but he didn't. This gave YHWH occasion to punish Israel for David's sin. He gave David three choices to atone for his sin:

And David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to YHWH, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done, And now, I beseech You, O YHWH, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

For when David was up in the morning the word of YHWH came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying, "Go and say to David, 'Thus says YHWH, "I offer you three things; you choose one of them so that I may do it to you.'"

So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or

will you flee three months before your enemies while they pursue you? Or that there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now advise, and see what answer I shall return to Him who sent me."

And David said to Gad, "I am in great trouble. Let us fall now into the hand of YHWH, for His mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man."

So YHWH sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed, and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba seventy thousand men.

And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, YHWH turned Himself from the evil and said to the angel that destroyed the people, "It is enough. Now stay your hand." (2 Samuel 24:10-16)

Let us not think that every evil of the anti-Christ comes without the hand of God involved. Satan is used by God to test the hearts of men. Even the worst that the anti-Christ spirit can do is no more than God allows or, in such a case as this, directs.

It is true that God tempts no man (James 1:13). But that doesn't mean that God does not allow, or even direct, Satan to tempt men in order to test them. God knows the heart. He knew David would be susceptible to this particular temptation in which he placed his confidence in numbers of men rather than in God. (Remember Gideon's three hundred.) He also knew that David's choice would be to allow a plague upon Israel rather than be pursued by men. It was because of God's anger with Israel that He allowed David to be put in that position. Interestingly, while David wanted a census as a means to place his trust in men, he did not trust men enough to be put in their hands. He learned a valuable lesson about trusting in God, but the price was high for Israel.

Yet through all his failures, David remained strong for YHWH and subdued the Land for Israel so that when he died he left his son Solomon with the peaceful conditions under which Solomon could build the first temple.

SOLOMON'S REIGN

Anti-Christ was surprisingly inactive during Solomon's reign. YHWH had promised that as long as Solomon remained faithful He would bless his kingdom with peace. Yet at the very beginning Satan was at work to dislodge him through Adonijah his older brother. Adonijah believed that the people wanted him to be king, but he also acknowledged that YHWH had chosen Solomon. His heart was against YHWH's choice and he supposed that if he could marry Abishag the Shunammite, he could have a part in the throne. Abishag had been one of David's wives or concubines, and it would have been a dishonor for one of David's sons to take her as a wife. He asked his mother Bathsheba to request Abishag as his wife, which Bathsheba agreed to do. Perhaps Bathsheba did not understand this impropriety and the treachery behind it, but Solomon did:

And king Solomon answered and said to his mother, "And why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is my older brother - even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah."

Then king Solomon swore by YHWH, saying, "God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life. Therefore now, as YHWH lives, who has established me and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day."

And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he fell upon him so that he died. (1 Kings 2:22-25)

This occasion prompted Solomon to purge his throne of Abiathar the priest whom he replaced with faithful Zadok, and to execute Joab who had conspired with Adonijah (1 Kings 2:28). Thus, Solomon's kingdom was secured:

And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. (1 Kings 4:25)

With all his wisdom and his love for YHWH, Solomon had one fatal flaw: he loved foreign women to his own hurt. And in his last days the anti-Christ spirit was resurrected from the pit:

But king Solomon loved many alien women together with the daughter of Pharaoh - women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites - from the nations concerning which YHWH said to the children of Israel, "You shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in to you. For surely they will turn away your heart after their gods."

Solomon embraced these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines, and his wives turned away his heart.

For it happened, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart away after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with YHWH his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of YHWH, and did not go entirely after YHWH, as did his father David.

Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that faces Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And he did the same for all his alien wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

And YHWH was angry with Solomon because his heart was turned from YHWH God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep that which YHWH commanded.

Therefore YHWH said to Solomon, "Inasmuch as this is done by you, and you have not kept My covenant and My statutes which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. Notwithstanding, I will not do it during your days for your father David's sake, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away all the kingdom, but will give one tribe to your son for David My servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen." (1 Kings 11:1-13)

Solomon's account is a type of the Millennial Kingdom during which the whole earth will enjoy peace, but after which Satan will be loosed for a season to deceive the nations to rebel against God.

Because of Solomon's idolatry YHWH caused the kingdom to be split in two, allowing Solomon's house to retain rule over Judah, while the northern kingdom of Israel was given into the hands of Jeroboam son of Nebat, from the tribe of Ephraim:

And it happened at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way. And he had clad himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the field. And Ahijah took the new garment that was on him and tore it in twelve pieces. And he said to Jeroboam, "You take ten pieces, for thus says YHWH, the God of Israel, 'Look, I will tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and will give ten tribes to you, but he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, because they have forsaken Me and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways, to do that which is right in My eyes, and to keep My statutes and My judgments, as did David his father.

"However, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him prince all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David whom I chose, because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and will give it to you - even ten tribes. And to his son I will give one tribe so that David My servant may have a light always before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself to put My name there. And I will take you, and you shall reign according to all that your soul desires, and shall be king over Israel.

"And it shall be, if you will obey all that I command you, and will walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight to keep My statutes and My commandments as My servant David did, that I will be with you and build you a secure house as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. And I will afflict the seed of David for this, but not forever."

Therefore, Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, to Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. (1 Kings 11:29-40)

Solomon's death is recorded with just a few brief statements. But it marked a dramatic turn of events in the warfare between anti-Christ and God's people.

Judah remained as Solomon's inheritance, but the ten tribes of Israel were taken from him. The priestly tribe of Levi (the twelfth piece of Ahijah's garment), which had no inheritance in the land, remained throughout both Israel and Judah.

The history of both nations reveals the anti-Christ's design to destroy the means by which God's Messiah would come. ❖

ANTI-CHRIST

HISTORY OF

PART VII

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

by Albert James Dayer

Not long after Solomon's death (ca. 931. B.C.) God's judgment upon Israel began. The nation would be divided, with the northern ten tribes under the rule of Jeroboam, and the southern tribe of Judah retained by Solomon's son Rehoboam. Because God sees Israel as one kingdom in His eternal plan, this era is called that of the Divided Kingdom. There were two kings sharing the rule over one divided nation.

During these years (931-586) the Assyrian Empire emerged as a great power, followed by the Babylonian Empire under Nebuchadnezzar. Anti-Christ would use both empires to subjugate Israel and Judah, but that was at the behest of YHWH God who was chastizing His people for having fallen into idolatry.

Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years. He would be the last king to rule over Israel as one, undivided nation. Because of his idolatry God determined that all but the tribe of Judah would be taken from the house of David and given to Jeroboam who at one time had been one of Solomon's greatest warriors.

It began when Rehoboam went to Shechem to be crowned king over all Israel. Jeroboam, who had been in exile in Egypt because of Solomon's displeasure, came to him with an envoy asking that Solomon's yoke upon the northern kingdom be eased:

And it happened that when Nebat's son Jeroboam, who was still in Egypt, heard of it (for he had fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt) they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, "Your father made our yoke difficult. Now therefore, you make the difficult service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve you."

And he said to them, "Leave for three days, then come to me again."

And the people left.

And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father while he still lived, and said, "How do you advise that I may answer these people?"

And they spoke to him, saying, "If you will be a servant to these people today, and will serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever."

But he rejected the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that had grown up with him and which stood before him. And he said to them, "What counsel do you give that we may answer these people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Make the yoke which your father put upon us lighter'?"

And the young men that had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "You shall say this to these people that spoke to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter for us,' you shall say this to them: 'My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist. And now, whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father has chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.'"

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, "Come to me again the third day."

And the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the old men's counsel that they gave him, and spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke. My father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

Therefore the king did not listen to the people, for the cause was from YHWH so that He might perform His saying which YHWH spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Nebat's son Jeroboam.

So when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying, "What portion do we have in David? Nor have we inheritance in the son of Jesse! To your tents, O Israel! Now see to your own house, David!"

So Israel went into their tents. But as for the children of Israel which lived in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the taxes, and all Israel stoned him with stones so that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam quickly got on his chariot to flee to Jerusalem.

So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

And it happened, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come again, that they sent and called him to the congregation and made him king over all Israel. There were none that followed the house of David except the tribe of Judah only. (1 Kings 12:1-20)

The counsel of the young men was ungodly, but it was used by YHWH to prompt Rehoboam to foolishness. The anti-Christ spirit worked in the young men to push away the ten tribes of Israel so that the nation would be splintered. This may have seemed a good way for anti-Christ to weaken the nation (and it certainly did that) but it was by God's design as a punishment upon Solomon for his idolatry.

Rehoboam's foolishness demonstrates the prophetic nature of Solomon's proverbs:

Yes, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun because I should leave it to the man that shall come after me. And who knows whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet he shall have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored, and wherein I have shown myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity. (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19)

Evidently Solomon had no faith in man—even in his own son. He knew he would have an heir to David's throne because God had promised that there would be a descendent to sit on David's throne for all time. That promise was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. During the Millennium the resurrected David will again rule over all Israel from Jerusalem:

For the Lord YHWH says this: "Behold, I, even I, will both search for My sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so I will seek out My sheep in the cloudy and dark day and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered. And I will bring them out from the people and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture and their fold shall be upon the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie in a good fold, and they shall eat in a fat pasture upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down," says the Lord YHWH.

"I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away and will bind up that which was broken and will strengthen that which was sick. But I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment....

"And I will set up one shepherd over them, even my servant David, and he shall feed them. He shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

And I, YHWH, will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them. I, YHWH, have spoken it. (Ezekiel 34:11-24)

These prophecies of Israel being brought out of all nations "in the cloudy and dark day" have not yet been fulfilled. They obviously pertain to the Millennium. David will rule over Israel even as Jesus rules over all the nations including Israel. This prophecy was written by Ezekiel during the Babylonian captivity, some 400 years after David's death. The return of Israel from that captivity was a preview of the millennial kingdom, but it was not completely fulfilled. Israel was often treated cruelly by the nations after that return, and that cruelty continues to this day in many countries. Israel has never dwelt in safety since the days of Solomon. The end of Israel's glory began with Rehoboam's ascension to the throne. Only the towns of Judah remained loyal to Rehoboam. So he called upon all Judah to fight against Israel and bring the ten tribes back under his rule, but YHWH spoke to Rehoboam and the people through the prophet Shemaiah, telling them not to fight because this was YHWH's doing. To their credit they obeyed the word of YHWH and returned home (1 Kings 12:21-24).

Under Jeroboam Israel's slide into idolatry commenced. Anti-Christ put fear in Jeroboam's heart that the people would give their allegiance to Rehoboam when they went up to Jerusalem to offer their sacrifices in the temple:

And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom will return to the house of David if these people go up to do sacrifice in the house of YHWH at Jerusalem. Then the hearts of these people will return again to their lord, even to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah."

Whereupon the king took counsel and made two calves of gold, and said to them, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Behold your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt."

And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. And this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. (1 Kings 12:26-30)

This was the same sin the Israelites committed in the desert wilderness under Aaron's priesthood while Moses delayed returning from Mount Sinai. Satan knows how fickle man's heart is, and he knows how to play us for the fool. One would think that after the other team ran a particular play our team wouldn't fall for it again. But Israel continued to fall for the anti-Christ's play in spite of the disaster it brought upon them. Satan's influence upon Jeroboam exposed his fear, which was lack of faith. Jeroboam knew of YHWH's prophecy establishing him as king over Israel, but he allowed fear to cloud his judgment and thus led Israel into idolatry. His sin was compounded by the appointment of false priests to offer the sacrifices:

And he made a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people which were not of the sons of Levi.

And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made, and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.

So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised in his own heart, and ordained a feast for the children of Israel. And he offered upon the altar, and burned incense. (1 Kings 12:29-33)

“Bethel” or “Beth-El” means “house of God,” specifically, “house of El,” “El” being a reference to the God of Israel. Aaron had also told the people that the golden calf was their God YHWH.

Dan was located in the northern part of Israel. Bethel was located in the province of Simeon on the southern border of Israel, only about ten miles north of Jerusalem. It was evidently Jeroboam’s thinking that Bethel would be the perfect place to intercept the people on their way to Jerusalem and give them an excuse not to continue farther.

It was also a psychological ploy. Bethel was the place where YHWH identified Himself to Jacob as “the God of Bethel” (Genesis 31:13). Anti-Christ could use this Scripture to justify in the people’s minds accepting Bethel as a legitimate place to worship YHWH with strange fire.

God sent a prophet from Judah to cry out against the altar at Bethel while Jeroboam stood offering a sacrifice. But Jeroboam called for his men to seize the prophet, whereupon Jeroboam’s outstretched hand became withered. Even though he was in rebellion against YHWH he pleaded with the prophet to pray that YHWH would restore his arm, which He did:

And the king answered and said to the man of God, “Ask now the favor of YHWH your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me again.”

And the man of God besought YHWH, and the king’s hand was restored to him again and became as it was before. And the king said to the man of God, “Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward.”

And the man of God said to the king, “If you gave me half your house, I will not go in with you, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place, for it was ordered me by the word of YHWH, saying, ‘Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that you came.’”

So he went another way, and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel. (1 Kings 13:6-10)

Jeroboam acknowledged that YHWH was the God of the prophet—“your God.” Even though he called the calves he had made “YHWH,” he knew in his heart that they did not represent YHWH and that the god to whom he was praying was not YHWH. But he himself had become anti-Christ and continued in his idolatry.

Sadly, this prophet who had been faithful up to this point was deceived by another prophet in Israel who convinced him God had told him that the prophet was to come into his house and eat. This resulted in the prophet being killed by a lion after

leaving the Israelite prophet’s home for having disobeyed the clear words of God.

Satan set the trap through the second prophet who considered his desire for the first prophet to remain with him of more importance than God’s word. But the prophet who had confronted Jeroboam also failed because he allowed the words of a man to dissuade him from the words of God.

This is a lesson that is largely unheeded today. Many Christians follow men who claim to be prophets of God yet who give them words contrary to the Word of God. The result is that they are torn by the one who, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). The lion that tore this prophet was a type of Satan. His account proves that even true prophets may be deceived by false prophets if they fail to continue trusting the Word of God. Evidently this prophet was in his heart looking for an excuse to take some sustenance (to feed his carnal desires), and willingly succumbed to the lie. But we cannot say, “He lied to me,” when we know that the “prophet’s” words are contrary to God’s Word.

Jeroboam’s sin of leading Israel into idolatry was so great that during his reign God determined to send Israel into captivity. In addition, He declared that Jeroboam’s house would be desolate; all the males in his lineage would be cut off and the kingdom would be given to another not of his household. God spoke these judgments through Ahijah, the same prophet through whom God had promised Jeroboam the throne in Israel:

“Moreover, YHWH shall raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day. But when? Even now.

“For YHWH shall strike Israel as a reed is shaken in the water, and He shall uproot Israel out of this good land which He gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking YHWH to anger.

“And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam who sinned and who made Israel sin.” (1 Kings 14:14-16)

Having succeeded in turning Israel against God through idolatry, anti-Christ worked on Judah. Rehoboam was Solomon’s son through Naamah, an Ammonite woman. Like his father, he succumbed to an alien wife’s influence, worshipping false gods and leading Judah to do the same:

And Judah did evil in the sight of YHWH, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. For they also built themselves high places and images, and groves on every high hill, and under every green tree.

And there were also sodomites in the land, and they committed all the abominations of the nations which YHWH cast out before the children of Israel.

And it happened in the fifth year of king Rehoboam that Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of YHWH, and the treasures of the king’s house. He even took away everything, and he took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made. (1 Kings 14:22-26)

Rehoboam lost the riches of his throne, and Judah came under the rule of Shishak, but God allowed Judah to remain in the land because Rehoboam humbled himself and acknowledged God's justice. It was not time for Judah to go into captivity, so God stayed the hand of anti-Christ at that point.

When Rehoboam died, his son Abijah reigned in Judah. At first Abijah was righteous and relied upon God. When Israel and Judah first went to war against each other Abijah announced to Israel that Judah's faithfulness to God would give Judah victory. And so it was. But as Abijah grew stronger he also abandoned faith in God and committed all the sins of idolatry that his father had committed. But for David's sake God raised up Abijah's son Asa to reign in Judah after Abijah's death:

And Asa did what was right in the eyes of YHWH, as did David his father. And he took the sodomites out of the land and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

And he also removed even Maachah his mother from being queen because she had made an idol in a grove. And Asa destroyed her idol and burned it by the brook Kidron.

But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless, Asa's heart was perfect with YHWH all his days. And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which he himself had dedicated, into the house of YHWH, silver, and gold, and vessels. (1 Kings 15: 11-15)

Asa's heart was perfect before God even though he allowed the high places to remain. The high places were places of worship and sacrifice which God had not sanctioned.

One might ask how Asa's heart could be perfect even though he allowed these to remain. We might look at our own hearts. Do we have "high places" in our lives that displease our Lord? Whatever is not of faith is sin; sins are high places that remain even though our hearts may be right with the Lord.

This does not justify the high places, but God knows the imperfection of our flesh. This is why He chose to redeem us in the first place; He loves us as He loves Israel and Judah. Those nations are types of man in many ways: one day righteous, the next day sinning. But God made provision for our sins through the shed blood of Jesus. He has promised that if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

Every time Israel and Judah repented, God forgave them; when they fell into sin and forgot their source of salvation God chastised them. Yet He never destroyed Israel and Judah just as He has promised never to destroy those who remain faithful to Him:

The steps of a good man are ordered by YHWH and He takes delight in his ways. Though he falls he shall not be utterly cast down, for YHWH holds him up with His hand. (Psalms 37:23-24)

It was during Jeroboam's reign in Israel that God commissioned the prophet Jonah to go to Nineveh with the message to repent. But even Jonah had a touch of the anti-Christ spirit in first refusing to go to Nineveh, and then becoming angry when Nineveh repented and God spared the city. Jonah tried to get as far away as possible in the opposite direction from Nineveh which lay east of the Tigris River across from the site of the modern city of Mosul, Iraq.

The precise location of ancient Tarshish, named after one of the sons of Javan (Genesis 10:4) is not known. There were three possibilities:

- According to the Jewish historian Josephus, Tarshish may have been the city of Tarsus in southern Asia Minor, also called Tarsisi by the ancient Assyrians;
- Some historians identify Tarshish as the city of Tartessos in southern Spain;
- The Septuagint and the Vulgate texts identify Tarshish with Carthage, which was on the northern coast of Africa, near modern Tunis, Tunisia.

It's possible that as the descendants of Javan migrated to various areas they named more than one place Tarshish. In any case, we know that Jonah went to Joppa to catch the ship to Tarshish. Joppa was situated where the modern city of Jaffa, south of Tel Aviv, is located today. It is a port city on the Mediterranean Sea. So if Jonah was taking a ship from Joppa he would have been going west on the Mediterranean Sea. Any of the three possibilities would be among the farthest western points in the known world. But because Tunis was known for its great shipbuilding industry, and Scripture often makes reference to "the ships of Tarshish," most likely the Tarshish to which Jonah was going was the city that would become Carthage in northern Africa.

Jonah's travels demonstrate how diametrically opposed to Christ the anti-Christ is. If Christ says "Go east," anti-Christ will say, "Go west."

Upon Jeroboam's death his son Nadab reigned in Israel. Nadab continued in his father's sins. He reigned only two years in Israel before he was assassinated by Ahijah's son, Baasha, who usurped the throne. Baasha secured his throne by killing every member of Jeroboam's family as prophesied by Ahijah in response to Jeroboam's sin of leading Israel into idolatry.

But Baasha was also evil. He reigned in Israel for twenty-four years and committed the same sins Jeroboam had committed.

During Asa's reign in Judah many from the tribes of Benjamin, Simeon, Manasseh and Ephraim settled in Judah because they recognized YHWH's influence there.

But though Asa's heart may have been perfect before God, there were times when he allowed the anti-Christ spirit to take control. When faced with the army of Israel under Baasha, he allowed fear to take the place of faith. Enlisting the aid of the Syrian king Ben-Hadad, Asa gained victory over Israel, but he had to suffer the consequences:

And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him, "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on YHWH your God, therefore the king of Syria's army has escaped out of your hand.

"Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge army, with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on YHWH He delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of YHWH run back and forth throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him. In this you have done foolishly. Therefore from now on you shall have wars."

Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in a prison house, for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time. (2 Chr 16:7-10)

Anti-Christ's anger against God's people is often manifested by influencing others from among God's people to act against them. How often do those who bring truth to the Body of Christ suffer the anger of those who refuse to hear the truth? Asa's treatment of Hanani is certainly a typical example of this. Yet God will judge His own; we must be careful not to judge those who refuse to hear our words. Perhaps their hearts are right but their flesh is still worshipping in a "high place."

There were many evil kings, particularly in Israel's history. The worst of them was Ahab who was influenced by his wife Jezebel. Ahab was evil from the start, but Jezebel has come to epitomize the spirit of anti-Christ. Even today wicked women are referred to as "Jezebels." Through her conscientious idolatry and having the true prophets in Israel put to death, Jezebel exhibited the anti-Christ spirit.

Even after God demonstrated His power on Mount Carmel through the prophet Elijah, Jezebel vowed to kill Elijah:

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and all about how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." (1 Kings 19:1-2)

Elijah, though one of God's greatest prophets, allowed fear to overtake him and he fled for his safety. We may take heart that fear may sometimes overtake us, but just as Elijah regained his courage, we may also if we turn and place our trust in the true God of our salvation once again.

As for Jezebel, she paid for her rebellion with her life, being eaten by dogs as prophesied by God through Elisha (2 Kings 9:10-37).

Jezebel is a type of unfaithful Jerusalem which played the harlot by going into idolatry. Her spirit is found in the assembly at Thyatira in the time of the apostle John:

And to the messenger of the called-out in Thyatira write, "These things says the Son of God who has His eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass: 'I know your works, and charity, and service, and faith, and your patience, and your works—the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against you because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she did not repent.

"Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death, and all the called-out shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts, and I will give to every one of you according to your works. (Revelation 2:18-23)

This woman in Thyatira who was usurping the men's place of teaching was corrupting the fellowship with sexual and spiritual fornication. Whether or not her name was actually Jezebel we don't know, but she is called Jezebel for a good reason: she possessed the same anti-Christ spirit that Ahab's Jezebel had.

This period in Israel's history was among the most evil under Ahab's and Jezebel's leadership. It appears as if Ahab was the weaker of the two. But whereas Jezebel was evil continually, Ahab was willing to listen to God in times of distress.

God determined that Israel would survive in spite of its idolatry. After convincing the people of His power on Mount Carmel He sent a prophet to assure Ahab that if he trusted God he would be victorious against Ben-Hadad. This was to prove to Ahab that YHWH is the true God. Ahab trusted YHWH and gained the victory. But once again, anti-Christ took hold of him through Jezebel.

Ahab saw a vineyard that belonged to a man named Naboth, and wanted to buy it. But Naboth replied, "YHWH forbid it of me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you."

When Jezebel heard from Ahab what happened she committed one of the most ungodly acts recorded in Scripture:

And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern the kingdom of Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let your heart be glad. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth. And she wrote in the letters, saying, "Proclaim a fast and set Naboth on high among the people. And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, 'You blasphemed God and the king.' And then carry him out and stone him so that he may die."

And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent to them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent to them. They proclaimed a fast and set Naboth on high among the people. And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him. And the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth blasphemed God and the king."

Then they carried him forth out of the city and stoned him with stones so that he died. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth is stoned, and is dead."

And it happened, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead."

And it happened, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it. (1 Kings 21:7-16)

God sent Elijah to Ahab with the word of YHWH that He would cut off every living man in Ahab's house so that the king-

dom would not continue in his lineage. When Ahab heard this he repented. So God determined that the death of his posterity would not occur in Ahab's lifetime, but after his death.

Ahab was a tragic figure—a weak man strongly influenced by an evil, anti-Christ wife. There have been many Jezebels in history, even among the common people of every nation. Strong women with evil intent married to weak-willed men who give in to their wives rather than risk their displeasure. This is why the Word of God says, "It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house" (Proverbs 21:9).

The little good in Ahab's life was greatly outweighed by the evil. More often than not, he refused to listen to God's true prophets and surrounded himself with false prophets. This was his undoing when God used an anti-Christ spirit to entice Ahab to try to regain Ramoth Gilead from the king of Syria with Judah's king Jehoshaphat's help:

And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I ask you to inquire at the word of YHWH today."

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together—about four hundred men—and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall I desist?"

And they said, "Go up, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

And Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not a prophet of YHWH here besides, that we might inquire of him?"

And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of YHWH, but I hate him because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."

And Jehoshaphat said, "Do not let the king speak so."

Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Hasten here Micaiah the son of Imlah."

And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on their robes, each sat on his throne in an empty place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets prophesied before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made himself horns of iron and said, "This says YHWH: 'With these you shall push the Syrians until you have consumed them.'"

And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-Gilead and prosper, for YHWH shall deliver it into the king's hand."

And the messenger that had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Look now, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one mouth. Let your word, I ask you, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good."

And Micaiah said, "As YHWH lives, what YHWH says to me, that I will speak."

So he came to the king. And the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle, or shall we desist?"

And he answered him, "Go, and prosper, for YHWH shall deliver it into the hand of the king."

And the king said to him, "How many times shall I charge you that you tell me nothing but that which is true in the name of YHWH?"

And he said, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that do not have a shepherd, and YHWH said, 'These have no master; let every man of them return to his house in peace.'"

And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?"

And he [Micaiah] said, "You hear therefore the word of YHWH. I saw YHWH sitting on His throne, and all the host of Heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. And YHWH said, 'Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?'"

"And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before YHWH and said, 'I will persuade him.'"

"And YHWH said to him, 'How?'"

"And he said, 'I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'"

"And He said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go forth, and do so.'"

"Now therefore, look, YHWH has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and YHWH has spoken evil concerning you."

But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the Spirit of YHWH go from me to speak to you?"

And Micaiah said, "Behold, you shall see in that day when you shall go into an inner chamber to hide yourself."

And the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah and carry him back to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son, and say, 'The king says this: "Put this fellow in the prison and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.'"

And Micaiah said, "If you return at all in peace, YHWH has not spoken by me."

And he said, "Listen, O people, every one of you!"

So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-Gilead. (1 Kings 22:5-29)

The anti-Christ spirit in Ahab was so strong that he refused to hear Micaiah regardless of what he had to say. He wanted Micaiah to prophesy good, but when he did, Ahab rebuked him for not telling the truth. When Micaiah prophesied the truth, Ahab had him put in prison. The lying spirit in the false prophets prevailed, and Ahab went to his death in battle where the dogs licked his blood as prophesied.

But even as he went to battle he thought he could outsmart God by disguising himself as a common man while Jehoshaphat went in his royal robes. A "random" arrow found the small, unprotected spot in Ahab's armor and mortally wounded him.

Many people think to outsmart God by various means, even when they know they are going against His will. But their sin is the chink in the armor which will allow the enemy to destroy them.

Jehoshaphat also incurred the wrath of God because he willfully joined with Ahab and rejected the counsel of God's true prophet. At the least he should have taken Micaiah's defense and pleaded with Ahab to let him go free. But he had joined in an unholy alliance because he considered Ahab his Israelite brother.

Even so, Jehoshaphat is considered among the more righteous of Judah's kings.

A significant anti-Christ was Athaliah, mother of Judah's king Ahaziah. She sought to kill every descendant of the royal line of David:

And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal seed. But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Ahaziah's son and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain. And they hid him in the bedchamber from Athaliah—even him and his nurse—so that he was not slain.

And he was hidden with her in the house of YHWH six years. And Athaliah reigned over the land. (2 Kings 11:1-3)

Had Athaliah been able to kill Joash, anti-Christ would have succeeded in destroying the royal line of David, and God's promise of His Redeemer would have been nullified. Athaliah's actions demonstrate the abominable evil of the anti-Christ spirit. She was ready to kill every male relative including her own grandson in order to usurp the throne of David. She remained on the throne for six years until Jehoiada the high priest commissioned the rulers and the army to bring Joash back:

And he brought forth the king's son and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony. And they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands, and said, "God save the king!"

And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of YHWH. And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets.

And Athaliah tore her clothes and cried, "Treason! Treason!"

But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the army, and said to them, "Take her forth outside the ranges, and him who follows her kill with the sword."

For the priest had said, "Let her not be slain in the house of YHWH."

And they laid hands on her, and she went the way by which the horses came into the king's house, and there she was slain.

And Jehoiada made a covenant between YHWH and the king and the people, that they should be YHWH's people—between the king also and the people.

And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and broke it down—they thoroughly broke his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

And the priest appointed officers over the house of YHWH. And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land, and they brought down the king from the house of YHWH, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings.

And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet. And they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house.

Joash was seven years old when he began to reign. (2 Kings 11:12-21)

It is characteristic of anti-Christ to protest "treason" when anti-Christ itself is treasonous to begin with. How often do anti-Christ politicians, or even regular folk for that matter, impute to their opponents the ungodly character of which they themselves are guilty. Liars protest when the truth is said of them.

During this time in Israel's history anti-Christ continued to deceive the world and substitute man's wisdom for God's truth. The birth of philosophy is attributed to three men who lived from the time of Josiah to the Babylonian Captivity. Long before Greece would become the dominant world power, Thales and two of his contemporaries—Anaximander and Anaximenes—began to take a scientific interest in natural phenomena. Thales taught that observation and reason were necessary to understand the underlying nature of the cosmos. Born into aristocracy in the city of Miletus on the west coast of Asia, Thales developed what came to be called the "Milesian School."

Philosophy is man's way of explaining nature and human existence apart from God's revealed Word. All philosophy is basically humanistic in nature, and, while it has discovered some truths related to nature and life, it can never come to a full knowledge of truth because it does not rely upon God's Word and His Holy Spirit to illuminate His Word. Thus it has devised pseudo-sciences such as psychiatry and psychotherapy to explain and deal with man's aberrant expressions of living. Anti-Christ has successfully used these pseudo-sciences to not only keep people dependent upon man, but alienated from God.

The history of Israel testifies to the influences of anti-Christ in the lives of its kings. God's prophets were constantly persecuted and murdered by the anti-Christ kings of Israel. With the exception of Jehu who started out righteous, then fell away, every king in Israel was anti-Christ, doing evil and practicing idolatry.

Judah's kings were a mixture of good and evil. A few began righteous but fell away. Only Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah were faithful to YHWH throughout their reigns. All others either fell away or were anti-Christ in their character from the start.

Because of Israel's unfaithfulness God sent the anti-Christ Assyrians to remove Israel from the Promised Land. Judah was slightly more righteous than Israel and God allowed the nation to remain about 136 years longer. Eventually He sent the Babylonians to take Judah captive. From Assyria Israel was dispersed throughout the nations and became known as "the lost ten tribes." Judah eventually returned from Babylon, but her former glory would never return.

Following on the next page is a list of Judah's and Israel's kings, noting which were righteous and which were anti-Christ. Those who fell away were not necessarily anti-Christ, but those who were evil from the beginning were certainly anti-Christ in their spirits. ❖

ANTI-CHRIST

A HISTORY OF PART III

THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

by Albert James Dager

The Assyrian captivity of Israel's northern ten tribes was begun around 740 B.C. It was shortly before this that the Olympiad Games began in honor of Greece's gods, believed to live on Mount Olympus. The first games were held in Olympia, Greece, near the towns of Elis and Pisa, at a sanctuary for the Greek gods. They began as an annual foot race of young women competing for the position of priestess for the goddess Hera. At the time, they were known as the Heraea Games. Eventually the games became a competition between athletes from the Greek city states. Around the fifth century B.C., the games were restricted to male participants. The games ended around A.D. 395.

The Olympiad was Greece's paean to its gods. Virtually all the nations had fallen prey to the anti-Christ spirit. They had become steeped in idolatry through their mystery religions led by shamans, priests, oracles, and other spiritual leaders who kept the people from the knowledge of YHWH.

Just as the rest of the world continued in its downward spiral into idolatry, Israel and Judah followed suit. But they could not escape God's love and commitment to His covenants. He determined that both nations would be chastised by sending them into captivity. Israel would be the first to feel God's rod of correction as prophesied by Isaiah, when Assyria began to assert its strength. The prophet Hosea gave the warning to Israel as early as the reign of Uzziah in Judah (about the time of Jeroboam II in Israel):

The word of YHWH that came to Beer's son Hosea in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Joash's son Jeroboam, king of Israel—the beginning of the word of YHWH by Hosea: And YHWH said to Hosea, "Go, take to yourself a wife of prostitution and children of prostitution, for the land has committed great whoredom, departing from YHWH."

So he went and took Diblaim's daughter Gomer who conceived, and bore him a son.

And YHWH said to him, "Call his name Jezreel, for in a little while I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the

house of Jehu, and will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease. And it shall come to pass in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

And she conceived again and bore a daughter. And God said to him, "Call her name Loruhamah, for I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel, but I will utterly take them away. But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by YHWH their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen."

Now when she had weaned Loruhamah she conceived and bore a son. Then God said, "Call his name Loammi, for you are not my people, and I will not be your God." (Hosea 1:1-9)

This prophecy came to Hosea approximately 40 years before Assyria began its attacks against Israel. The Assyrian captivity, ordained by God but implemented by anti-Christ, began with the reign of Israel's king Pekah in Samaria:

In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Ramaliah's son Pekah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH. He did not depart from the sins of Nebat's son Jeroboam, who made Israel sin.

In the days of Israel's king Pekah, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, came and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-ma'achah, and Jonoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. (2 Kings 15:27-29)

This first foray of Assyria against Israel resulted in the capture of three of the northern kingdom's ten tribes: Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh.

Although these three tribes had recently been valiant in fighting, and called upon YHWH to help them (1 Chronicles 5:18-24), it wasn't long before they again succumbed to the anti-Christ spirit that plagued the entire nation of Israel:

And they transgressed against the God of their fathers and went whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them.

And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, (the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser, king of Assyria), and he carried them away—even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh—and brought them to Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, to this day. (1 Chronicles 5:25-26)

Pul was another name for Tilgath-pilneser. Although part of anti-Christ's design to destroy Israel, Pul was not aware that God was stirring him up to do so.

Why did God cause these three tribes to go into captivity before the others? Perhaps it was because having been granted victory over their enemies by YHWH they wasted no time in again turning away from Him to false gods. They knew better. Nothing is said of the other tribes' departure from idolatry to turn for a short time to YHWH.

Whatever God's reason, eventually all of Israel was taken by the Assyrians, never to return to their homeland except for a small remnant as prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 10:20-23).

Israel's last king was Hoshea who, like his fathers before him, had neglected YHWH and worshipped false gods. He had become subject to Assyria's king Shalmaneser, but tried to make an alliance with Egypt for protection against Shalmaneser, refusing to continue paying taxes to him. Scripture's account of Israel's last days in the Land is brief:

In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Elah's son Hoshea began to reign in Samaria over Israel for nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH, but not like the kings of Israel who came before him.

Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him, and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him tribute.

And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea, for he had sent messengers to Egypt's king, So, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria as he had done year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria captured him and bound him in prison.

Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years.

In Hoshea's ninth year the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (2 Kings 17:1-6)

Leaving a small remnant in Israel, the anti-Christ Shalmaneser settled people in the Land from various areas of his kingdom, including from Babylon:

And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the children of Israel, and they possessed Samaria, and lived in its cities.

And so it was at the start of their living there that they did not fear YHWH. Therefore YHWH sent among them lions that killed some of them.

Therefore they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations that you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the ways of the God of the land, therefore he has sent lions among them, and, look, they slay them because they do not know the ways of the God of the land."

Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Take one of the priests whom you brought from there, and let him go and live there, and let him teach them the ways of the God of the land."

Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and lived in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear YHWH.

However, every nation made gods of their own and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made—every nation in their cities in which they lived.

And the men of Babylon made Succothbenoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adramelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

So they feared YHWH, and made from the lowest of themselves priests for the high places, who sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.

They feared YHWH, but served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from there. Unto this day they do after the former manners: they do not fear YHWH, nor do they follow the statutes, or follow the ordinances, or follow the law and commandment which YHWH commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel. (2 Kings 17:24-34)

The settling of foreigners in the Land led to hybrid forms of religion that included worship of YHWH along with worship to different gods. This is why, after Judah returned from captivity in Babylon, the Jews hated the Samaritans. They rightly considered them idolaters who had perverted the ways of the God of Israel.

Although Hosea had prophesied of the Assyrian captivity of Israel his prophecy did not abandon Israel altogether:

"Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered, and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there it shall be said to them, 'You are the sons of the living God.'

"Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and hold one head, and they shall come up out of the land, for the day of Jezreel shall be great." (Hosea 1:10-11)

According to the prophecies of Ezekiel as well, it yet remains for all of Israel to be restored to the Land after Christ returns to rule and David again sits on his throne in Jerusalem:

YHWH says this: 'Look! I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, where they have gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to

them all, and they shall no longer be two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms anymore at all. Neither shall they defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions, but I will save them out of all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them so that they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

And My servant David shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd. They shall also walk in My judgments, and observe My statutes, and do them.

And they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, wherein your fathers have lived, and they shall live therein—even they and their children, and their children’s children forever. And My servant David shall be their prince forever.

Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them—it shall be an everlasting covenant with them—and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore.

My tabernacle shall also be with them. Yes, I will be their God, and they shall be My people, and the heathen shall know that I, YHWH, sanctify Israel when My sanctuary shall be in their midst forevermore. (Ezek 37:21-28) (See also Isaiah 11:10-16.)

God has not yet brought all of Israel and Judah together out of the Diaspora into one nation in the Promised Land. This must yet be future, after David is resurrected to sit on the throne of Israel gathered from all the nations during the Millennium. David will again be king over all Israel, and they will have one Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who will reign as King over all the nations at that time.

There are those who say that “David” in this Scripture is really Jesus. But this was written to Israel who knew who David was. He was never thought to be the Messiah, but the nation did look forward to the coming Messiah who would be its Shepherd. David is David; Jesus is Jesus. David will be the king of Israel under the King of Israel and the whole earth, Jesus the Messiah of Israel.

Scripture does not say much about Israel’s captivity by Assyria. It does, however, focus quite a bit on Judah’s captivity by Babylon. We will see how anti-Christ manifests himself both as an instrument of God’s judgment and as an enemy of God’s people.

JUDAH’S JUDGMENT

To begin, we must remember that Judah is the tribe through whom the Messiah of Israel was to come. This is why Judah has been preserved throughout the millennia since its patriarch was born to Jacob. God did not treat Judah the same as he treated the other eleven tribes. Even the tribe of Levi went into the Diaspora except for a remnant that served as priests in Judah.

Because of Judah’s importance to God’s plan of redemption, the anti-Christ spirit was set against the nation to destroy it. Having used Assyria to drive the other tribes from the Land, he set his face against Judah by stirring Babylon to take it captive. In both cases he was used by God as His instrument of judgment. But God never determined that either Israel or Judah would be utterly destroyed or removed from the prospect of redemption.

Assyria’s sudden rise to power alarmed not only Israel, who had already lost three of its tribes, but the Syrians as well. This caused Israel to ally with Syria and to call upon Judah to join them in mutual defense against the Assyrians. Judah’s rejection of their plea gave occasion for anti-Christ to stir up Israel and Syria to attack Judah. Yet this was God’s plan, not for the destruction of Judah, but for the destruction of Israel’s king, Pekah, and Syria’s king, Rezin (Isaiah 7:1-9).

Even so, anti-Christ influenced Judah’s king Ahaz to worship Baal and to burn his sons as sacrifices. In spite of this, God offered to help him against Israel and Syria. But being anti-Christ himself, Ahaz spurned God’s help and trusted in the strength of his own army, thus bringing much destruction upon his nation:

Therefore YHWH his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria, and they struck him and carried away for themselves a great multitude of captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who struck him with a great slaughter. For Remaliah’s son Pekah slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day, who were all valiant men, because they had forsaken YHWH God of their fathers.

And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king’s son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah, who was next to the king.

And the children of Israel carried into captivity from their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and also took away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria. (2 Chronicles 28:5-8)

Anti-Christ’s plan was to use Israel and Syria to utterly destroy Judah. Although God allowed Judah to suffer and go into captivity to Israel, He used the prophet Oded to chastise Israel’s army and to convince the people to send the captives back to Judah (2 Chronicles 28:9-15).

Even though YHWH showed favor to Judah, Ahaz still sought help from Assyria to fight against the Edomites and Philistines. The king of Assyria came, but he didn’t help Ahaz. Instead he plundered his house and the temple at Jerusalem. Judah then became subject to Assyria, but was allowed to remain and pay taxes.

Upon Ahaz’s death his son Hezekiah tore down the idols his father had set up. He had the temple rededicated to YHWH and called upon all Judah to worship the true God. He then invited all of Israel to come to the Passover celebration and to return to YHWH with the promise that, if they were faithful, God would return the captives from Assyria:

So the couriers went from city to city throughout the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even to Zebulun, but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them. Nevertheless some from Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 30:10-11)

Anti-Christ had thoroughly corrupted Israel through its history of ungodly kings, every one of which had turned from YHWH to false gods. Only a very small number from among the remnant remaining in the Land heeded the call to worship at the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

After this time of spiritual renewal the prophet Isaiah warned Judah not to return to their idolatry lest they be destroyed. Yet he is compelled by God, who knew Judah would fail, to prophesy of their coming captivity by Babylon (Isaiah 28:2-29:16). As it turns out, Hezekiah was followed by only one righteous king, Josiah. Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, starts out in idolatry but eventually repents. Manasseh's son, Amon was anti-Christ, and every king after Amon's son Josiah was anti-Christ, leading to Judah's captivity. Even so, God assures Israel and Judah that redemption will one day come (Isaiah 27:2-13; 29:22-24; 32:12-33:24).

Hezekiah's reign over Judah was not without its troubles from anti-Christ. Hezekiah became ill and was near death when God did a remarkable thing as recorded in 2 Kings:

In those days Hezekiah was sick to death. And the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, came to him and said to him, "YHWH says this: 'Set your house in order, because you will die, and not live.'"

Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed to YHWH, saying, "I implore You, O YHWH, remember now how I have walked before You in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Your sight."

And Hezekiah sorely wept.

And it happened that before Isaiah went out into the middle court, the word of YHWH came to him, saying, "Turn back and tell Hezekiah, the captain of My people, 'YHWH, the God of your father David, says this: "I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Look, I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of YHWH. And I will add to your days fifteen years, and I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and I will defend this city for My own sake, and for my servant David's sake.'"

And Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs."

And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What shall be the sign that YHWH will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of YHWH the third day?"

And Isaiah said, "You shall have this sign from YHWH—that YHWH will do the thing which He has spoken—shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?"

And Hezekiah answered, "It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees. No, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees."

And the prophet Isaiah cried out to YHWH, and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward from where it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz. (2 Kings 20:1-11)

Hezekiah wrote a thanksgiving to YHWH as recorded in Isaiah 38:9-20. But then he allowed the anti-Christ spirit to influence him, becoming prideful in his heart:

But Hezekiah did not give back according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was lifted up. Therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart—both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—so that

the wrath of YHWH did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah. (2 Chronicles 32:25-26)

God rewarded Hezekiah for his repentance, and gave him many riches and possessions. He also blessed the nation of Judah for Hezekiah's sake. But Hezekiah again succumbed to pride when emissaries from the king of Babylon came to bring gifts because he had heard of Hezekiah's sickness. Hezekiah showed the emissaries everything in his kingdom—all his treasures and his armory. This prompted God to send Isaiah to him with the prophecy that all he had, including those born to his household, would one day be taken away to Babylon. But Hezekiah was content with the belief that there would be peace in his lifetime.

Perhaps as a further test of Hezekiah's heart, God allowed the anti-Christ spirit to lead Sennacherib to invade Judah. In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign Assyria's king Sennacherib captured all the fortified cities of Judah. Hezekiah knew his strength was too little to resist the Assyrians so he offered to pay tribute to Sennacherib. To do so he stripped the temple of the gold he had used to cover the doors and doorposts. But Sennacherib was driven by the anti-Christ spirit to mock YHWH and to challenge His ability to preserve Judah (2 Kings 18:17-37). Hezekiah went to the temple to plead with God for deliverance from the Assyrians, and the Angel of YHWH slew 185,000 men of Sennacherib's army while they slept, causing Sennacherib to retreat.

At the end of the fifteen-year extension of his life Hezekiah died and was succeeded by his son Manasseh, who led the people back into idolatry:

And YHWH spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they would not listen. Therefore YHWH brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with a ring in his nose, and bound him with shackles, and took him to Babylon. (2 Chronicles 33:10-11)

This is another case where God used anti-Christ to chastise His people. To his credit Manasseh turned again to the true God and was restored to his kingdom. He then tore down the idols and illicit altars and shrines he had erected, turning the people of Judah back to the living God (2 Chronicles 33:12-17).

During this time God's prophet Nahum prophesied the destruction of Nineveh. This is some 125 years after that city's inhabitants had repented in response to Jonah's preaching. Nineveh was a city in Mitanni, a Hittite vassal state in northern Syria. Around the 14th century B.C. Nineveh was captured by Assyria. Nineveh was renowned for its worship of Ishtar, for which Jonah was sent to call it to repentance.

It was Sennacherib who built Nineveh into a major city of the Assyrian Empire. By Nahum's time anti-Christ had seduced Nineveh to stray so far from its repentance that it had embraced the Assyrian hallmark of unspeakable cruelties against Assyria's enemies. The Assyrians were infamous for their torture and killing methods.

God brought the Meds, Babylonians and Scythians against Nineveh so that within some forty years after Nahum's prophecy there was no trace of the city left. The remains of Nineveh would not be found for some 2500 years, during the 19th century.

Manasseh was succeeded by his son Amon who also succumbed to anti-Christ, only without the repentance that his father came to. Amon ruled for only two years and was followed by his son Josiah who would prove to be the last righteous king in Judah. In spite of Josiah's virtue God's judgment upon Judah would remain firm:

And there was no king like him before him who turned to YHWH with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses. Neither did there arise after him any like him.

Nevertheless, YHWH did not turn from the fierceness of his great wrath which burned against Judah because of all the anger to which Manasseh had provoked Him.

And YHWH said, "I will remove Judah out of My sight also, just as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there.'" (2 Kings 23:25-27)

Because of Josiah's young age of eight when he took the throne, God called one of Josiah's distant relatives, descended from Hezekiah, to be the spiritual leader to turn Israel from its idolatry. Zephaniah was called around 630 B.C. to warn Judah of its impending judgment (see the Book of Zephaniah).

Zephaniah's prophecies are often mistaken to apply to the very last days of God's judgment upon the earth. But it was really God's warning of "the Day of YHWH" which would bring Judah into captivity.

That's not to say there are no verses applicable to both times, but the primary context is God's judgment upon Judah. Yet Zephaniah also finishes with God's promise of restoration during the Millennium not only of Judah, but of all Israel (Zephaniah 3:8-20).

No doubt Zephaniah's proclamations influenced young Josiah, but it wasn't until he was about 16 years of age that he was able to begin his reforms in Judah, tearing down all the idols and their shrines.

Around the same time that Zephaniah was warning Judah, another great prophet arose. This prophet came to be known as "the weeping prophet" because of his lamentations concerning Israel's unfaithfulness and the impending judgment of Judah. Jeremiah likened Israel to an unfaithful wife, and that she was, seduced by anti-Christ to commit spiritual fornication with false gods:

YHWH also said to me in the days of Josiah the king, "Have you seen that which backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there has played the harlot. And I said after she had done all these things, 'You turn to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it.

"And I saw, when for all the causes by which backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away and given her a bill of divorce, still her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.

"And it happened that through the lightness of her whoredom she [Israel] defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and with sticks. And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me with her whole heart, but deceitfully, says, 'YHWH.'"

And YHWH said to me, "The backsliding Israel has justified herself more than treacherous Judah. Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, 'Return, you backsliding Israel, says YHWH, and I will not cause My anger to fall on you, for I am merciful, says YHWH, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have sinned against YHWH your God, and have scattered your ways to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed My voice, says YHWH. Turn, O backsliding children, says YHWH, for I am married to you, and I will take you one from a city, and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds after My heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land in those days, says YHWH, they shall no longer say, "The ark of the covenant of YHWH," nor will it come to mind, nor will they remember it, nor shall they visit it, nor shall that be done anymore.

'At that time they shall call Jerusalem "the throne of YHWH" and all the nations shall be gathered to it, to the name of YHWH, to Jerusalem. Neither shall they any longer walk after the imagination of their evil hearts.

'In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance to your fathers.'" (Jeremiah 3:6-18)

Again we see that during the Millennium all Israel and Judah will be gathered in the Land together. It is not for the present time, nor is the current anti-Christ state of Israel the fulfillment of these prophecies. It remains for the Lord Jesus, the Messiah of Israel, to accomplish this upon His return.

While the prophets were warning Judah to turn away from idolatry they were persecuted by anti-Christ. The men of his own town plotted to kill Jeremiah but God revealed this to him and declared His punishment upon them (Jeremiah 11:18-23).

If there has been one consistent sign of anti-Christ it is persecution against God's prophets. It is no different today than it was from the time God raised up His first prophet. Nor will it ever be different until Satan is bound.

Still, under Josiah, Judah did experience a brief time of spiritual revival. Josiah's command to repair the temple was heeded with faithfulness. In the process the Book of the Law of YHWH was discovered. When it was read to Josiah he tore his robes and inquired of God what should be done. He renewed the Covenant between God and His people who were still in the Land—Judah, Benjamin, and a remnant of Israel—and increased his reforms upon the idols in the Land, even as far north as Bethel in Israel. For this, God promised that Josiah would die in peace and that he would not see the disaster that would ultimately come upon his nation.

Throughout the known world conflict was rising everywhere as powerful nations, each under anti-Christ's minions, vied for supremacy. During Jeremiah's time Babylonia rebelled against its Assyrian masters and the Babylonian Empire was established. In Greece the move toward the world's first democratic state was

stirring as citizens began overthrowing their kings. It would be over one hundred years before "democracy" would be established.

With all his righteousness, Josiah succumbed briefly to the anti-Christ spirit in not listening to God who spoke to him through Pharaoh Necho whom Josiah opposed in battle:

After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Egypt's king Necho came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates, and Josiah went out against him.

But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, you king of Judah? I am not coming against you today, but against the house with which I am at war, because God commanded me to make haste. Stop your meddling with God, who is with me, so that He not destroy you."

Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he could fight with him, and did not listen to the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.

And the archers shot at king Josiah, and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am terribly wounded."

Therefore his servants took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. (2 Chronicles 35:20-24)

Neco was on his way to fight on the side of Assyria against the Babylonians. No doubt Josiah thought he was protecting Judah's interests by opposing Necho. To Judah's thinking, Assyria posed the greater threat. Josiah wasn't aware that God had ordained Babylon's rise to power. And it was Babylon, not Assyria, who would end up being Judah's oppressor. Josiah either didn't believe Necho was speaking for God, or was persuaded in his own mind what would be the better course of action. He chose to fight Necho and paid the price.

After Josiah's death his son Jehoahaz ascended the throne of Judah. He was anti-Christ and began to lead Judah back into idolatry. After only a few months, however, Pharaoh Necho took him captive and put Josiah's other son Eliakim in his place. Necho changed the name of Eliakim (Heb., "God raises up") to Jehoiakim (Heb., "YHWH raises up").

There is no indication why Necho would change his name, but it is certainly more specific to name "YHWH" rather than merely "God," as the source of his authority. Was this a slap at YHWH by Necho? Or was it merely a mocking of Judah? Or did Necho really believe that YHWH had ordained him to be his instrument in placing Eliakim on the throne? Certainly this last idea is true, as all power comes from the true God, but we don't really know Necho's thoughts.

In any case, "Jehoiakim was also anti-Christ and continued Jehoahaz's policy of leading Judah into idolatry. His reign lasted eleven years. With Josiah gone, God's prophet Jeremiah again became anti-Christ's target. When Jeremiah stood in the courtyard of the temple and called Judah to repent, threatening destruction if it did not do so, the priests, the prophets, and all the people who heard him said that he must die. But Jeremiah eventually convinced the people as well as the officials of Judah that

he was speaking for YHWH, and they told the priests and prophets that he should not be put to death. But the prophet Uriah, who had also prophesied the same things against Judah was pursued to Egypt by Jehoiakim and was put to death by the sword (Jeremiah 26:1-23).

Anti-Christ could not destroy Jeremiah simply because the Spirit of God convicted the hearts of the people, at least momentarily, to allow him to live. But Anti-Christ's wrath against Uriah was not deflected. For reasons known only to God, Uriah was struck down by anti-Christ through Jehoiakim.

God directed Jeremiah to record his prophecies on a scroll, which he dictated to the scribe Baruch. He then told Baruch to read the words in the temple. When Jehoiakim heard of Baruch's reading of the scroll he defiantly, and personally, burned the scroll piece-by-piece as a portion of three or four columns was read. This brazen anti-Christ attack against God's Word would lead to his downfall.

(We see today this same attitude toward the Word of God, not only by anti-Christ's outside the Body of Christ, but by those within the Body of Christ. These anti-Christ's pose as ministers of righteousness, shredding the Word of God because it convicts them of their ungodly beliefs and practices that they do not want to give up. They pollute the pulpits of churches to turn the hearts of God's people to worship false gods. These false gods are not necessarily wooden statues with foreign names (although New Age influences in the churches do bring in the gods of eastern religions). These false brethren, like the false brethren of Judah, have built high places and unsanctioned altars where the God of the Bible is named among other gods with whom He must share His glory. Perhaps the most popular false god today is that of self.)

Nebuchadnezzar had gained strength in Babylon. He defeated Egypt's Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish and would eventually take Egypt captive. After defeating Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar turned his attention to Judah. He took Jehoiakim captive to Babylon along with spoils from the temple at Jerusalem, which he put in his temple.

Meanwhile, Jeremiah dictated again to Baruch all that was to be recorded. We have that record today in the Book of Jeremiah.

It was now around 600 B.C. Lao Tze, who would be the founder of Taoism is a teenager. Aesop has recently become famous in Greece for his fables. Soon India's Prince Siddhartha Gautama (who would become "Buddha") will be born.

Upon Jehoiakim's death his son Jehoiachin took the throne. His reign lasted only three months, but he also was anti-Christ, following after false gods and leading Judah to do the same.

Nebuchadnezzar had not yet taken Judah into captivity. But when Jehoiachin decided to rebel against him, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, then took the entire city captive to Babylon. He left only the poorest in the Land to maintain its crops. Thus both Israel and Judah were purged from their Promised Land, never to have their glory return again during this present age. It would appear as if anti-Christ had gained the final victory over God's plan of redemption. ❖

ANTI-CHRIST

PART IX

JUDAH IN BABYLON

For a time after being taken by Nebuchadnezzar, Judah remained in the Land as a vassal state to Babylonia. Upon the death of Jehoiachin the son of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar appointed Jehoiakim's brother, Mattaniah, as king, and renamed him Zedekiah. Zedekiah was also anti-Christ as were most of the kings of Judah before him. But he knew Jeremiah spoke for YHWH, and for a time protected him.

Rather than repenting of its idolatry and calling upon YHWH God to deliver the nation, Judah looked to Egypt to deliver it from Nebuchadnezzar. So God sent Jeremiah to prophesy that Egypt would not be able to protect Judah and that the nation would indeed go into captivity for its rebellion. As a result, Jeremiah's life was sought by the anti-Christ elements among his own people.

At first it looked as if Jeremiah's prophecy would fail when the Babylonian army left Jerusalem upon hearing of the Egyptian army's advance. So Jeremiah left Jerusalem to go into the territory of Benjamin, and was accused of defecting to the Babylonians. Irijah, the captain of the ward in Benjamin took Jeremiah captive and brought him to the princes of Judah. Being angry with Jeremiah, they had him thrown into prison. But Zedekiah called for him and asked if Jeremiah had a word from YHWH. Jeremiah's answer was, "There is, for He said you shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon."

Jeremiah pleaded with Zedekiah not to have him thrown back into the prison. Zedekiah granted his plea and allowed him to stay in the court of the prison and be given daily bread (Jeremiah 37:1-21).

But this further enraged the anti-Christ spirit in Jeremiah's enemies. They went to Zedekiah and demanded that Jeremiah again be thrown into prison. Zedekiah relented, saying that it was not in his power to stop them. So they cast Jeremiah into the dungeon of Hammelech's son Malchiah, that was in the court of the prison.

This dungeon was full of mud, and Jeremiah sank into it, left to starve to death. But Ebed-melech, one of the Ethiopian eunuchs in the king's house, went to Zedekiah and pleaded for Jer-

emiah's life. Zedekiah again relented and had Ebed-melech take thirty men to rescue Jeremiah.

Zedekiah again called Jeremiah to inquire of YHWH concerning Judah, whereupon Jeremiah warned him that unless he surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar, he and his whole household, as well as Jerusalem, would be destroyed.

Jeremiah was left in the court of the prison where he remained until Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar's army (Jeremiah 38:1-28)

Zedekiah did not heed Jeremiah's words, and Jerusalem was destroyed as Jeremiah prophesied.

After Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt's pharaoh Necho around 605 B.C., as prophesied by Jeremiah, he began to take Judah captive. When the first captives were taken, God told Jeremiah to prophesy to the people that the entire nation would go into captivity, and exactly how long the captivity would last:

Therefore, YHWH of hosts says this: "Because you have not heeded My words, look, I will send and take all the tribes of the north," says YHWH, "and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, and against its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and a derision, and perpetually desolate.

Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

"And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are finished, that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation for their iniquity," says YHWH, "and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetually desolate.

"And I will bring upon that land all My words that I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book that Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations.

For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also, and I will recompense them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.” (Jeremiah 25:8-14)

The last legitimate Hebrew king to reign was Jehoiachin who succeeded his father Jehoiakim. The account of Jehoiachin’s reign is brief:

Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother’s name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. And he did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH, according to all that his father had done.

At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants besieged it.

And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers, and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his [Nebuchadnezzar’s] reign.

And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of YHWH, and the treasures of the king’s house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold that Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of YHWH, as YHWH had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except the poorest sort of the people of the land.

And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king’s mother, and the king’s wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land; he carried them into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all that were strong and apt for war—even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his [Jehoiachin’s] uncle king in his place, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through the anger of YHWH it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from His presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. (2 Kings 24:8-20)

Zedekiah’s rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, though impelled by the anti-Christ spirit, was at the behest of God, whose judgment upon Judah would not be denied. The captivity was completed after Zedekiah’s rebellion.

With Judah’s captivity came an end to the kings of Israel. Anti-Christ had succeeded in subverting Israel and Judah sufficiently that God’s judgment would no longer be stayed. As an

enemy of God’s people, Nebuchadnezzar was anti-Christ. Yet YHWH called Nebuchadnezzar His servant, and Judah was to obey him or suffer God’s displeasure even further.

Even before the captivity was complete, and while Jehoiakim was still king of Judah, events that would reveal the hatred of anti-Christ against God’s people were taking shape in Babylon among the first captives. These events involved four Hebrew men whose faith would be an inspiration to Jews and Christians for generations, even to this present day.

Nebuchadnezzar ordered Ashpenaz, chief of his court officials, to bring some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility to serve in the king’s palace. Those selected were to be handsome, without defect, and intelligent—able to learn the Babylonian language and to be schooled in every discipline. Among these men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. Their names were changed by the chief official to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, respectively. These names were purposely given to erase the Hebrew meanings and instill Babylonian meanings to these men’s character.

Daniel (“God is Judge”) was changed to Belteshazzar (“Pre-serve, O Bel, his life”). Bel was the chief god of Babylon.

Hananiah (“Gift of the Lord”) was changed to Shadrach (“Command of Aku”). Aku was Babylon’s moon god.

Mishael (“Who is as God is”) was changed to Meshach (“Who is as Aku”).

Azariah (“Whom YHWH helps”) was changed to Abednego (“Servant of Nego”), or Nebo, the god of science and literature.

No doubt these faithful men were displeased with their new names, but in obedience to YHWH’s command that all Judah be subject to Nebuchadnezzar, they did not resist taking them.

It is somewhat incongruous that believers today know Daniel’s Hebrew name because of his prophecies and history written as part of Scripture, but they know the other three men by their Babylonian names: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These are the anti-Christ names by which these faithful men are referred in Sunday school classes.

Is this not a small victory for anti-Christ?

Would not Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah prefer to be remembered by their Hebrew names?

It may be argued that Daniel more often referred to them by their Babylonian names. But these times were all in reference to how the Babylonians referred to them. In all other instances, which were prior to their names being changed by Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel calls them by their Hebrew names.

All four men found great favor with Nebuchadnezzar who found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his kingdom (Daniel 1:20). YHWH was with them in power, and would use them to demonstrate His power to Nebuchadnezzar and all his people. The first dramatic instance in which YHWH did so involved a dream that He gave to Nebuchadnezzar. Scripture says this dream occurred during Nebuchadnezzar’s second year of reigning, but it’s likely that this is the second year of his sole reign which he had beforehand shared with his father, Nabopolassar.

And in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, with which his spirit was troubled, and his sleep broke from him.

Then the king commanded to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans, to show the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king.

And the king said to them, "I have dreamed a dream, and my spirit was troubled to know the dream."

Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Syriac: "O king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will show the interpretation."

The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "The thing has left me. If you will not make known to me the dream with its interpretation, you shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dunghill. But if you reveal the dream and its interpretation you shall receive gifts and rewards and great honor from me. Therefore show me the dream and its interpretation."

They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will reveal its interpretation."

The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain the time, because you see the thing has left me. But if you will not make known to me the dream, there is but one decree for you, for you have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me until the time is changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I will know that you can reveal its interpretation to me."

The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, "There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter. Therefore there is no king, lord, or ruler that asked such things from any magician, or astrologer or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requires, and there is no one else who can show it before the king except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. And the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain, and they sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain. (Daniel 2:1-13)

Nebuchadnezzar did not forget what he had dreamt. He was testing his wise men and, perhaps, was already displeased with them for some reason. Kings knew that they were not as in control of things as they would like. Even though they may have loved their king, people have always looked to religious men to guide them. And kings often resented the counsel of those they knew controlled the thoughts of the people through their sorceries. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar was looking for a good excuse to do away with these men. By giving them an impossible task he could justify ridding his kingdom of them.

Whatever Nebuchadnezzar's thoughts were, it appears as if anti-Christ was willing to sacrifice his own minions in order to destroy God's chosen wise men. That is the difference between serving the true God and serving false gods. The true God does not destroy His own people unless they become so rebellious and apostate that He has to make an example of them. False gods (devils under Satan's command) will destroy even those faithful to them if it will serve to help them in their war against YHWH.

In this case the devils' sacrifices abounded to God's glory, and their consternation.

Then Daniel answered with counsel and wisdom to Arioch the captain of the king's guard, who had gone forth to slay the wise men of Babylon. He answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree so hasty from the king?"

Then Arioch made the thing known to Daniel.

Then Daniel went in and desired of the king that he would give him time, and that he would reveal the interpretation to the king.

Then Daniel went to his house and made the thing known To His Companions, Hananiah, Mishael, And Azariah so that they would desire mercies from the God of Heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his fellows would not perish with the rest of the wise men of Babylon.

Then the secret was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of Heaven. Daniel answered and said, "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His, and He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings, and sets up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who know understanding; He reveals the deep and secret things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.

"I thank You, and praise You, O You God of my fathers, who has given me wisdom and power, and has now made known to me what we desired of You, for You have now made known to us the king's matter."

Therefore Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had ordained to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and said this to him: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon. Bring me in before the king, and I will reveal to the king the interpretation." (Daniel 2:14-24)

This is a good lesson for us. Daniel did not plead for his own life and the lives of his Hebrew brothers only, but for all the wise men of Babylon. These were servants of devils, yet Daniel did not desire that they be put to death. How does this mesh with God's commands to Israel and Judah to kill the prophets of Baal?

God's commands to purge His people from such evil was reserved for the Land He had given to Israel and Judah. He never commanded them to destroy others outside the Land. While in Babylon, Judah was subject to the king and the laws of that nation. God took pity even upon his adversaries in the natural realm.

Today God's people are living as strangers and pilgrims in the nations of the world. Jesus' command to love our enemies extends to the most vile. We are not commanded to take the nations for Christ, or to impose Christian rule over the nations. Our testimony is to have an impact on individual lives to show them the love and mercy of the true God. It would be wonderful if such lives extended sufficiently that a just and righteous nation would result. But man's nature being what it is, the world will remain at enmity against God, and will grow more evil as the end of this age approaches. Our concern must be for the souls of those who are trapped in the Devil's snare. We can learn from Daniel how the grace and mercy of God operates even in the most ungodly of nations.

Daniel understood God's design even at that early time in history. He did not want the wise men of Babylon destroyed for something over which they had no power.

Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel in before the king, and said this to him: "I have found a man among the captives of Judah who will make known the interpretation to the king."

The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream that I have seen, and its interpretation?"

Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, cannot reveal to the king the secret that the king has demanded. But there is a God in Heaven who reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, are these.

"As for you, O king, your thoughts upon your bed came into your mind, what should come to pass hereafter, and He who reveals secrets makes known to you what shall come to pass. But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but for their sakes that shall make known the interpretation to the king, and that you might know the thoughts of your heart." (Daniel 2:25-30)

Daniel proceeded to describe the image that Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream: a statue of a man whose head was pure gold, its chest and arms were made of silver, its torso and thighs were bronze, its legs were iron, and its ten toes were a mixture of iron and clay. The statue was struck on its feet by a large rock that grew into a mountain and filled the whole earth (Daniel 2:31-35).

After exhibiting his great humility Daniel gave the interpretation which spoke of various kingdoms that would arise after Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon: Medo-Persia (silver chest and arms); Greece (Bronze torso and thighs); Rome (Legs of Iron); The Last Empire (Mixture of Iron & Clay).

This last empire is believed to be the revived Roman Empire in the last days, melding the ten provinces into which Rome was divided after the age of the emperors. It will be the final and greatest of anti-Christ's empires, and will most likely encompass Western Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa—the entire territory over which the Roman Empire extended during its greatest period. To accomplish this, it appears as if the "Christian" West will have to make an alliance with the Islamic Middle East. But the alliance will not last because anti-Christ (the Muslim peacemaker) will turn on the False Prophet from "Christian" Europe and destroy him. The center of the conflict will be Jerusalem, which is laid claim to by the world's three monotheistic religions: Islam, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism.

This, of course, is another study, but it serves our current purpose in order to better understand the nature of Daniel's in-

terpretation. Because of Daniel's ability to recite and then interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he was paid great honor, given many gifts, and was made ruler over the entire province of Babylon. He was also placed in charge of all the wise men. At Daniel's request his companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were appointed administrators over Babylon while Daniel remained in the royal court.

All this took place while Jehoiakim was still on the throne in Judah, but it sets the stage for the anti-Christ's attempts to destroy Daniel and his companions, as well as all Judah and the remnant of Israel that had been taken captive to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar himself was anti-Christ. His destruction of Judah was without mercy. And although we see him honoring Daniel and his companions, it wasn't because he had any fondness for Israel or even for these men except to the extent that they pleased him. Had Daniel not been able to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream and then interpret it, Daniel and his companions would have perished with the rest of Babylon's wise men.

We see, then, God's hand in sending Nebuchadnezzar the dream: it was to set God's oracles in the place of authority within anti-Christ's camp in order to maintain Judah and the remnant of Israel until the day of their release. This would prevent even more terrible destruction upon the captives at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar's royal administrators.

Jeremiah's prophecies of God's coming destruction upon Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon is a strong indictment against their ungodliness and mistreatment of God's people (Jeremiah 50:1-51:58).

In spite of Nebuchadnezzar's sometimes benevolence and even acknowledging of YHWH as the true God, he remained in anti-Christ's camp throughout his reign. When it came to the anti-Christ's attempts to destroy Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, Nebuchadnezzar was double-minded at best.

The spirit of anti-Christ is entrenched in false worship. It was this spirit that prompted Nebuchadnezzar to erect a statue of himself and to order all in his realm to bow before it, thus leading to a confrontation between the anti-Christ wise men of Babylon and the faithful men of God:

Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits, and its width six cubits.¹ He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king sent to gather together the princes, the governors, and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together at the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up, and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

1 Approximately 90 feet tall and 9 feet wide.

Then a herald cried aloud, "To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at the time you hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king has set up, and whoever does not fall down and worship shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of music, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up.

Then, at that time, certain Chaldeans came near and accused the Jews. They spoke and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live for ever! You, O king, have made a decree that every man who hears the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the golden image, and whoever does not fall down and worship, that he should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.

"There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men, O king, have not regarded you. They do not serve your gods, nor do they worship the golden image which you have set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king.

Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? Do you not serve my gods, nor worship the golden image that I have set up?"

"Now if you are ready that at the time you hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, you fall down and worship the image which I have made, well. But if you do not worship, you shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not concerned to answer you in this matter. If it is so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up."

Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the manner of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Therefore he spoke, and commanded that they should at once heat the furnace seven times more than was usual for it to be heated.

And he commanded the strongest men that were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

Then these men were bound in their coats, their robes, and their turbans, and their other clothes, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Thus, because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up quickly, and spoke, and said to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

He answered and said, "Look! I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no harm, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spoke, and said, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you servants of the most high God! Come out, and come here."

Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the midst of the fire.

And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counselors, being gathered together, saw these men upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was a hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor had the smell of fire passed on them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His Angel, and delivered His servants who trusted in Him and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, so that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.

"Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no other God that can deliver in this way."

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. (Daniel 3:1-30)

The dramatic deliverance of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah would be the first of many such dramatic displays of God's power over the anti-Christ idolaters. Still, Nebuchadnezzar's heart was not essentially changed. While recognizing the supreme power of YHWH, he nevertheless continued to trust in his own gods. Like all false gods of every nation, Babylon's gods allowed for personal pride and licentious living. This brought YHWH's judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar in a most remarkable manner.

Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that terrified him, and which he related to his subjects:

I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and prospering in my palace. I saw a dream that made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions in my head troubled me. Therefore I made a decree to bring in front of me all the wise men of Babylon so that they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream.

“Then the magicians, the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told the dream to them, but they did not make known to me its interpretation.

“But at last Daniel came in before me, whose name was Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god, and in whom is the spirit of the holy gods. And I told him the dream, saying, ‘O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no secret troubles you, tell me the visions in my dream that I have seen, and their interpretation.’

“Thus were the visions of my head in my bed: I saw, and look, a tree in the midst of the earth, and its height was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and its height reached to the heavens, and the sight of it to the end of all the earth. Its leaves were fair, and its fruit plenteous, and in it was food for all. The animals of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the sky lived in its branches, and all flesh was fed by it.

“I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, look, a watcher and a holy one came down from Heaven. He cried aloud and said this: ‘Cut down the tree, and cut off his branches; shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the animals get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet with the dew of the heavens, and let his portion be with the animals in the grass of the earth. Let his heart be changed from man’s, and let an animal’s heart be given to him, and let seven times pass over him.

“This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones, to the intent that the living may know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He will, and sets up over it the lowest of men.”(Daniel 4:4-17)

The interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream frightened Daniel causing him to be reluctant to tell it to Nebuchadnezzar. The king was to be driven from his palace and from among men to live as an animal for seven years until he repented of his pride and acknowledged that even he must be subject to the true God of Heaven. Daniel appealed to him to repent immediately in hope that YHWH would stay His judgment. But the anti-Christ spirit was strong in Nebuchadnezzar, and it fed his pride even more:

All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar: At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spoke and said, “Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the strength of my power and for the honor of my majesty?”

While the word was in the king’s mouth there fell a voice from Heaven, saying, “O king Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: ‘The kingdom is departed from you, and they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the animals of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen, and seven times shall pass over you until you know that the most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He will.’”

The thing was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar that same hour, and he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of the heavens, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws. (Daniel 4:28-33)

Nebuchadnezzar’s sanity returned at the end of the seven years, and he praised the true God of Heaven. Then the members of his royal entourage sought him out and restored him to his throne.

This is the last we hear of Nebuchadnezzar. History records that when he died in 562 B.C. he was succeeded by his son Amel-Marduk who reigned only two years and was assassinated by his brother Nergal-sharezer or Neriglissar. Nergal-sharezer reigned from 560-554 B.C. and was succeeded briefly by Labashi-Marduk who, as a young boy, was murdered in a conspiracy to place a usurper on the throne. That usurper was Nabonidus, the father of Belshazzar, one of the most anti-Christ of the Babylonian kings. Yet although they were anti-Christ in their spirits, each allowed Daniel and his companions to continue among the wise men in the royal palace .

It was during Belshazzar’s first year, 552 B.C., that Daniel had his vision of four beasts that represented the four kingdoms that would follow Babylon and usher in the Kingdom of Christ (Daniel 7).

During Belshazzar’s third year Daniel had another vision, this one concerning the conflict between a ram and a goat, representing the kingdoms of Medo-Persia and Greece respectively (Daniel 8).

This conflict is briefly alluded to by the pre-incarnate Word of God who later appeared to Daniel for the purpose of revealing to him the 70 “weeks” of years that would be the history of Israel until the coming of the Messiah’s Kingdom (Daniel 10:5-13).

Each of the succeeding kingdoms would be anti-Christ’s steps to ultimate power in the last days. The next step from Belshazzar’s Babylonian Empire would be that of the Medo-Persians. Daniel’s interpretation of the writing on the palace wall was given on the last day of Belshazzar’s reign—the day that Darius the Mede invaded his palace and slew him.

Darius appointed 120 men as princes to rule in his kingdom, one of whom was Daniel. Because of Daniel’s exceptional abilities, guided by the Spirit of God, Darius planned to place him over the entire kingdom. Anti-Christ took this occasion to inspire jealousy within the other princes. They tried to find some way to discredit Daniel but were unable to find any cause against him. So they, like the wise men in Nebuchadnezzar’s palace before them, conspired to set him up for destruction:

Then these emirs and princes assembled together to the king, and said this to him, “King Darius, live forever! All the emirs of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counselors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whoever shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, except from you, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.

“Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing so that it not be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not change.”

Therefore king Darius signed the writing and the decree.

Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did before.

Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God.

Then they came near, and spoke before the king concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man that asks a petition of any God or man within thirty days, except from you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

The king answered and said, "The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not change."

Then they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, who is of the children of the captivity of Judah, does not regard you, O king, nor the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

Then the king, when he heard these words, was very displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him. And he worked until sundown to deliver him.

Then these men assembled to the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spoke and said to Daniel, "Your God whom you serve continually, He will deliver you."

And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords so that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

Then the king went to his palace and passed the night fasting. Neither were instruments of music brought before him, and his sleep escaped him.

Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went quickly to the den of lions. And when he came to the den he cried out with a lamentable voice to Daniel. And the king spoke and said to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God! Is your God, whom you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions?"

Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! My God has sent His Angel, and has shut the lions' mouths so that they have not hurt me, inasmuch as before Him innocence was found in me. And also before you, O king, I have done no harm."

Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of harm was found upon him because he believed in his God.

And the king commanded, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—them, their children, and their wives. And the lions

had the mastery of them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they came to the bottom of the den.

Then king Darius wrote to all people, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth, "Peace be multiplied to you.

"I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for He is the living God, and steadfast forever, and His kingdom is that which shall not be destroyed, and His dominion shall be even unto the end.

"He who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions delivers, and rescues, and He works signs and wonders in the heavens and in earth."

So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian. (Daniel 6:6-28)

It is an indictment against Israel that a pagan king such as Darius believed more strongly in YHWH than did Israel's kings, to the extent that he proclaimed not only that YHWH could deliver Daniel, but that He would deliver him (vs. 16).

Darius also called YHWH the living God (vs. 20), thus delineating between YHWH and the pagan gods of Medo-Persia, that were lifeless idols made by the hands of men.

With every attempt by the anti-Christ spirit to destroy God's servants as he no doubt did in many unrecorded incidents, God's power was manifested in such a way that even pagan kings had to admit that YHWH ruled over man's kingdoms. Yet there is no evidence that any of these kings, though showing favor to Daniel and other faithful Israelites, had any lasting change of heart.

No doubt Darius, like Nebuchadnezzar, admired and even may have loved Daniel. Was the only reason Daniel found favor with him because, like Nebuchadnezzar, Darius saw value for himself in Daniel's abilities?

I confess I have some compassion for these kings. At least they were able to recognize the truth when confronted with it. Perhaps they were too weak to confront others with that truth, but is that not like many Christians today? It is easy to acknowledge truth when truth serves us; it isn't so easy to acknowledge truth when to do so may result in persecution or even merely displeasure from others.

Many Christians think they can be friends with the world, but the only reason the world accepts us is because of what the world perceives it can receive from us, much as Nebuchadnezzar perceived what he could receive from Daniel and his companions. The Gospel is still a stumbling block to those who perish; it is not easily received.

That's not to say that worldly people cannot be converted to Christ through our association with them. It is our Lord's desire that we continue in this world for that purpose. But we must be careful not to be conformed to the world in order to enjoy the pleasures of the world and the favor of men. If while we serve the true God we are able to befriend those who do not know Him, we should do so. But like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, our first allegiance is to YHWH God. ❖

ANTI-CHRIST

PART X

THE RETURN OF JUDAH

As Judah faced the prospect of returning to their Land, the nations continued their inexorable decline into paganism. The temple to Diana was built in Ephesus and came in modern times to be called the third wonder of the world. Confucius was inspiring the sacred books of China. Prince Siddhartha Gautama was developing the Buddhist religion in India. Rome was about to be faced with rebellion against Tarquin the Proud, setting the stage for establishment of the Roman Republic. Yet the primary focus of anti-Christ was upon one nation in particular. If anti-Christ could thwart God's plans for Israel he could unite the world against YHWH and establish his kingdom over the entire earth. A critical period in Israel's history unfolded when the time for God's promise to restore Israel to the Land had come.

When Cyrus of Persia defeated Babylonia in 539 B.C., he issued a decree allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. He was following the Persian philosophy of conquest that the best way to govern foreign nations was to allow them to continue in their cultural and religious traditions. But more than this, he was compelled by God to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy that the Babylonian captivity would last 70 years.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order that the word of YHWH spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, YHWH stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: 'YHWH God of Heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all His people? YHWH his God be with him, and let him go up.'" (2 Chronicles 36:22-23)

Cyrus returned all the Israelite temple artifacts that Nebuchadnezzar had placed in the temple of his god after capturing Judah. But with the laying of the new temple's foundation by Zerubbabel came both joy and sorrow.

But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice, and many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people. Because the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard far off. (Ezra 3:12-13)

Having come back to their homeland, the Jews encountered the inhabitants that had taken over. Those new inhabitants did not like the idea of the Jews again gaining strength in their midst, and they plotted to sabotage the rebuilding of the temple. At first they feigned friendship, offering to help build the temple, but Zerubbabel and all the heads of the tribes of Israel told them that they had no part in building the temple to YHWH.

Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, and hired counselors against them in order to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius¹ king of Persia. (Ezra 4:4-5)

If there were ever a reason for anti-Christ to strive against the plans of YHWH, this was among the most important. If he could prevent the temple from being built he would accomplish two important victories: 1) he would prove YHWH false in His promise to restore Judah and the temple; 2) he would prevent Israel from having a place to worship the true God.

1 This Darius is not the same as Darius the Mede who first conquered Babylonia, but Darius Hytaspes, 3rd Persian king to succeed Cyrus.

For several years anti-Christ succeeded in preventing the temple from being rebuilt. Upon the death of Cyrus, his son Cambyses, also known as Artaxerxes, inherited the disputes lodged against Judah. After receiving a letter indicting the Jews as rebellious people who should be prevented from building the temple, Cambyses ordered the rebuilding to cease. No further work was done until the reign of the Persian king Darius when the prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged Zerubbabel to take up the project again.

Then Tatnai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, with Shethar-Boznai and other officials of his realm, were led by their anti-Christ spirit to confront Zerubbabel and his workers demanding to know who authorized the building of the temple. After hearing the account of how Judah had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar for their sins, and how Cyrus had given a decree for them to be sent back to build the temple, Tatnai sent a letter to king Darius recounting Zerubbabel's story and asking that a search be made among the royal archives to see if it were true.

After having a search made of the royal archives and discovering that Cyrus had indeed ordered the temple to be rebuilt, Darius then issued his own decree that no one was to hinder the construction any longer:

Then Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls where the treasures were laid up in Babylon. And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that is in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein was a record thus written:

"In the first year of Cyrus the king the same Cyrus the king made a decree concerning the house of God at Jerusalem, 'Let the house be built—the place where they offered sacrifices—and let its foundations be strongly laid, its height sixty cubits, and its breadth sixty cubits, with three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber. And let the expenses be given from the king's house.

"And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from out of the temple that is at Jerusalem, and brought to Babylon, be restored and returned to the temple that is at Jerusalem, every one to its place, and place them in the house of God."

"Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites that are beyond the river, stay far from there. Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in its place.

"Moreover I make a decree that you shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God, that from the king's goods, even from the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given to these men so that they not be hindered. And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of Heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests that are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail so that they may offer sacrifices of sweet savors to the God of Heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.

"I have also made a decree, that whoever changes this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged on, and let his house be made a dunghill for this.

"And the God that has caused His name to dwell there destroy all kings and people that put in their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God that is at Jerusalem.

"I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed."

Then Tatnai, governor on this side of the river, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions, quickly did according to that which Darius the king had sent. (Ezra 6:1-13)

Nothing like a little incentive to change one's mind.

With this, the opposition relented. It had been some fourteen years since work on the temple had ceased, but now the work could continue.

But anti-Christ was not finished. He induced the Jews themselves to put off working on the temple in order to attend to their own needs and comforts. As a result, God withheld blessings from them. Then the Word of God came to the people through Haggai, telling them the reason they were having problems with their crops and livestock:

In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, the word of YHWH came through Haggai the prophet to Shealtiel's son Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and to Josedech's son Joshua, the high priest, saying, "YHWH of hosts speaks this, saying, 'These people say, 'The time has not come, the time that YHWH's house should be built.'"

Then the word of YHWH came through Haggai the prophet, saying, "Is it time for you, O you, to dwell in your roofed houses, and this house lie waste?"

"Now therefore, YHWH of hosts says this: 'Consider your ways. You have sown much, and bring in little; you eat, but you do not have enough; you drink, but you are not filled with drink; you clothe yourselves, but there is no one warm; and he who earns wages earns wages to put it into a bag with holes.'

"YHWH of hosts says this: 'Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified,' says YHWH."

"'You looked for much, and, look, it came to little; and when you brought it home I blew upon it. Why?' says YHWH of hosts. 'Because of My house that is ruined, and every man of you runs to his own house. Therefore the sky above you is kept from dew, and the earth is kept from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the newwine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the work of the hands.'"

Then Shealtiel's son Zerubbabel, and Josedech's son Joshua, the high priest—with all the remnant of the people—obeyed the voice of their God YHWH, and the words of the prophet Haggai as their God YHWH had sent him, and the people feared before YHWH.

Then YHWH's messenger Haggai spoke YHWH's message to the people, saying, "I am with you," says YHWH."

And YHWH stirred up the spirit of Shealtiel's son Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Josedech's son Joshua, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came and worked in the house of their God, YHWH of hosts, in the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king. (Haggai 1:1-15)

God expected that the Jews would have to build themselves homes and take care of their needs before they could put themselves wholly into the task of rebuilding His house. But they had procrastinated for too long. The work of the temple became less important as time passed, and they grew accustomed to their comforts.

How like they are we at times. We purpose to do many things for the Lord, but the cares of the world and our own comforts get in the way. Before we know it, far too much time has passed and we've missed, or almost missed, the opportunity to serve Him.

Although the people did respond to Haggai's prophecy and put themselves into the work of building the new temple, those who remembered the majestic beauty of Solomon's temple wept because of the smaller and less ornate qualities of its replacement. They were not aware that the real glory of this temple would not be its materials, but the entrance of their Messiah into its gates at God's ordained time. So God, speaking through Haggai to Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the remnant that were in the Land, gave them this assurance:

"Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?"

"Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel," says YHWH, "and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, high priest, and be strong, all you people of the Land," says YHWH, "and work, for I am with you," says YHWH of hosts. "According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My spirit remains among you. Do not fear."

"For YHWH of hosts says this: 'Yet once, in a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations. And the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says YHWH of hosts."

"The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," says YHWH of hosts.

"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former," says YHWH of hosts, "and in this place I will I give peace," says YHWH of hosts." (Haggai 2:3-9)

The "desire of nations" is the Messiah, not only of Israel, but of the whole earth. All nations will receive the blessings of Messiah when He returns to establish His millennial Kingdom. In the meantime, when He came the first time, He entered the temple and purged it for the sake of His Father's name (Matthew 21:12-13).

In the year 516 B.C., exactly seventy years after the destruction of Solomon's temple, Zerubbabel's temple was completed. God's promise of restoration of the people to the Land was also completed in exactly seventy years from the time they were taken to Babylonia. Despite anti-Christ's many attempts to destroy God's prophets, His people, and His plans for restoration, all things came about as prophesied. It may even be said that God took into account the delays caused by Satan's attempts to thwart His plans, thus fulfilling His prophecies in the times specified.

Yet many exiles chose not to return to the Land, and so remained in the Diaspora, their descendants scattered throughout the nations until their Messiah brings them all back after His return. Just what prompted those exiles who chose to remain is not stated in Scripture, but it would seem that they succumbed to the spirit of the world—the anti-Christ spirit—choosing to live among the heathen rather than in close proximity to their God in His temple.

During this time of transition for Judah, Zechariah received his prophecies, many of which relate to the coming of the Messiah, the manner of His death, even His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver. Zechariah's apocalyptic and millennial prophecies for the future of Jerusalem are a guide to how anti-Christ will oppose the will of God in the last days.

It was also during this time that God visited Daniel again to tell him of the fall of the Persian Empire and the rise of the Grecian Empire, as well as other future events that would lead to the last days of this age (Daniel 10:1-12:13).

Upon the death of Darius, his son Xerxes I inherited his empire. Although taking harsh measures through taxation against Egypt and Greece, he seems content to allow the Jews alone to live in peace, perhaps in response to the decrees of Cyrus and Darius. But in the third year of Xerxes's reign anti-Christ made a strong attempt to destroy the Jews in Persia. That attempt is recorded in the Book of Esther.

Xerxes held a banquet for all the people at Shushan, the city from which he reigned. He commanded the seven eunuchs who served him to bring Queen Vashti so that he could display her beauty to his subjects. When Vashti refused his command he was counseled by the nobles of Persia and Media to exile Vashti lest her example cause the women in his kingdom to rebel against their husbands, and replace her with another woman possessing greater beauty than that of Vashti. Among the candidates for Xerxes new wife was Hadassah, a cousin of Mordecai, a Jew from the tribe of Benjamin who was living at Shushan. She was taken to Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of his harem.

So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together at Shushan the palace into the custody of Hegai, that Esther was also brought into the king's house, into the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness from him, and he quickly gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were suitable to be given to her from out of the king's house. And he gave her and her maids the best place in the house of the women.

Esther had not revealed her people or her tribe, for Mordecai had charged her that she should not reveal it.

And every day, Mordecai walked in front of the court of the women's house in order to know how Esther did, and what would become of her.

Now when every maid's turn came to go in to king Ahasuerus,² after she had been twelve months according to the manner of the women (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors, and with other things for the purifying of the women). Then in this manner every maiden came to the king: whatever she desired was given to her to go with her out of the house of the women to the king's house.

In the evening she went, and the next day she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, who kept the concubines. She came in to the king no longer unless the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, came to go in to the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all those who looked at her.

So Esther was taken to king Ahasuerus, into his royal house, in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. (Esther 2:8-17)

Thus were set in motion God's plan to thwart an evil attempt by anti-Christ to destroy God's people.

In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those who kept the door, were angry, and sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus. And this was known to Mordecai, who told it to Esther the queen, and Esther informed the king of it in Mordecai's name.

And when inquiry was made of the matter, it was found out. Therefore they were both hanged on a tree, and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

After these things king Ahasuerus promoted Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king's servants that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman, for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai did not bow or give him reverence.

Then the king's servants who were in the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's commandment?"

Now it came to pass, when they spoke daily to him, and he did not listen to them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand, for he had told them that he was a Jew.³

And when Haman saw that Mordecai did not bow or give him reverence, then Haman was full of wrath. And he thought in scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had revealed to him the people of Mordecai. Therefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

In the first month, that is, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar. And Haman said to king Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom, and their laws are different from all people. Neither do they keep the king's laws. Therefore it is not for the king's profit to put up with them.

"If it pleases the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries."

And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it to Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. And the king said to Haman, "The silver is given to you—the people also—to do with them as it seems good to you."

Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the king's scribes were called, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded to the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to its writing, and to every people after their language; it was written in the name of king Ahasuerus, and sealed with the king's ring.

And the letters were sent by mail into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published to all people so that they would be ready for that day.

- 2 Xerxes is also called Ahasuerus, meaning "Mighty." This is a title that was given to many Persian kings, and was not his proper name.
- 3 The Jews would bow to no one but the true God.

The mail went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Shushan was perplexed. (Esther 2:21-3:15)

The Jews and all Israel had suffered many things in their history up to this point, but never since Pharaoh's attempt during the Exodus had anyone attempted to commit total genocide against God's people. Anti-Christ must surely have understood God's prophecies concerning Israel's Messiah, and he knew the time was nearing when the Messiah would come. At this time, just prior to the culmination of the revealed Word of God to Israel as a people, anti-Christ determined to once-and-for-all eliminate any possibility of God's prophecies coming to pass.

But God also had a plan.

When Mordecai learned of the king's command to destroy all the Jews in his kingdom, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes as was the custom for mourning a great loss. He also continued to sit in the king's gate, which was not lawful while wearing sackcloth.

When Esther heard of it she sent word to Mordecai by Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, to ask the reason. He sent word back to tell her of the king's decree, and to charge her to plead to the king for his and his people's safety. Then a terrible decision had to be made:

Again Esther spoke to Hatach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, know that whoever is not called—whether man or woman—comes to the king into the inner court, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter so that he may live. But I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days."

And they told Esther's words to Mordecai.

Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, "Do not think within yourself that you shall escape in the king's house, any more than all the Jews. For if you altogether hold your peace at this time, then enlargement and deliverance shall arise to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house shall be destroyed. And who knows whether you came to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

Then Esther bade them to return this answer to Mordecai: "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and you fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so I will go in to the king, which is not according to the law. And if I perish, I perish.

So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him. (Esther 4:10-17)

At first Esther was reluctant to obey Mordecai for fear of her life. But Mordecai knew that God would not allow His people to be utterly destroyed, but would bring them help from some other place. He prophesied that if Esther did not do as he said, she would certainly perish along with her family, even though the Jews would be rescued. Esther understood the consequences, but preferred to risk the king's displeasure rather than God's.

On the third day Esther put on her royal clothes and stood in the inner court of the king's house. When the king saw her he extended his scepter to her and asked what she desired. Esther did not immediately tell the king her true petition, but created a ruse to expose Haman's plot. She asked that the king and Haman come to a banquet that she had prepared for him. So the king called for Haman to come quickly to the banquet. There the king offered to grant to Esther any petition she asked of him. Esther replied that she would ask her petition at another banquet she would prepare for him and Haman the next day.

Then Haman went away joyfully, but when he saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and Mordecai did not bow to him, Haman was full of indignation. So when he got home he called for his friends, and for Zeresh his wife, bragging of his great fortunes and many children, and how the king had promoted him above all others in the kingdom. He also boasted that Queen Esther had invited him alone to a banquet with the king, and that he was invited alone with the king the next day for another banquet. Yet he conveyed that all this meant nothing as long as Mordecai the Jew sat at the king's gate refusing to honor him. So Zeresh and his friends advised him to have a gallows made and to ask the king the next day to have Mordecai hanged.

That night the king was troubled and could not sleep. God was prompting him to review the book of records. It was found that Mordecai had warned the king of the plot by Bigthana and Teresh to kill him. So Xerxes asked what had been done to reward Mordecai, to which his servants answered that nothing had been done for him. At that point in time Haman decided to approach the king to ask for Mordecai to be hanged. His timing was impeccable. According to God's timing. This is so great.

And the king said, "Who is in the court?"

Now Haman had come into the outward court of the king's house to ask the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. And the king's servants said to him, "Look, Haman stands in the court."

And the king said, "Let him come in."

So Haman came in. And the king said to him, "What shall be done to the man whom the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought in his heart, "To whom would the king delight to do honor more than to myself?"

And Haman answered the king, "For the man whom the king delights to honor, let the royal apparel be brought which the king uses to wear, and the horse that the king rides upon, and the royal crown that is set upon his head, and let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes so that they may array the man with whom the king delights to honor, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor'."

Then the king said to Haman, "Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as you have said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew who sits at the king's gate. Let nothing fail of all that you have spoken."

Then Haman [certainly mortified] took the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor."

And Mordecai again came to the king's gate. But Haman hurried to his house mourning, and having his head covered.

And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Then his wise men and Zeresh his wife said to him, "If Mordecai is of the seed of the Jews, before whom you have begun to fall, you will not prevail against him, but shall surely fall before him."

And while they were still speaking with him, the king's chamberlains came, and hurried to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared. (Esther 6:4-14)

Haman had no idea he was serving anti-Christ, but his pride deceived him into thinking he could wreak vengeance on a lowly Jew who would not bow to him. His fate was to be that which awaits all who serve anti-Christ.

Thinking he would be honored by Esther he went to the banquet with the king. There he not only learned of his fate, but created the circumstances by which he would meet that fate:

So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. And the king again said to Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, "What is your petition, Queen Esther, and it shall be granted to you—and what is your request, and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom."

Then Esther the queen answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given to me at my petition, and my people at my request, for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could not equal the king's damage."

Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said to Esther the queen, "Who is he, and where is he, that dares presume in his heart to do so?"

And Esther said, "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman."

Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

And the king, arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath, went into the palace garden. And Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen, for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.

Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine, and Haman had fallen upon the couch where Esther was. Then the king said, "Will he force the queen also before me in the house?"

As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, "Look, also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, stands in the house of Haman."

Then the king said, "Hang him on it."

So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath was pacified. (Esther 7:1-10)

That day the king gave Haman's household to Esther who placed Mordecai over it. Moreover, after Esther brought Mordecai to the king, Xerxes gave him his ring. Responding to Esther's plea for her people, Xerxes told them to write a decree rescinding his previous order, seal it with the king's ring, and have it posted throughout his kingdom. He also aided the Jews when anyone sought to harm them.

These events became the basis for the Jews' celebration of Purim, because Haman had cast Pur, the lot, to destroy them:

Therefore they called these days Purim after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come to them, the Jews ordained and took upon themselves, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves to them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year, and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.

And he sent the letters to all the Jews, to the hundred twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth, to confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.

And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book. (Esther 9:26-32)

For the rest of his days Mordecai was next in power to Xerxes, and was recognized among all the Jews as a great man.

Although the Jews were protected by God for the rest of the testamental period of the prophets, anti-Christ continued to gain small victories, at least for some seasons, among them. One attempt to destroy Israel was through intermarriage with the heathen among whom they lived. Around 458 B.C., the prophet Ezra was raised up to confront that evil. Ezra made a plea to the people and to the rulers to put away their foreign wives, and all Israel complied.

Upon the death of Xerxes, his son Artaxerxes gained the throne, inheriting his father's troubles with Egypt and Greece, upon whom Xerxes had imposed stringent rule. Numerous rebellions had to be quelled. Yet Artaxerxes continued his benevolence toward the Jews, allowing them to continue building strength in their land. This was obviously God's hand in protecting and providing for His people as long as they continued in His Law. They were not perfect, but there were evidently a sufficient number who wished to be obedient to the true God.

Another man appointed by God to be in the right place at the right time was Nehemiah, the royal cupbearer to Artaxerxes—a position of great trust considering how often kings have been poisoned by unfaithful stewards within their palaces.

Yet anti-Christ was not idle in putting to work his own people. Those who opposed the building of the temple broke down the wall of Jerusalem and burned its gates. Nehemiah records how his brother Hanani brought him the news of this latest setback to the Jews. Before approaching the king with his petition for the Jews he, like Esther, pleaded with YHWH through prayer and fasting.

And it happened that in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was in front of him. And I picked up the wine and gave it to the king. Now at no time before this had I been sad in his presence. Therefore the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing else but sorrow of heart.”

Then I was very sorely afraid, and said to the king, “Let the king live forever. Why should my countenance not be sad when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies in waste, the its gates are consumed with fire?”

Then the king said to me, “For what do you make request?”

So I prayed to the God of Heaven. And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you would send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, so that I may build it.”

And the king said to me (the queen also sitting by him), “For how long will your journey be, and when will you return?”

So it pleased the king to send me, and I set a time for him. Moreover I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors beyond the river so that they may convey me over till I come into Judah. And a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, so that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into.”

And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.. (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

In spite of Artaxerxes’ support, anti-Christ raised more enemies to resist the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Three men in particular resisted Nehemiah: Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian continually plotted to undermine the work God had commissioned, even threatening to report to the king that Nehemiah was acting rebelliously, planning to set himself up as king.

With threat of attack always present, Nehemiah commanded that the men work with their swords in their hands or by their sides. Neither did they remove their clothes except to wash them. The threats came to nothing because their enemies saw how strong they were and how determined to accomplish their work.

Space does not allow us to recount all that transpired for Israel to accomplish this task against great odds. Suffice it to say that no matter how strong the enemy, our God is far stronger. ❖

ANTI-CHRIST

THE INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

The dedication of the second temple in Jerusalem (c. 515 B.C.) is the final major event in ancient Israel's history that was recorded in the writings of the prophets. With the closing of the writing of the prophet Nehemiah sometime between 446-430 B.C. there came a period of silence from YHWH to Israel and Judah. Most of Israel remained in Diaspora after the Assyrian captivity, but Judah and a remnant of Israel came back to the Land with the end of the Babylonian captivity. The last writings of the prophets record the building of the second temple, and end with future prophecies of Israel's restored glory. Fittingly, Malachi (placed as the last book in order, though not the last written) ends with the prophecy of the Messiah's coming:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of YHWH, and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:5-6)

These two verses address the Lord Jesus' first coming after John the Baptist who came in the spirit of Elijah (Matthew 11:14), and His second coming (Acts 2:19-20). During the approximately 470-500 year interim between the writings of the prophets and the writings of the apostles, God gave no other written Scriptures. There were Hebrew writings that were accepted as "canon" by Roman Catholicism, but they were never part of the Hebrew Scriptures, and have been rejected by most non-Catholic Christians. These are the apocryphal books, generally recognized as historical if not scriptural. We will have a say about these later.

This is not to say there were no prophets during that time, but evidently what God had spoken through the written Word up till then was all He had to say to His people at large until the Holy Spirit inspired Jesus' apostles to write their testimonies of His life and ministry, as well as His instructions to His assemblies.

This time of prophetic silence is called the "Intertestamental Period." It is also called the "Second Temple Period" because it covers the time from the building of the second temple to the coming of Messiah into the second temple around A.D. 30.

In addressing this period we turn primarily to history for an understanding of anti-Christ's designs upon the earth.

Until Messiah came and the faith of Abraham was offered to the nations through the proclaiming of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (the Gospel of the Kingdom), anti-Christ's most concerted efforts were directed toward attempts to destroy Israel and Judah. If any one tribe of Israel could be destroyed completely—particularly Judah—then God's promise of a Redeemer for the world could not be fulfilled. And the promise of God's New Covenant with the house of Judah and the house of Israel, given through Jeremiah the prophet (Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 8:8), would not be enacted. All of Abraham's seed through Isaac and Jacob have been Satan's target for physical destruction and spiritual corruption.

The rest of the world was already in Satan's camp, having given itself over to idolatry. Except for the few Gentiles who became proselytes to the Law of Moses, there was little if any influence of God's Word among the nations.

With the closing of the written Word given by YHWH, the books that comprised the Law and the Prophets (the Jewish Tanakh, or Christian "Old Testament") were the sum total of His Scriptures for His people as a whole.

The Intertestamental Period began around 430 B.C., and ended with the writings of the apostles following Jesus' ministry on earth.

During this period the Jews (the name applied to the restored tribe of Judah as well as the remnant of other Israelite tribes that went back to the Land with them) endured many hardships at the hands of several nations that ruled over Jerusalem. Anti-Christ's continued efforts to destroy them were evident.

Because Cyrus did not restore the monarchy to Judah, the priests became the dominant authority over the people, and the temple became the center of political, social and religious authority. Whatever prophets remained during this time were afforded little if any consideration. Instead there arose over the course of time four major religious sects that claimed God's authority: the Sadducees; the Pharisees; the Essenes; and the

Zealots. The Essenes adhered to asceticism and a monastic type of life, eschewing the physical world as evil by nature. The Zealots were revolutionaries who arose late in the Intertestamental Period during the Roman occupation, and sought to establish independence for the nation of Judah. The Sadducees were an offshoot of the Hasidim, an anti-Hellenistic sect that arose during the time of Antiochus Ephiphanes. They were the priests among the people. The Pharisees were a group of scribes and sages who evolved into the major teachers of the Torah (the writings of Moses) and were addressed as "rabbi" (teacher). Thus, they gained the greater strength among the people even though in direct opposition to the Sadducees. Although the Pharisees are best known as the major detractors of Jesus, they would equate to today's Fundamentalist Christians. The major doctrine that separated them from the priestly caste of the Sadducees was their belief in the resurrection. They could well serve as a warning for today's neo-Evangelicals who, though holding much sound doctrine, are straying from the purity of the Faith.

Anti-Christ's efforts to corrupt the nation continued through these religious elements within Judah that turned the people away from the pure faith of YHWH.

The Pharisees ultimately evolved in later years as the leaders of Rabbinic Judaism which began as the oral traditions took precedence over the written Scriptures. It wasn't until the Jewish Diaspora after the destruction of the second temple in A.D. 70, however, that Rabbinic Judaism began to codify its traditions in the Talmud. But already around 536 B.C. the Mishnah had begun to develop, not in written form, but in oral form.

The Mishnah (Hebrew, "repetition," or "to study and review") was the first major written compilation of the Jewish oral traditions which trace back to the beginning of Pharisaic times. Today's rabbis state that the Oral Law traces to Moses who passed it on to Joshua, and that it has continued unabated since that time. But the truth is that the Oral Law added much to Moses' Law, and certainly the later additions to it were in direct opposition to the truth of Jesus being the Messiah.

Because of the persecution of the Jews following the destruction of the second temple it was decided that the Oral Law needed to be preserved in written form lest it be forgotten as the Jews migrated throughout the world. This was done around A.D. 200 by Rabbi Judah haNasi and is considered the first major work of Rabbinic Judaism.

But the written Mishnah is a study for a later installment in this series. It is mentioned in passing to set the scene for how the Jews began to rely more and more upon the teachings of the rabbis than upon the written Word of God. This would set the stage for conflict between the religious leaders—especially the Pharisees—and the Messiah when He first came to earth.

It wasn't long after returning from Babylonia that the Jews began to backslide. The Jewish historian Josephus records how the Jews, including the priests, married foreign women. He relates how the elders of Jerusalem had become upset that Manasseh was serving with his brother Jaddua the high priest after marrying a foreign woman, Sanballat's daughter Nicaso. (This same Sanballat was a major hindrance to Nehemiah's building of the wall and temple at Jerusalem [Nehemiah 2:10-6:14]).

The elders felt that Manasseh's conduct would set an example for the Jews, and would result in many marriages to foreign women. So they, along with Jaddua, commanded Manasseh to either divorce his wife or not approach the altar. Manasseh went to Sanballat and told him that, although he loved Nicaso, he was not willing to be deprived of his priesthood on her account.

Sanballat promised Manasseh that if he would keep Nicaso as his wife, Sanballat would confer upon him the high priesthood and make him governor of all the places Sanballat then ruled. He also promised to build him a temple upon Mount Gerizzini, the highest mountain in Samaria.

Manasseh agreed, whereupon Sanballat then seduced the priests and Levites to join with Manasseh by giving them money, land and houses.

Thus anti-Christ was able to subvert the religious leaders of Jerusalem and cause them to break the Law which forbade the Levites from having an inheritance of land and real property. There is no record of any prophet being sent by God to correct these sins, and this was a further departure from God's written Word in favor of the Oral Law that formed the basis of Rabbinic Judaism.

Under Persian rule Judah managed to maintain peace even though it began almost immediately to again fall away from YHWH's Law. But Persian rule was on its last legs.

God's prophecies must be fulfilled through the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great who was born in 356 B.C.

As we address the work of anti-Christ against God's people during the Intertestamental Period we will consider the prophecy given to Daniel by God. In doing so we must understand that all biblical prophecy centers on the Holy Land, most particularly Jerusalem. It does not center on the United States of America; it does not center on Europe; it does not center on Asia. It does not center on any of these except where their actions touch the Holy Land/Jerusalem.

God's plan of salvation and Satan's activities to thwart that plan revolve around Jerusalem primarily because of the spiritual implications of God's plan of salvation. Thus every major kingdom addressed in Scripture has eyed the Holy Land as a prized possession. To them, occupation of Jerusalem had pragmatic benefits. As the capital of Judah, Jerusalem has held the key to control of the land bridge between three continents—Asia, Africa and Europe. There is good reason why that area of interest to those kingdoms is called "the Mediterranean." It is Latin for "Middle of the land," or "Middle of the earth." Satan's principalities and powers in the heavens have used the kingdoms of this world in attempts to further their master's goal of thwarting God's plan of redemption. Israel, therefore, is the key to God's plan of salvation, and its history was told through prophecy recorded in the Book of Daniel.

There were portions of Daniel's vision that foretold of the Intertestamental Period and the worldly powers Satan would use to gain control of Jerusalem. As we consider these prophecies, keep in mind, again, that all scriptural prophecies are pertinent to Israel. All directions of the compass relate to Jerusalem. The kings of the north were those of Assyria and Syria over the time span. The kings of the south were the kings of Egypt. Where possible I will intersperse the names of the human principals involved.

Daniel 10:12-12:13, relates the vision given by God to Daniel while he was residing by the river Euphrates at Hiddekel. Daniel tells of a man who appeared to him, and whose description is identical to that of the risen Christ in Revelation 1:13-16. This man began to speak to Daniel:

Then he said to me, "Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days. But look, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia. Now I have come to make you understand what shall befall your people [Israel/Judah] in latter days, for the vision is still for many days."

Daniel received this vision during the Babylonian captivity in the third year of Cyrus's rule over the Persian Empire. The vision told of the demise of the Persian Empire and the rise of Greece, which would be the major world power during much of the Intertestamental Period.

Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I will return to fight with the prince of Persia, and when I have gone forth, look, the prince of Greece shall come. But I will show you that which is noted in the Scripture of truth, and there is no one who stands with me in these things but Michael your prince. Also I, in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him."

"And now I will show you the truth. Look, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than they all, and by his strength through his riches he will stir up all against the realm of Greece."

The prince of Persia spoken of in this prophecy is not the human prince of the empire, but the spiritual principality over it. All of the principalities over the nations are anti-Christ, but it appears as if they are in conflict with one another. Thus the constant warfare between nations for power. The human leaders of the nations don't understand this, and are ignorant pawns in anti-Christ's game. Satan's ultimate goal is the unification of mankind under a world ruler. This has been his goal since God scattered mankind over all the earth lest they become too powerful too soon:

And YHWH came down to see the city and the tower that the children of men built. And YHWH said, "Look the people are united, and they all have one language, and they begin to do this. And now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do."

"Come. Let us go down and confound their language there so that they will not understand one another's speech."

So YHWH scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the earth, and they stopped building the city. (Genesis 11:5-8)

It has taken man thousands of years to come near to the place of global unity, and we are mere steps away. Since the time of the Industrial Revolution man has made tremendous strides toward that unity thanks to the increased speed of transportation. In just 80 years man went from riding the horse as his fastest means of transportation to landing on the moon. Now he is working to land on Mars and planets beyond. In order to do so he is rebuilding the Tower of Babel through the "Global Village," where all nations are becoming interdependent. (The question has been asked why the U.S. hasn't returned to the moon. The answer is that we are not allowed to explore space independently; all efforts toward space exploration must be international. This is why the space station is called "The International Space Station." The U.S. has surrendered its sovereignty in every practical sense; it remains only a formality for this to be recognized openly.)

To accomplish global unity it has been necessary that constant warfare create conditions for acceptance of the world ruler. In the case of Persia vs. Greece, the spiritual power over Persia withstood the Lord who would make way for the spiritual power of Greece. This reveals that the final authority over all earthly power is God (Daniel 4:17), and Satan is allowed to reign over the principalities and powers of the air for a time in order to bring about God's plan of redemption.

The three kings who would arise in Persia before that empire would give way to the Grecian Empire were those who came after Cyrus. His decree to rebuild Jerusalem began Daniel's prophecy, and the three kings who followed were Cambyses, Darius I, and Xerxes. Xerxes gave the decree to obey Cyrus's command, which had been forgotten over time due to anti-Christ's opposition.

"And a mighty king [Alexander the Great of Greece] shall stand up, who shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of the heavens, and not to his offspring, nor according to his dominion which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those."

Alexander was about twenty years of age when he succeeded his father, Philip of Macedon. This was around 336 B.C. In 334 B.C. he first defeated the Persians under Darius III in Anatolia (Asia Minor), and again one year later at the Battle of Issus. During the latter campaign he destroyed the city of Tyre. He completed his conquest in 331 B.C., bringing an end to the Persian Empire.

The greatest achievement that historians grant to Alexander was not his military conquest, but his influence in bringing Greek culture to the lands he conquered. By defeating Persia he gained dominion over the Holy Land, and although his treatment of the Jews was benign, the resulting Hellenization of their land resulted in significant changes to Jewish tradition and religious practice.

Anti-Christ knows that attempts to destroy God's people physically would never ultimately succeed. In addition to physical annihilation, he must destroy as much of the Jews' spiritual

foundation as possible. This he sought to do through Hellenizing their culture.

It is no less his design upon God's people today. By bringing worldly influences to bear over so-called "Christendom," he has effectively nullified any major resistance to his plans for world conquest through his last-days representative whom we expect to be revealed before much longer.

Alexander's reign was short-lived. He died at Babylon in 323 B.C., only eight years after his conquest of Persia. But the influence of Greek culture he brought to the world has remained to this day, and that culture was even adopted by the Romans when they became the next great world power.

The cause of Alexander's death is lost to historians. It has been speculated that he was poisoned or that he died from any of several diseases including malaria, typhoid fever, acute pancreatitis, or even West Nile virus.

Daniel's prophecy revealed that Alexander's kingdom would be parceled out to four kings who came up in his place. These were Ptolemy in Egypt to the south; Antigonus in Asia to the north; Seleucus over both Syria and Babylon to the east; and Cassander in Macedonia to the west.

With the death of Alexander there arose a dispute over whom between Ptolemy and Seleucus should control the Holy Land.

And the king of the south [Ptolemy Lagidae of Egypt] and one of his princes [Seleucus I of Syria] will be strong. And he [Ptolemy] will be strong above him [Seleucus], and have dominion; his dominion shall be a great dominion.

Seleucus deferred to Ptolemy's greater strength and did not continue to challenge him for Jerusalem.

Ptolemy's conquest of Jerusalem was accomplished through deception when he came to the city in 320 B.C., feigning a desire to make a sacrifice on a Sabbath, knowing that the Jews would not fight on that day. He is said to have taken many captives to Egypt from Jerusalem and other parts of Judea and Samaria. Josephus records that, knowing how the Jews considered their oaths sacred Ptolemy used them as garrisons for important strongholds. Many Jews went voluntarily to Egypt, partly because of the excellence of the land and partly because of the kind treatment by Ptolemy and his successors.

Josephus praises the kindness of the Ptolemies toward the Jews, but he viewed this through natural eyes. Throughout God's Word Egypt is regarded as an enemy of YHWH, and Israel is chastised for its looking toward Egypt for succor. The Jews may have prospered somewhat under the Ptolemies, but there is no doubt that they suffered spiritually, removing themselves from the Land God had granted them. From ancient times spiri-

tual leadership challenged God's prophets, co-mingling their traditions and the Egyptian mysteries carried from the Exodus and the new Egyptian conquest into a hybrid Judaism called Qabbalah.¹ With the closing of God's written revelation came the transfer of spiritual authority from His prophets to the priests and rabbis. During the Intertestamental Period the mystical traditions of Qabbalah gained tremendous power over the nation through the Oral Law. Anti-Christ was preparing the nation to reject God's Messiah when he would come. What he did not know is that it was God's plan for Messiah to be rejected in order that His greater plan of redemption would be accomplished. This mystery of God was hidden even from His angels since the foundation of the world:

Nevertheless, we speak wisdom among those who are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, or of the princes of this world, that come to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom that God ordained to our glory before the world, which none of the princes of this world knew. Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him."

But God has revealed them to us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—yes the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:6-10)

The princes of this world are the spiritual anti-Christ minions of Satan in the heavenly realm. We could also say it refers to the human agencies used by Satan to accomplish his purposes.

In the King James Version of the Bible Daniel's prophecy seems to jump forward to "the end of years" (Daniel 11:6). But the Hebrew *kates* literally means "after" or "afterward."

Afterward, they will join themselves together, for the king's daughter of the south [Berenice Syra, Ptolemy II's daughter] shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement [Berenice married Antiochus of Syria]. But she shall not retain firm power; neither shall he stand, nor his power, but she and those who brought her shall be given up, and he who fathered her, and he who strengthened her in these times.

After the death of her father, Ptolemy II, Berenice was abandoned by Antiochus who went back to his first wife Laodice. Berenice and her son, whom she sought to place in power as Regent over Syria, were both poisoned by Laodice. Berenice's brother, Egyptian King Ptolemy III Euergetes, avenged Berenice by invading Syria and having Laodice killed.

1 "Hebrew theology was divided into three distinct parts. The first was the *law*, the second was *the soul of the law*, and the third was *the soul of the soul of the law*. The law was taught to all the children of Israel; the *Mishna*, or the soul of the law, was revealed to the Rabbins and teachers; but the *Qabbalah*, the soul of the soul of the law, was cunningly concealed, and only the highest initiates among the Jews were instructed in its secret principles." Manly Palmer Hall, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* (Los Angeles: Theosophical Research Society, 1962), p. CXIII.

But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate [Berenice's brother, Ptolemy III], who will come with an army and will enter into the fortress of the king of the north [Seleucus II], and will deal against them, and shall prevail, and shall also carry captives into Egypt—their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold—and he shall continue more years than the king of the north.

So the king of the south [Ptolemy III of Egypt] shall come into his [Seleucus II's] kingdom, and shall return into his own land.

These events transpired during the years 261-246 B.C. As this intrigue played out, Jerusalem served as a focal point among the struggles for power and was invaded several times, disrupting the peace of the Jews. The conflict between Ptolemy's house in Egypt and Seleucus's house in Syria continued unabated, leading to the appearance of one of the greatest anti-Christ's in history.

But his [Seleucus II's] sons [Ceraunus and Antiochus III ("the Great")] shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces. And one [Antiochus the Great] shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through. Then he will return and be stirred up, even to his fortress.

Antiochus III, under the influence of Hermeias, who had been the chief minister over the Seleucid Empire under Antiochus's father Seleucus II, ordered an attack against Judea in an attempt to put down the rebels among the Jews there. This first campaign was a significant failure.

After learning of Hermeias's plot to have Antiochus assassinated so he could control the empire through oversight of Antiochus's infant son Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), Antiochus III had Hermeias put to death. Unable to wage a successful campaign against Achaeus, who had revolted and ruled Syria, Antiochus launched a new attack against Judea. This resulted in his ability to challenge Ptolemy IV for Egypt. But in 217 B.C., Ptolemy IV defeated Antiochus III at the Battle of Raphia, causing him to retreat to Lebanon.

And the king of the south [Ptolemy IV] shall be moved with anger, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north, and he shall set forth a great multitude, but the multitude shall be given into his hand.

And when he has taken away the multitude his heart will be lifted up and he will cast down many ten thousands, but he will not be strengthened by it.

Where Antiochus III failed against Egypt, his son Antiochus IV would prove more formidable. His attack against Jerusalem would be one of the anti-Christ's most significant attempts to once-and-for-all destroy God's people and their temple.

For the king of the north [Antiochus IV (Epiphanes)] will return, and will set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with many riches.

And in those times many will stand up against the king of the south. Also, the robbers of your people [traitorous Jews who joined Ptolemy, but rebelled and then joined Syria] will exalt themselves to establish the vision [to liberate Judea], but they shall fall.

So the king of the north shall come and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities, and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand.

But he who comes against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him, and he shall stand in the glorious land [Judea], which by his hand shall be consumed.

He shall also set his face to enter [into Egypt] with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him [Ptolemy III through a peace treaty] the daughter of women [Cleopatra], corrupting her [Antiochus hoped Cleopatra would betray Ptolemy]. But she will not stand on his [her father's] side, neither be for him.

After this he will turn his face to the isles, and will take many, but a prince for his own behalf [the Roman Consul] shall cause the reproach offered by him to cease; without his own reproach he will cause it to turn upon him. [Antiochus' plans to defeat Rome were turned on him and he was defeated.]

Then he [Antiochus] shall turn his face toward the fort of his own land [Syria]: but he shall stumble and fall, and not be found.

Then will stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom [Seleucus IV], but within few days he will be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. [He was poisoned for political reasons.]

And in his estate a vile person will stand up [Antiochus IV "Epiphanes"], to whom they will not give the honor of the kingdom, but he will come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries.

And with the arms of a flood they will be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yes, also the prince of the covenant [Onias, the high priest in Jerusalem].

And after the covenant made with him he will work deceitfully, for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people.

He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do that which his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter the prey, and spoil, and riches among them. Yes, and he shall fabricate his devices against the strongholds, even for a time.

And 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 fabricate devices against him.

Yes, they who feed of the portion of his food shall destroy him, and his army shall overflow, and many shall fall down slain.

And both these kings' hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table, but it shall not prosper, for the end shall still be at the time appointed.

Then he shall return into his land with great riches, and his heart shall be against the holy covenant [Antiochus persecuted the Jews, perceiving them to be against him]; and he shall do exploits, and return to his own land.

At the time appointed he shall return and come toward the south, but it shall not be as the former, or as the latter. For the ships of Chittim [Roman Cyprus] shall come against him. Therefore he shall be grieved, and return, and have indignation against the holy covenant [Antiochus desecrated the temple and stole the holy implements, slaying 80,000 Jews in the process]. So he shall do: he shall even return, and have an understanding with those who forsake the holy covenant.

And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily sacrifice.

[Antiochus polluted the altar with broth made of swine's blood and dedicated the temple to the god Jupiter], and they shall place the abomination that makes desolate [he later slew a pig on the altar].

And he shall corrupt by flatteries such as do wickedly against the covenant, but the people who truly know their God shall be strong, and do exploits [thus began the war of the Maccabees].

Antiochus IV Epiphanes is considered the arch-enemy of the Jews during the Intertestamental Period. Anti-Christ would use him to accomplish the greatest desecration of the temple in the history of Israel. This abomination began with a false rumor that Antiochus IV had been killed in his war against Egypt. The deposed high priest Jason gathered a force of 1,000 men and attacked Jerusalem, causing Menelaus, the high priest appointed by Antiochus, to flee for his life.

Angered by his defeat by Egypt in 167 B.C., Antiochus counterattacked Jerusalem and reinstated Menelaus as high priest. He then executed many of the Jews. The apocryphal Second Book of Maccabees records the history of this event:

Now when this that was done came to the king's ear, he thought that Judea had revolted. Whereupon removing out of Egypt in a furious mind, he took the city by force of arms, and commanded his men of war not to spare such as they met, and to slay such as went up upon the houses.

Thus there was killing of young and old, making away of men, women, and children, slaying of virgins and infants. And there were destroyed within the space of three whole days eighty thousand, of which forty thousand were slain in the conflict, and no fewer sold than slain. (2 Maccabees 5:11-14)

So enraged was Antiochus that such a shedding of blood did not requite his fury. After such a great slaughter he turned his wrath against the temple of God. Again, we turn to 2 Maccabees for the historical account:

Yet he was not content with this, but presumed to go into the most holy temple of all the world, Menelaus, that traitor to the Law, and to his own country, being his guide. And taking the holy vessels with polluted hands, and with profane hands pulling down the things that were dedicated by other kings to the augmentation and glory and honor of the place, he gave them away.

And so haughty in mind was Antiochus that he did not consider that the Lord was angry for awhile for the sins of those who lived in the city, and therefore his eye was not upon the place. For had they not been formerly wrapped in many sins, this man, as soon as he had come, would have been quickly scourged and put back from his presumption, as Heliodorus was, whom Seleucus the king sent to view the treasury.

Nevertheless, God did not choose the people for the place's sake, but the place for the people's sake. And therefore the place itself, that was partaker with them of the adversity that happened to the nation, did afterward partake of the benefits sent from the Lord, and as it was forsaken in the wrath of the Almighty, so again, the great Lord being reconciled, it was set up with all glory.

So when Antiochus had carried out of the temple a thousand and eight hundred talents, he left in all haste to Antiochia, thinking in his pride to make the land navigable, and the sea passable by foot, such was the haughtiness of his mind.

And he left governors to vex the nation: at Jerusalem, Philip, for his country a Phrygian, and for manners more barbarous than he who set him there; and at Garizim, Andronicus; and besides, Menelaus, who worse than all the rest bore a heavy hand over the citizens, having a malicious mind against his countrymen the Jews.

He also sent that detestable ringleader Apollonius with an army of twenty-two thousand, commanding him to slay all those who were in their best age, and to sell the women and the younger sort, who coming to Jerusalem and pretending peace, did forbear till the holy day of the Sabbath, when taking the Jews keeping holy day, he commanded his men to arm themselves.

And so he slew all those who had gone to the celebrating of the Sabbath, and running through the city with weapons slew great multitudes.

But Judas Maccabeus with nine others, or thereabout, withdrew himself into the wilderness with his company, who continually fed on herbs lest they should be partakers of the pollution, and lived in the mountains after the manner of animals. (2 Maccabees 5:15-27).

The second temple would see two instances of this abomination that causes desolation, which refers to the desecration of God's temple. The first occurred when Antiochus offered a swine on the altar and sprinkled the broth and the blood

thereon. He broke into the holy of holies and ransacked the temple of the vessels made of precious metals. This polluted the temple and made it a profane place, unable to be used for service to YHWH.

The second abomination of desolation would occur later in A.D. 70 when Roman troops under the command of Titus would utterly destroy it after making sacrifices to their gods on the altar. That, too, is for a later installment in this series.

The Book of 2 Maccabees tells how anti-Christ, through Antiochus Epiphanes furthered his atrocities by outlawing Judaism and forcing Hellenization upon the people, thus hoping to destroy their culture and religion:

Not long after this the king sent an old man of Athens to compel the Jews to depart from the laws of their fathers and not to live after the Laws of God, and also to pollute the temple in Jerusalem and to call it the temple of Jupiter Olympius, and that in Garizim [Samaria], of Jupiter the Defender of strangers, as those who lived in that place desired.

The coming in of this mischief was sore and grievous to the people, for the temple was filled with riot and reveling by the Gentiles who dallied with harlots, and had to do with women within the circuit of the holy places, and besides that brought in things that were not lawful. The altar also was filled with profane things, which the Law forbids.

Neither was it lawful for a man to keep Sabbath days or ancient feasts, or to profess himself at all to be a Jew. And on the day of the king's birth every month they were brought by bitter constraint to eat of the sacrifices, and when the feast of Bacchus was kept, the Jews were compelled to go in procession to Bacchus, carrying ivy.

Moreover, by the suggestion of Ptolemy there went out to the neighboring cities of the heathen a decree against the Jews that they should observe the same fashions and be partakers of their sacrifices. And whoever would not conform themselves to the manners of the Gentiles would be put to death.

Then might a man have seen the present misery, for there were two women brought, who had circumcised their children, whom when they had openly led around the city, the babes hanging at their breasts, they [the Gentiles] cast them down headlong from the wall.

And others that had run together into nearby caves to keep the Sabbath day secretly, being discovered by Philip,² were all burnt together because they made a conscience to help themselves for the honor of the most sacred day.

Now I beseech those who read this book, that they not be discouraged by these calamities, but that they judge those punishments not to be for destruction, but for a

chastening of our nation. For it is a token of His [God's] great goodness when evildoers are not tolerated for any long time, but are soon punished. For not as with other nations, whom the Lord patiently forbears to punish till they have come to the fullness of their sins, so He deals with us, lest that, having come to the height of sin, afterwards He should take vengeance on us.

And therefore He never withdraws his mercy from us. And though He punish with adversity, yet He never forsakes His people. (2 Maccabees 6:1-16)

The writer of 2 Maccabees spoke truth when he said this calamity was for the chastisement of God's people. They had consistently turned from God's Word and were largely given to the practices of the heathen voluntarily. Now those practices would be forced upon them in such an unpleasant manner that they would choke on them. This was just how God dealt with their forebears in the desert when they complained about wanting quail instead of the manna. He sent so many quail that they choked on them and couldn't move about.

It was during these atrocities that the Maccabeans staged a revolt and courageously campaigned against Antiochus's army at Jerusalem:

And they who understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.

Now when they shall fall, they shall be helped with a little help, but many shall cleave to them with flatteries.

The Maccabeans were of little help, and were ultimately defeated. However, they were able to retake Jerusalem for a time. They cleansed and rededicated the temple some three years after it had been desecrated.

And some of them of understanding [believers] shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.

The history of Israel and of believers in Christ has been one of persecutions, trials and tribulations to purify us and make us white. ❖

2 On his deathbed Antiochus Epiphanes appointed this Philip, a personal friend, as ruler over all his realm (1 Maccabees 6:14).



ANTI-CHRIST

PART XII

THE RISE OF ROME

During the Intertestamental Period anti-Christ attempted a number of times to eradicate or, at least severely hamper, Israel's existence. In our previous chapter we consulted extra-biblical historical sources for information on these attempts. Nation after nation invaded the Holy Land, subjugating Israel in the process. Had it not been for God raising Judah Maccabee who led the Maccabean Revolt in 165 BC, Israel's identity as a nation might have been erased. But God's promises never fail, and He stirred up the Jews to defeat the Seleucid army, opening the way for 25 years of Jewish independence under the Hasmonean Kingdom of Israel established by Judah Maccabee's brother Simon some twenty years later. Yet centuries earlier the conflict of world powers was unfolding to bring about the fulfillment of scriptural prophecy that foretold the coming of Israel's Messiah.

Around the middle of the seventh century BC, at the same time that Greece was flexing its muscles in conquest of the Middle East, subjugating Judah in the Holy Land, anti-Christ was birthing a new state that, centuries later, would be the means by which he would execute Israel's Messiah. But the death of the Messiah was YHWH's plan for the redemption of mankind—the mystery hidden from the angels since the beginning of time, which mystery would unfold with the confounding of anti-Christ and his minions on earth. That fledgling state, Rome, was beginning to exercise strength through trade among the Mediterranean nations.

The founding of Rome is steeped in mysticism and legend. There is no solid historical evidence of how Rome came into existence as a nation. The traditional account of Rome's early history is attributed primarily to the ancient historians Dionysius of Halicarnassus (c. 60 BC – after 7 BC), Livy (59 BC – AD 17), and Plutarch (cir. AD 46 – 122).

As the legend goes, Rome was founded on April 21, 753 BC, by Romulus and Remus, twin sons of the Italian god Mars who sired them through the priestess Rhea Silvia. Rhea Silvia was said to be a Vestal Virgin (priestess of the goddess Vesta) in the ancient Italian city of Alba Longa. She was the daughter of

Numitor, king of Alba Longa, who was deposed by his brother Amulius. Amulius forced Rhea Silvia to become a Vestal Virgin in order to ensure that she would not bear children who might grow up to be a threat to Amulius' reign. But she was taken by force by the god Mars, thus setting into motion the intrigue that characterizes the legend of Rome's founding.

Upon the birth of Romulus and Remus, Mars abandoned them. Fearing that the twins would rebel against him when they were grown, Amulius had them put into a trough and thrown into the Tiber River. When the river receded, the trough came to land where a she-wolf found it with the boys still inside. The she-wolf nursed the two boys, and raised them with the help of a woodpecker who brought them food. (Both the wolf and woodpecker are animals that were sacred to Mars.)

When they became adults, Romulus and Remus assassinated Amulius and reinstated their grandfather, Numitor, as king. They then set out to found a city of their own, choosing the site of the Palatine Hill where the she-wolf had nursed them. As they were building the city, Remus ridiculed Romulus for building the city's wall too low. To prove his contention, Remus leapt over the wall. Angry at his brother's taunting, Romulus killed Remus, then continued to build the city, naming it after himself (Roma).

Rome's first citizens are said to have been outlaws and fugitives. Because there were too few women for them, they captured women from the Sabines, another tribe in Italy. The Sabines declared war against the Romans, but the Sabine women, having grown fond of their Roman husbands, intervened. A peace pact was made, and the Sabine leader, Titus Tatius, ruled with Romulus over the two tribes until Titus Tatius was killed in battle. Romulus ruled alone until he allegedly disappeared in a storm. The Romans believed that he didn't die, but was taken to heaven, whereupon they worshipped him under the name of Quirinus. He was succeeded as king of Rome by Numa Pompilius.

Alba Longa, where the story begins, is now called Castel Gandolfo. It is the summer residence of the pope, and overlooks Lake Albano about 12 miles southeast of Rome.

The Roman Kingdom

The actual date of Rome's founding is in dispute among archaeologists, but it is generally accepted that Rome grew from farming enclaves on the Palatine Hill. Eventually the city developed into the capital of the Roman Kingdom which, according to tradition, was ruled by a succession of seven kings who followed Romulus. It is believed that the kings were elected for life by the citizens of Rome, and none relied on military force to gain the throne. These kings had several insignia, including the curule chair, a purple toga, red shoes, a white crown, and twelve lictors (civil servants who guarded Roman magistrates and who carried about the fasces [a bundle of white birch sticks tied with leather straps] with the head of an axe protruding from them). The most important of these insignia was the purple toga. All these are now insignia attendant to the pope as *Pontifex Maximus* ("Greatest Bridge-builder").

It is believed by historians that the title *Pontifex Maximus* was literal: in Rome the position of bridge-builder was important, particularly for those who built the bridges over the city's sacred river, the Tiber. Only authorities with priestly duties could build those bridges. The religious significance was that only the *pontifices* could build the bridge between gods and men.

As far back as the seventh-century BC, anti-Christ was preparing the spiritual groundwork for the great apostasy that would come to fruition one thousand years later in the mid-third century AD, known as Roman Catholicism, headed by another *Pontifex Maximus*—the pope.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the pope is the "Vicar of Christ," that is, he takes the place of Christ on earth as the mediator between God and man. As *Pontifex Maximus* the pope is implied to have the spiritual power to provide the way for man to reach God.

Another of the pope's titles, "Holy Father," is reserved in Scripture for our heavenly Father.

The pope's crown, the *Triregnum* ("triple crown"), represents the pope's three functions as "Supreme Pastor," "Supreme Priest," and "Supreme Teacher." Although recent popes have not worn the *tri-regnum*, it remains the symbol of the papacy and has not been abolished.

We see, then, how the popes have usurped the titles of the triune Godhead: "Pope" means "Father"; "Supreme Pastor" and "Supreme Priest" places him in the stead of Jesus as our "One Shepherd" and "High Priest"; "Supreme Teacher" places him in the stead of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus said would be our teacher.

Were it said that the pope merely represents the Godhead, one might not be able to find fault. But these are titles reserved for the man, not for the God he claims to represent.

The Roman Kingdom, then, laid the groundwork for one of anti-Christ's greatest achievements in polluting the pure faith of God's people, not only among the Jews, but among the followers of Jesus Christ.

The Roman Republic

Around 509 BC, the Roman monarchy was overthrown and replaced with a republican form of government. The Roman Republic was originally governed by men under the constraints of

written laws. It consisted of a complex constitution that incorporated the separation of powers based on the principle of checks and balances. The development of the constitution grew from the struggle between the aristocracy (the patricians who could trace their ancestry to the early history of the kingdom) and other prominent citizens (the plebeians) who were not from among the aristocracy.

At first the republic was controlled by the aristocracy, but over time the laws that allowed them to dominate the government were repealed. What developed was a new aristocracy that depended on the structure of society rather than on law to maintain its dominance. In other words, popular opinion took the place of the rule of law, and elected representatives became the new aristocracy (sound familiar?).

During the first two centuries, the Republic's territory expanded from central Italy to the entire Mediterranean world. In its third century of existence the Republic took control of Greece, North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula (modern Spain, Portugal, Andorra, Gibraltar, and southern France). It was the most stable, prosperous, and powerful nation in Europe, rivaling Greece in Asia Minor. By the third century BC Rome had developed into the pre-eminent city in Italy. Virtually every Italian city and tribe had succumbed to Rome's dominance.

In 264 BC Rome embarked on its first military campaign against the Carthaginian Empire—the first of the three Punic Wars. (The term Punic comes from the Latin *Punicus* [or *Poenicus*], referring to the Carthaginians' Phoenician ancestry.)

At that time the Carthaginian Empire dominated the Western Mediterranean. As the Roman Republic continued to expand within the Italian Peninsula, the island of Sicily—which was then a cultural melting pot—came into its sights. Part of Sicily was controlled by the Carthaginian Empire, so Rome's design for conquest was naturally resisted by Carthage.

The Punic Wars lasted more than one hundred years. By the end of the third war Rome had conquered the Carthaginian Empire and destroyed the city of Carthage, making Rome the most powerful state in the Western Mediterranean. At the same time Rome was fighting the Punic Wars it was embroiled in the Macedonian Wars in which Rome defeated the Seleucid king, Antiochus III the Great. In 146 BC, the same year Rome razed the city of Carthage, Rome destroyed the Greek city of Corinth, bringing to an end the Fourth Macedonian War, and establishing Roman supremacy over the Eastern Mediterranean. From there it was merely a matter of time before Rome would control the entire Middle East, including the tiny province of Judah, situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. It is here that anti-Christ's most intense battle against YHWH would begin and, eventually, will end.

Israel Under The Roman Republic

From the time of the Roman Republic's beginning (509 BC) until the coming of Jesus Christ (c. 4 BC)¹ there were few words of YHWH written down in the Hebrew Scriptures. The last book of the prophets is that of Nehemiah, written sometime between 446-430 BC. During the years that Rome was developing into the most powerful empire in the history of mankind, destined to crucify the Son of God to appease the Jewish religious leaders in His day, YHWH remained virtually silent. It's as if He had stopped

dealing with Israel while establishing through anti-Christ the nation that would complete the prophecies of Daniel. The spiritual prince of Greece would give way to the prince of Rome.

Within two decades of their conquest over the Seleucid army during the Maccabean Revolt in 165 BC, the Maccabees, led by Simon Maccabaeus, established Judah's independence through the Hasmonean Dynasty. Thus began twenty-five years of Jewish independence as the Seleucid Empire suffered defeat at the rising power of the Roman Republic and the Parthian Empire. Around 139 BC, the Roman Senate recognized Israel's independence, but in time Israel would be subjugated by the coming Roman Empire.

In 64 BC the Roman general Pompey conquered Jerusalem and made Israel a tributary state, exacting taxes and exercising authority over its political elements. Around 56 BC, Aulus Gavinius, proconsul of Syria under Roman rule, divided the Jewish Kingdom into three territories: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. About 39 BC, Herod the Great (74 BC - 4 BC) was appointed tetrarch of Galilee by the Roman Senate.

Herod was the second son of Antipater the Idumaean, a highly ranked official within the Roman Republic, who appointed Herod governor of Galilee at the age of 25. His appointment ended the Hasmonean Dynasty and began the Herodian Dynasty.

Herod is credited with some great cultural and archaeological achievements, foremost being the expansion of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. But although he had the backing of the Roman Senate, his brutality of the Jews was decried by his subjects, most notably the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews.

The Roman Empire

Because of Rome's great expansion of power, the republican form of government was replaced with imperialism, which allowed Rome to rule over its territories through military and political power. Thus was developed the Roman Empire, ruled by emperors who enjoyed the worship of the people as divinity—god-men to whom even the Roman Senate gave obeisance. It was to the Roman god-man, Caesar Augustus, that the Jewish religious leaders and people gave their allegiance over the only true God-man, Jesus Christ, when they shouted, "We have no king but Caesar," and demanded that Jesus be crucified. Anti-Christ stirred up the people to succumb to the greatest apostasy possible—giving to a mere man precedence over God, even to the point of committing deicide.

Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus became the first emperor of Rome upon the ending of the Second Triumvirate, the political alliance through which he ruled with Aemilius Lepidus and Mark Antony from 43 BC to 33 BC. With Caesar Augustus' ascension to the throne as emperor the Roman Empire was born—the only empire in history, even to this day, to gain total dominance over all of Western Europe. (The current European Union appears to be headed toward reviving that dominance.)

Under the Roman Empire the ruling establishment in Judea remained, keeping Herod as a puppet king over the province of Galilee.

Herod was not a Jew by descent, but from a family of Idumaeans that had converted to Judaism through duress imposed by the Maccabean John Hyrcanus who had conquered the region of Idumaea (Edom) sometime between 140-130 BC. Hyrcanus forced the Idumaeans to either obey Jewish law or leave. Most converted and were circumcised. Herod publicly identified himself as Jewish, but his religious claims were contradicted by his and his family's decadent lifestyle.

It is during Herod's reign that Scripture again picks up Israel's history, beginning with the birth of the Messiah:

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, look, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

When Herod the king heard these things, he, and all Jerusalem with him, were troubled. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together he demanded from them where Christ should be born.

And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judaea, for thus it is written by the prophet, 'And you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of you shall come a Governor who shall rule My people Israel.'"

Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, diligently inquired of them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again so that I may come and worship Him also."

When they had heard the king, they departed. And look, the star that they saw in the east went ahead of them till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

And when they had come into the house they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshipped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented to Him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

And being warned by God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they went into their own country another way. And when they had left, look, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and you stay there until I bring you word, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy Him.

1 The year of Jesus' birth was miscalculated by Roman Catholic historians, resulting in an error in the Gregorian calendar.

When he arose he took the young child and his mother by night and went into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, so that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "I have called My Son out of Egypt."

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked by the wise men, was exceedingly angry, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all its coasts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "In Rama there was a voice heard: lamentation, weeping, and great mourning—Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not."

But when Herod was dead, look, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they who sought the young child's life are dead."

And he arose, and took the young child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus ruled in Judaea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Notwithstanding, being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee. And he came and resided in a city called Nazareth, so that which was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matthew 2:1-23)

Anti-Christ was fully aware of the prophecies about Israel's Messiah. Those prophecies spelled out clearly the year and place of Messiah's birth. Foremost in anti-Christ's mind was to destroy the Messiah before He could fulfill His God-ordained destiny. Yet although anti-Christ knew the time and place of Messiah's birth he had no power within himself to kill Him. He had to rely upon man, and he was constrained by the will of God. Evidently God was able to hide from anti-Christ the whereabouts of Jesus by secreting Him in Egypt until the death of Herod. This caused anti-Christ, impelling Herod in blind rage, to strike out at any baby boy born around the time that the Magi had come to him, up to two years of age.

Herod died soon after, and his son, Herod Antipas, continued as ruler of Galilee from 4 BC to AD 39. This same Herod Antipas would be used by anti-Christ to keep the Jews under subjection to Rome, and to facilitate the deaths of both John the Baptist and Jesus.

With the birth of Jesus came the end of the Intertestamental Period, although that end is not officially recognized by historians to have ended until the writing of the first Gospel by Matthew around AD 37.

Although Jesus did not write Scripture, He closed the chapter of the Law and the Prophets, and established the Kingdom of God in the physical presence of men, which Kingdom will be more fully established during His millennial reign on Earth, and ultimately in the New Heavens and New Earth for eternity. ❖



ANTI-CHRIST

PART XIII

THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH

The first four thousand years of human history can be seen as little more than preparation for the most important event the cosmos would ever see. Throughout that time God was preparing for the moment when He would send into the world the Savior of mankind. And not of mankind only, but of the entire cosmos.

Scripture calls the time of this Savior's appearance "the fullness of time":

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we may receive the adoption as sons.

And because you are sons God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!"

Therefore you are no longer a servant, but a son. And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Galatians 4:4-7)

There is much more to this than meets the eye. Indeed, it takes the Spirit of God to illumine our minds to comprehend the magnitude of what took place some two thousand years ago. The "fullness of time" refers to a specific moment in the history of the universe when God Himself would enter into the human experience for the specific purpose of redeeming the lost and revealing His Kingdom to mankind. Through this He opened the way for those born under the Law, which was given because of the transgression of man, to be brought into the family of God—to become adopted sons and joint heirs to His Kingdom.

To accomplish this great manifestation of His grace toward us He first had to reveal His holiness in contrast to the unholy nature of man. He did this by selecting from among humanity one particular man, Abraham, whose faith He honored by bringing forth from him a nation set aside—sanctified—through the giving of the Law. The Law, given through Abraham's descendant, Moses, demonstrated God's righteousness and the obedience He demands of those who would be redeemed from the curse of sin.

We have seen how, throughout history, God preserved that nation, Israel, in spite of repeated attempts by anti-Christ to destroy it or, at the least, to render it ineffective in fulfilling God's plan of redemption. Yet in spite of anti-Christ's strongest efforts, and Israel's consistent failings, God nurtured the nation and preserved it until the fullness of time. Now Israel's grandest purpose would be fulfilled: the Messiah (the Anointed) promised from the time of Adam's fall would come into the world.

This was not an afterthought of God, regardless of what some hyper-dispensationalists might say. God's redemption of mankind was planned from the foundation of the world:

...you were not redeemed with corruptible things like silver and gold from your vain conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot who truly was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for you who, by Him, believe in God who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory so that your faith and hope might be in God. (1 Peter 1:17b-21)

The foundation of the world (Gr: *kosmos*) refers to the creation "in the beginning" (Genesis 1:1). The Gospel of John reveals that the person who created all things is the Word of God who became a man:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and not even one thing that was made, was made without Him....

And the Word became flesh and lived among us (and we saw His glory—the glory of the only-begotten by the Father), full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-14)

There have been many throughout history who have claimed to be God's Messiah, but only one person came in "the fullness of time"—the specific time prophesied by the angel Gabriel as recorded by the prophet Daniel:

Seventy sevens are determined for your people and for your holy city to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem until the Messiah the Prince shall be seven sevens, and sixty-two sevens. The street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

And after sixty-two sevens Messiah shall be killed, but not for Himself. And the people of the prince that shall come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, and their end shall be with a flood, and until the end of the war desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:24-26)

This is a specific prophecy of a specific time regarding the nation of Israel and the Messiah. Verse 24 states that a specific time of seventy seven-year periods (lit. seventy “sevens,” or seventy times seven years—490 years) would pass until God’s dealing with Israel would be completed.

To “seal up” the vision and prophecy meant to complete it. To anoint the most Holy meant the coronation of the coming eternal King when He comes into His earthly Kingdom.

The part of this prophecy relevant to this writing is verse 25, where Gabriel states that the Messiah would come seven sevens plus sixty-two sevens (483 years) after the decree to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. It was from the time of that decree that the 490 years would commence. The Messiah would come into Jerusalem after 483 years, or seven years before the end of God’s dealing with Israel. Let us see what history has proven:

The initial decree for Israel to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple came from Cyrus, king of Persia in the first year of his reign (cir. 539 BC). This was not specific to the building of the wall of Jerusalem, but only to the temple. However, due to much opposition from Israel’s enemies, the decree was not implemented. The work did not go forward until Artaxerxes I gave the decree to Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to build the wall. The Book of Nehemiah records the events. It was in the 20th year of Artaxerxes’ reign (465-425 BC) that Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to lay the groundwork to rebuild the wall (Nehemiah 2:1). This would put the decree in the year 445 BC.

Historians put the birth of Jesus at between 7 BC and AD 6. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states:

The course of Jesus’ life and the geographic setting of his ministry can only be given in rough outline. The details are surrounded by many uncertainties. The period within which his ministry and death occurred may, however, be narrowed down with considerable accuracy on the basis of a synchronistic dating of the appearance of John the Baptist in the 15th year of Tiberius (Luke 3:1)—i.e., AD 28/29—which is confirmed by non-biblical sources. But the year and place of Jesus’ birth are uncertain. Mark and John say nothing about them. The only sources for them are the widely divergent birth and

childhood legends in Matthew 1 and 2, where Jesus’ birth and early lot are set in the time of Herod I and the change of regime (4 BC), and the narrative of Luke 2, which links Jesus’ birth with the first registration in Judaea under the emperor Augustus (AD 6). There is also historical evidence of a census carried out about 8 BC. With all of this in mind, many sources estimate the year of birth as 7-6 BC. (The use of BC [before Christ] and AD [Anno Domini, or “in the year of the Lord”] was not common until the Middle Ages.)

If we allow that Jesus began His ministry at about the same time John the Baptist came on the scene according to New Testament accounts, then we would add 445 BC to AD 29 to reach the approximate period of 474 years. Jesus would minister for approximately three to four years before being crucified. He came into Jerusalem being hailed as the King of the Jews or Messiah a few days before His death. Add four years to 474 years and we have 478 years. This still falls a few years short of the 483 years according to Gabriel’s prophecy to Daniel.

Allowing for inaccurate dating of ancient events, five years is a blink of an eye over the span of nearly 500 years. The reasonable question to ask is, who else in the history of Israel fits the role of the Messiah prophesied in Daniel’s encounter with Gabriel?

The dating of Daniel’s writing has been set by historians at somewhere between 616-536BC. It was not written after the fact of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. Even secular historians do not dispute the events of the last week before Jesus’ crucifixion.

Most strikingly, the prophecy states that Messiah would be killed immediately after His appearance:

And after sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be killed, but not for Himself: (26a).

So Messiah would come 483 years after the decree to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and would immediately be killed. For what purpose, then, did He come? He died, “not for Himself,” but for those whom He came to redeem for His eternal Kingdom.

But what else was happening among the nations during this time in history? Could there have been any significant challenges to Jesus’ claim of being the Messiah?

Strangely, no event of any historical importance took place during the time from Jesus’ birth until His death and resurrection. No important historical figure, religious or political, arose within any nation including Israel or Rome to impact history in any meaningful way. God did not allow for anyone to enter into history during the time of the Messiah’s prophesied appearance. Jesus Christ is the only person from that time to impact history, and His impact has been greater than any person who ever lived before or since.

There is no legitimate disputing that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies recorded in Daniel, Isaiah, and every book of the Law and the Prophets. These foretold of His healing ministry, of His suffering and death, and of His resurrection, as well as the coming millennial Kingdom of God on the earth with the Son of God on the throne in Jerusalem.

According to Daniel, the Messiah would be killed at the end of the 62nd seven-year period. The last seven-year period—the 70th seven-year period—would see the end of God’s dealing with Israel. In the middle of the last seven-years the temple would be destroyed and the sacrifices cut off. This occurred in AD 70 under the Roman general Titus. From the time of the Messiah’s death until the middle of the 70th seven, some 37 years passed. These 37 years were a time of the Gospel going forth to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the world according to Jesus’ command to His disciples (Acts 1:8). From the middle of the 70th seven-year period until the present, some 2,000 years have transpired. This interim period until the second half of the last seven-year period is what Jesus called “the times of the Gentiles”:

“And when you shall see Jerusalem encircled with armies, then know that the desolation of it is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of it get out, and do not let those who are in the countries enter there. For these are the days of vengeance, so that all things that are written may be fulfilled.

“But woe to those who are pregnant, and to those who nurse in those days! For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” (Luke 22:20-24)

This period of destruction is what Scripture calls the time of “Jacob’s trouble”, out of which the Lord Jesus will deliver Israel, and David will again be on the throne (Jeremiah 30:1-11).

The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple after Jesus’ death is confirmed by many historical accounts. Jesus’ ministry and death are also confirmed by historical accounts. But the most compelling accounts are found in the Gospels that relate the fulfillment of ancient prophecies attributable to no one in history other than Jesus Christ. The prophetic nature of Scripture is the signature of God Himself. No other writings have that signature. Yet the god of this world system—Satan—has blinded the eyes of most men to regard Jesus as nothing more than a man who may have been “anointed” or “christed” according to New Age philosophy.

If the perfect record of fulfilled prophecies in Scripture are anything, they are compelling reasons why Scripture must be believed. No writing of strictly human origin can possibly be 100% accurate, particularly when compiled over thousands of years by many different men.

During those thousands of years prior to the appearance of the prophesied Messiah, anti-Christ worked diligently to destroy faith in Him. Now that He had arrived, anti-Christ would have to increase his efforts. And those efforts began almost immediately after His birth.

When Jesus was born there was great fanfare, but not among the world’s elite. Rather, the announcement of His birth came to the most lowly of men—shepherds guarding their flocks.

Commiserate with His humble birth in a stable, and the humble nature of His walk on this earth, the Messiah came with words of reconciliation from God His Father:

And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, look, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were very afraid.

And the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for, look, I bring you good news of great joy that shall be for all people. For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: you will find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men!” (Luke 2:8-14)

God’s offer to mankind is peace—reconciliation—between Him and all mankind which has been separated from Him by their sins. Some modern versions (e.g., English translations of the Latin Vulgate) have rephrased this verse to say, “peace toward men of good will,” implying that God’s grace is limited to certain people who possess a will to do good. But that is not what Scripture says. God’s grace is extended to all mankind through His Son, Jesus the Messiah. The fact that not all mankind will receive His offer does not alter that truth. Anything other than that truth opposes the good news or “Gospel” of Jesus Christ.

The announcement of Jesus’ birth did not escape notice of anti-Christ. Certainly he was impacted by the appearance of the heavenly host. He must have known immediately that his efforts to oppose God would have to be stepped up if he were to maintain his dominion over the earth.

The most logical step would be to have the Messiah killed while still a helpless infant. But God is always prepared for His adversary’s efforts against Him.

Anti-Christ’s first attempt on the Messiah’s life would come through the person of Herod, king of Judea:

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, look, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him.”

When Herod the king heard these things, he, and all Jerusalem with him, were troubled. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together he demanded from them where Christ would be born. And they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet, ‘And you, Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of you shall come a Governor who shall rule My people Israel.’”

Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, diligently asked them what time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again so that I may also come and worship Him." (Matthew 2:1-8)

The anti-Christ spirit in man doesn't care wherein truth may lie; it doesn't consider the consequences of opposing truth. Although not Jewish by birth, Herod Antipas was descended from Herod Antipater, founder of the Herodian dynasty over Judea through appointment by Julius Caesar. The Herodians "converted" to the Jewish faith for practical purposes, but their history of cruelty was lamented by the Sanhedrin.

Even so, Herod understood that Messiah was prophesied to come. His reason for learning the place of Messiah's birth was not so that he could worship Him, but so that he could kill Him. Herod had no fear of God, but placed his position as king above that of God. His spirit was that of anti-Christ who first conceived of dominion over God's creation:

How you have fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you who weakened the nations are cut down to the ground!

For you have said in your 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)

The anti-Christ spirit always seeks dominion in place of God. It is a blind spirit whose hatred of God is so intense that it causes its own destruction. Herod's spirit was that of anti-Christ: knowing the truth of God yet working to destroy that truth.

When the wise men were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, the anti-Christ within him was stirred to commit one of the greatest acts of infanticide in recorded history. Outsmarted by God, he flew into a rage and had all boys ages two years and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding area slaughtered. But His earthly father Joseph had also been warned in a dream to protect the child by fleeing into Egypt until Herod's death.

That same spirit of anti-Christ within Herod that has no fear of God works even today in the United States of America, as well as all over the world, where infanticide of a much greater magnitude is carried out daily in abortion clinics.

The transgression of the wicked within the heart reveals that there is no fear of God before his eyes. For he flatters himself in his own eyes until his iniquity is found to be hateful.

The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit; he is lacking to be wise, and to do good.

He devises mischief upon his bed; he sets himself in a way that is not good; he does not hate evil. (Psalms 36:1-4)

All sin is man's attempt to assert himself above God, whether in small ways or in great ways. It is the spirit of anti-Christ against which even the children of God must guard themselves. By God's grace we have a mediator, Jesus Christ, who has taken upon Himself the chastisement for all our sins (Isaiah 53:5).

His sacrifice was not only in His death, but in His life that was lived in total obedience to His Father in Heaven. His life was one of constant resistance against the anti-Christ who sought to destroy Him and His calling.

After Herod's death Jesus was brought by his earthly parents to the city of Nazareth in the province of Galilee. The accounts of His life as a young boy are limited aside from His astounding the teachers in the temple with His understanding and knowledge of Scripture (Luke 2:42-47).

The interim between that event and the beginning of His ministry has become the stuff of legends promulgated by the imagination of fallen men. The anti-Christ spirit, unable to destroy the Lord Jesus, has concocted fantasies that question His divine nature as the Word of God. He is said to have traveled to the East where He learned magic and the wisdom of seers to work miracles (or seeming miracles). Those who say this attempt to limit His abilities to that of a man who can conjure spirits or tap into the spiritual realm to achieve mystical powers.

Such things don't exist except with the aid of devils, but foolish people, unwilling to accept the idea of a sin nature for themselves, can't abide the truth that God provided a Savior to pay for their sins. They, too, have lifted themselves in their imaginations above the heights of the clouds. They want to believe that Jesus is nothing more than an enlightened man—another Buddha or "ascended master." And despite the truth that Scripture is the only history of Jesus that bears the prophetic signature of God, they choose to disregard the elements that prove His divinity (except to devise within their imaginations the idea that all men are gods, albeit some more advanced than others in their alleged godhood).

Some may ask why the Bible doesn't say anything about Jesus' youth beyond His experience in the temple at the age of twelve. The simple answer is that during that time He was growing in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52); His time to be revealed as the Messiah and King of Israel had not come. It was a period in His life of which God chose to remain silent. The silence of God's Word regarding Jesus' early years gives anti-Christ opportunity to test men's hearts whether or not they would believe that Jesus is who He said He is—the only begotten Son of God—the Word of God who became a man. When the time did come for Him to be revealed, it would be with dramatic evidence of His divinity:

Then Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. But John forbid Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and You come to me?"

And answering, Jesus said to him, "Allow it to be so now, for thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness."

Then he allowed Him.

And when he was baptized, Jesus immediately went up out of the water, and look, Heaven was opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And look, a voice from Heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:13-17)

This anointing by the Father, sending upon Jesus His Holy Spirit, was the beginning of the Lord's ministry. This startling

event did not escape the anti-Christ's notice. Just as with the announcement of Jesus' birth, he recognized that God was at work, and it was time to get to work himself. This time, however, he would try a different tactic: he would attempt to beguile Jesus just as he had Eve and so many after her:

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took Him up into the holy city and set Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, cast Yourself down, for it is written, 'He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and they shall bear You up in their hands lest at any time You dash your foot against a stone.'"

Jesus said to Him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'You shall not test the Lord your God.'"

Again, the devil took Him up into an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said to Him, "I will give You all these things if you will fall down and worship me."

Then Jesus said to him, "You get away, Satan, for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'"

Then the devil left Him, and, look, angels came and ministered to Him. (Matthew 3:1-11)

Jesus did not go into the desert haphazardly; He was led by the Spirit of God specifically to face temptation by Satan. It is evident that the devil was present when the Father proclaimed at Jesus' baptism, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." His first two tests appealed to that claim: "If you are the Son of God."

The anti-Christ also knew that eventually all the kingdoms of the world would be given into Jesus' hands at the proper time. Satan's final test was to tempt Him with the fulfillment of that destiny without having to go through the work and suffering ordained by the Father. Here, again, he was attempting to place himself above the stars of God. That is the ultimate goal of anti-Christ. It is not to destroy men's souls; it is not to wreak havoc on the earth through natural disasters; it is not to cause sickness and death. All these are subordinate to accomplishing his determined purpose—to establish himself as equal to God. He will even do "good" (e.g., healing, signs and wonders) if that will serve his purpose.

Still, the anti-Christ's kingdom is one of darkness and death. Jesus worked against this kingdom of darkness through the casting out of devils, the healing of sickness, the raising of the dead. Satan knew that an intruder had come to disrupt his kingdom—to bring light to men in darkness so that they could become that intruder's disciples to do the works that He did.

The kingdoms of this world are in the hands of anti-Christ, and they will remain so until the Lord Jesus returns to wrest them from him. Jesus' disciples are called to be a light in the darkness of this world that is under anti-Christ's headship. Just as Jesus resisted the temptation to rule in this world in order to serve in the Father's Kingdom, so His disciples must do the same. The servant is not greater than the master (John 13:13-17). Jesus is our example of how we should live our lives in this perishing world (vs. 15).

The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness was but the beginning of a protracted conflict between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. As we study the life of Jesus we will see the true nature of anti-Christ revealed in terms more palpable than ever seen before or since Jesus walked the earth.



ANTI-CHRIST

PART XIV

THE MESSIAH'S MINISTRY

Having returned from being tempted by the Devil in the wilderness, Jesus came again to John the Baptist. It is then that John testified of Jesus being the Messiah—the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And more than that—the Son of God:

The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who has preference over me for He was before me.’ And I did not know Him. But so that He should be made known to Israel, therefore I have come baptizing with water.”

And John bore witness, saying, “I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove from Heaven, and it stayed upon Him. And I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water, the same said to me, ‘Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, it is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’

“And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

Thus began the ministry of God’s only-begotten Son. For when Andrew and Peter heard John the next day again say, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” they followed Jesus and became His first disciples. The following day Philip and Nathanael joined Jesus as His disciples.

On the third day after His baptism Jesus attended a wedding feast in Cana in Galilee where, upon the urging of His mother, He turned water into wine. He appears to have done so reluctantly, after telling Mary that His time had not yet come to reveal Himself as the Messiah. This was the first of His miracles, and caused His disciples to put their faith in Him.

Since the time of His temptation in the wilderness until that time there is no record of anti-Christ opposing Jesus. It would be only a matter of days, however, before Jesus Himself would set the stage for the opposition that would eventually lead to His death on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. It was the time of the Passover, sometime around the year AD 27, the exact year being unverifiable:

And the Jews’ Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem and found sitting in the temple those who sold oxen, sheep and doves, and the moneychangers. And when He had made a whip out of small cords He drove them all out of the temple—along with the sheep, and the oxen—and poured out the changers’ money, and overthrew the tables, and said to those who sold doves, “Take these things away! Do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise!”

And His disciples remembered that it was written, “The zeal of Your house has consumed me.”

Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “What sign do you show us, seeing that You do these things?”

Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

Then the Jews said, “This temple was in construction for forty-six years, and will You raise it up in three days?”

But He spoke of the temple of His body. (John 2:13-21)

This is the first recorded confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders who, having succumbed to rabbinical Judaism in place of the faith given to Abraham and passed down through the Law of Moses, had become complacent in their religion. They saw no problem in making merchandise of God’s people. And they resented this intruder into their money-making schemes.

This was no rash action on the part of Jesus. He took some time to braid the whip He would use on the merchants and moneychangers. His action was calculated, and He knew it would draw the opposition of His enemies.

Still, no overt opposition came His way, although the Pharisees were keeping an eye on Him, and knew that He was gaining and baptizing more disciples than had John. When Jesus learned of the Pharisees’ interest in Him, knowing of their evil hearts, He left Judea and returned to Galilee. He was not yet ready to be delivered into their hands.

On His way to Galilee He passed through Samaria where He met a woman at Jacob’s well. There He revealed to Her that

He was Israel's Messiah (John 4:4-26). Because of the woman's testimony about Jesus many Samaritans came to see and hear Him, and in just two days among them many believed in Him.

Jesus' ministry to the Samaritans was judged as evil by many Jews because the Jews despised the Samaritans whom they considered interlopers and not of pure Israelite stock. The alienation began after the Jews returned from the Assyrian Captivity, believing that those occupying Samaria were aliens from Kutha in Mesopotamia. The Jews referred to the Samaritans as "Cuthim" in a pejorative sense. However, Scripture reveals that not all Israelites from the Northern Kingdom were exiled by the Assyrians; many remained in their land as their subjects. It's highly probable that many of those true Israelites intermarried with non-Israelites during the times of the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivities, but they continued to strongly identify with the religion of the Israelites.

The Samaritans claimed that they held to the true religion of the ancient Israelites prior to the Babylonian Captivity, and that they preserved the true religion, as opposed to Judaism, which they believed was a related but altered religion brought back by those who returned from exile.

Jesus' ministry to the Samaritans, as well as His parable about the Good Samaritan, would cause the unbelieving Jews to further reject Him, believing that the Messiah would have nothing to do with the Samaritans. The hatred of the Jews toward the Samaritans would be one of anti-Christ's weapons in his design to destroy the Messiah.

After spending two days in Samaria, Jesus returned to Cana in Galilee where, as His second miracle, He healed the son of a nobleman.

Although Jesus as Messiah would become anti-Christ's greatest target, his attack against this new work of God was first formed against John the Baptist:

But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him for Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils that Herod had done, added yet this above all: that he shut up John in prison. (Luke 3:19)

This verse is parenthetical in Luke's account of John the Baptist's ministry, placed between John's proclamation to the Jews to repent and be baptized, and Jesus' baptism which we know was performed by John. Most likely John was imprisoned by Herod not long after Jesus' baptism because John himself had said that he must decrease and the Lord must increase (John 3:30). Also, John's imprisonment came before Jesus embarked upon His first public ministry.

King Herod, though he liked to hear John the Baptist, succumbed to the anti-Christ's desire for John's death. Although saddened to do so, when Herodias instructed her daughter to ask for John's head on a platter after Herod had promised her anything she wanted for having danced so well before him and his guests, Herod had John beheaded. His cowardice is also a trait of anti-Christ.

Leaving His hometown, Nazareth, Jesus went to live in Capernaum, by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah:

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first He lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who live in the land of the shadow of death, the light has shined. (Isa 9:1-2)

This was the beginning of Jesus proclaiming the same message as that of John the Baptist; "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."

At first, His fame spread throughout the whole countryside as He taught in the synagogues. People praised Him. Then He returned to Nazareth. There He provoked the people to turn against Him:

And He came to Nazareth where He had been brought up. As was His custom, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. And there was delivered to Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He opened the book, He found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of YHWH is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of YHWH."

And He closed the book, and He gave it back to the minister and sat down. And the eyes of all those who were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say to them, "This Scripture is fulfilled in your ears today."

And all bore Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:16-23)

So far, so good; all spoke well of Him, bearing witness of Him. But then:

And He said to them, "You will surely recite to Me this proverb: 'Physician, heal yourself; whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'"

And He said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in His own country. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah when the heavens were shut up three years and six months—when great famine was throughout all the land—but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

And when they heard these things, all those in the synagogue were filled with wrath and rose up, and threw Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built so that they might throw Him down headlong.

But passing through the midst of them, He went His way and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and

taught them on the Sabbath days. And they were astonished at His teaching because His word had authority. (Luke 4:24-32)

Jesus knew that speaking the scriptural truth of God's mercy toward Gentiles while passing over the afflictions of the Jews would incite the hatred hidden within the hearts of His listeners. He fully knew what their reaction would be.

One ploy of anti-Christ is to portray Jesus as nothing more than "loving," "kind," and "generous" toward everyone in order to disarm people to His true nature and demand for holiness in His people. This is but one example of how He provoked those who at first saw nothing offensive in Him. He made sure they were offended in order to reveal their true hearts.

This incident set the match to the greatest conflagration of warfare between the Kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of darkness thus far seen on earth. It was the beginning of the end for both the Messiah's days on earth in this present age, and Satan's power over the hearts and minds of men.

Returning again to Galilee, Jesus demonstrated His authority over nature by having Simon Peter take Him in his boat to cast a net for fish. Peter obeyed, even though he and his companions had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. When the catch of fish was so great that Peter required his partners in another boat to help, and both boats began to sink, Peter said to Jesus, "Leave me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

From there Jesus began to call those additional men who would comprise His company of apostles. Zebedee's sons, James and John immediately left their father's boat to follow Him upon His word, "Come! Follow Me!"

This was no casual encounter. No doubt James and John had heard Jesus speaking on the shore of Galilee, and would have witnessed the miracle of the fishes.

Taking these men, Jesus went to Capernaum where He taught in the synagogue and caused more people to marvel at His teaching authority. His first recorded encounter with the minions of Satan's kingdom also took place there:

And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying, "Leave us alone! What have we to do with You, You Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know You, who You are—the Holy One of God!"

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Hold your peace and come out of him!"

And when the unclean spirit had torn him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him.

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What thing is this? What new teaching is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him!"

And His fame quickly spread abroad throughout all the region around Galilee. (Mark 1:23-28)

This was the Kingdom of Heaven's first direct attack against the kingdom of Satan. Until this time Jesus had worked miracles of healing and demonstrated His authority over the natural realm; now He demonstrated His authority over the spirit realm.

The unclean spirit residing in this man was most likely hidden, manipulating the man to do unclean things, perhaps unknown to his contemporaries. He may even have been one of the religious leaders whose hidden sins might never have come to light had Jesus' presence not provoked the unclean spirit to reveal himself.

This incident also prompted the people in Capernaum to bring to Jesus all the sick and those who were possessed by devils.

Leaving there, He went throughout all of Galilee proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, healing all the sick, and casting out devils. Large crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and all across Jordan followed Him. After a few days He returned to Capernaum, and further provoked antagonism toward Himself:

And they came to Him, bringing someone sick of paralysis who was carried by four. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. And when they had broken it up, they let down the cot in which the sick from paralysis lay.

When Jesus saw their faith He said to the sick from paralysis, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, reasoning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

And immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned so within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason these things in your hearts? Which is it easier to say to the sick from paralysis, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your cot, and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins (He said to the sick from paralysis), 'I say to you, arise, and take up your cot, and go your way into your house.'"

And immediately he arose, took up the cot, and went away in front of them all, insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen this before!"

And He went away again by the seashore, and the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. (Mark 2:3-13)

We're not told the further reaction from these particular scribes, but we know that the scribes as a class consistently plotted against the Lord.

After this incident Jesus saw Alphaeus's son Levi (Matthew) sitting in the tax collector's place. He said to Levi, "Follow Me," and he did. The Lord's association with Levi further provoked the religious leaders of the Jews to try to find fault with Him:

And it happened that as Jesus sat at dinner in His house, many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples, for there were many, and they followed Him.

And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?"

When Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are whole have no need of the physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast, and they came and said to Him, “Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?”

And Jesus said to them, “Can the children of the bride chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they shall fast in those days. (Mark 3:15-20)

The Jews put much emphasis on outward cleanliness and the keeping of the Law before others. They were quick to judge sinners and those who did not wash their hands before eating. Here, for the first time recorded, Jesus addressed the spiritual vs. the mundane conditions that separate the truly holy from the outwardly holy. In so doing He stirred the anti-Christ sentiments of the religious leaders who were jealous for their outward righteousness.

This conflict would be exacerbated when He next healed the invalid man by the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day, provoking the Jews to seek His death. They became even more enraged when He said, “My Father is at work here, and I work.” They sought all the more to kill Him because He had not only broken the Sabbath according to their tradition, but said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

The conflict has raged over the centuries over whether or not Jesus is God in the flesh—the Word of God who was in the bosom of the Father from eternity, and who came forth from the Father to create all things. The denial of His divinity is a mark of anti-Christ:

For many deceivers have entered into the world, who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-Christ. (2 John 7)

Jesus Christ (Jesus the Messiah) is testified to be the Word of God who became flesh (John 1). All Scripture and the faith of the saints from the creation of man to the present rest upon this truth. Anyone who denies this truth is anti-Christ according to God’s Word. The vast majority of mankind reject this truth, placing themselves in the camp of anti-Christ. But the conflict between Satan and Jesus as the Word of God would settle the issue once for all when Jesus would rise from the dead. This is why belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus and His faithful saints is essential to the true faith. Those who do not hold that hope have no hope.

Jesus’ entire walk was warfare against the kingdom of anti-Christ. Everything He did—every good work—set Him against Satan’s minions, both men and devils. And it was the Law of Moses that was the catalyst He used against His enemies:

“Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you—even Moses in whom you

trust. For had you believed Moses you would have believed Me, because he wrote of Me.

”But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My Words?” (John 5:35-47)

Throughout history anti-Christ has attempted to pervert God’s Word as a means to deceive mankind. He succeeded in deceiving the Jews through their religious leaders who had taken the Word as a set of rules by which they could keep the people enslaved to those religious leaders’ dictates. They perverted the meaning of the Sabbath and all the Law which was given as a blessing to Israel. Instead of blessing, the religious leaders had turned the Law into a curse and subjugated the people to their religious tenets.

When Jesus came He set the record straight, accomplishing several objectives: 1) He set free the people who believed and followed Him; 2) He exposed the evil of rabbinic Judaism that enslaved the people; 3) He destroyed the works of the Devil; 4) He showed the way to the Father for all who believe; 5) He made the way for the Gentiles to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And He did many other things that are too numerous to mention (John 21:25).

Many of Jesus’ works took place on the Sabbath for good reason. The Sabbath was established by God as a delight for Israel—a time to rest from their labors. It was holy to YHWH, but the religious leaders of the Jews had made the Sabbath a burden to the people. The Sabbath had become a time of sorrow rather than a time of delight—a time when the people were bound to the point where they could expect nothing good. Jesus showed that the Sabbath was being misrepresented; He demonstrated that it was always intended to be a time for good. Thus He healed and delivered many on the Sabbath. This stirred the ire of the religious leaders who, in their self-righteousness, desired to keep the people under bondage.

When He and His disciples went through the wheat fields on the Sabbath, plucking grains to eat, the Pharisees exclaimed, “Look! Your disciples do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day!”

But Jesus pointed them to their own Scriptures to recall how David and his men ate the show bread in the tabernacle, which was unlawful, and how the priests seem to profane the Sabbath by working in the temple. His words were meant to bring understanding that God never forbids good works or necessary work for Him on the Sabbath.

But their traditions overrode their understanding and took precedence over God’s Word.

It is much the same today when legalists within the Body of Christ attempt to impose the traditions of men for the sake of outward righteousness.

The hearts of the Jewish religious leaders had become so calloused that they refused to rejoice at the work of God to heal the people. Instead they used those works as a means to find fault with Jesus so that they could kill Him.

The anti-Christ spirit is so perverse that it cannot rejoice at good; it must destroy anything that is truly good—that is, anything that comes from God. Anti-Christ will accuse the

righteous of being evil, calling good “evil,” and evil “good.” This the Pharisees did to Jesus:

Then there was brought to Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and mute, and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and mute both spoke and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, “Is this not the son of David?”

But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, “This fellow does not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils!”

And Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? And if I cast out devils by Beelzebub, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.” (Matthew 12:22-28)

It was during this event that Jesus warned the people about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit—knowing the truth of God at work and willfully rejecting it, even calling it the work of the Devil. This is apostasy of the worst kind that Jesus said will not be forgiven.

In spite of the Lord’s consistent display of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of the Scriptures, coupled with His unfailing miracles, none of these things having been witnessed in such fashion since the creation of man, the religious leaders hearts became more hardened against Him. After He had chastised the Pharisees and lawyers during a meal to which a Pharisee had invited Him, they all the more opposed Him and sought how to entrap Him (Luke 11:53-54).

Some might say that this is to be expected, seeing how Jesus consistently provoked and even humiliated His detractors. But there is no excuse for refusing the light of truth regardless how that truth is conveyed. Jesus knew their hearts; He knew their thoughts; He knew that many followed Him for reasons other than those that stem from pure motives. Some followed because they wanted to receive some good thing from Him—a miracle, food, temporal benefits. Some followed because they wanted to find fault in order to solidify their position among the people. Some followed because they wanted to learn how to manifest the same power. Few followed because they wanted to know the truth that could conform them to holiness.

It is no different today. Witness the religious charlatans who make merchandise of God’s people, promising health, wealth, power and prestige. They preach false gospels in order to acquire filthy lucre.

And there are many who continue to find fault with Jesus and with the Word of God because they refuse the conviction of God’s truth. Were Jesus among us today they would seek to kill Him anew.

Knowing the nature of man, Jesus chose to teach in parables so that the hearers would not understand. Contrary to false teachers who say He taught in parables—calling them “word pictures”—so the people would understand:

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?”

He answered and said to them, “Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them. For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whoever does not have, from him shall be taken away even that he has.

“Therefore I speak to them in parables. Because seeing, they do not see, and hearing, they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, ‘By hearing you shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing, you shall see and shall not perceive.’ For this people’s heart has grown callous, and their ears are dull of hearing, and they have closed their eyes lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. (Matthew 13:10-15)

Jesus was revealing that most men are willfully blind and deaf to truth. Rather than cater to their blindness and deafness, He hid the truth of the Kingdom of Heaven from them except in parables. He explained His parables only to those to whom He chose to explain them.

Yet He spoke plainly certain truths to those who opposed Him—truths that exposed their evil hearts. They evidenced the truth He conveyed to His disciples that if one were to cast one’s pearls before swine, the swine would trample them in the mud and then turn against those who cast them there.

Jesus gave the pearls of truth about the Kingdom of Heaven, and the result was that the Jews as a whole turned on Him and killed Him.

Nor did Jesus go easy on those whom Scripture says believed in Him. He got to the heart of belief to expose the evil intent behind the belief of many:

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed in Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are indeed My disciples, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man. How do you say, ‘You shall be made free?’”

Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is the servant of sin. And the servant does not abide in the house forever. But the Son abides forever. Therefore, if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.

“I know that you are Abraham’s seed, but you seek to kill Me because My word has no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with My Father, and you do that which you have seen with your father.”

They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father!”

Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek

to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth which I have heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father.”

Then they said to Him, “We are not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God!”

Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God. Nor did I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you cannot hear My word.

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not live in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie he speaks of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth you do not believe Me.

“Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I speak the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God’s words. Therefore, you do not hear them because you are not of God.”

Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say well that You are a Samaritan and have a devil?”

Jesus answered, “I do not have a devil, but I honor My Father. And you dishonor Me. And I do not seek My own glory; there is one who seeks and judges. Truly, truly, I say to you, if a man keeps My saying he shall never see death.”

Then the Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a devil! Abraham is dead, and the prophets, and You say, ‘If a man keeps My saying he shall never taste of death!’

“Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead! Whom do you make Yourself to be?”

Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing; it is My Father—of whom you say that He is your God—who honors Me. Yet you have not known Him. But I know Him, and if I should say I do not know Him I shall be a liar like you. But I do know Him, and keep His saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.”

Then they took up stones to cast at Him. But Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple going through the midst of them, and so passed by. (John 8:31-59)

We see in this passage of Scripture that anti-Christ lurks in the hearts of all men—even those who believe, at least at first. These people had heard the Lord and believed in Him. Yet He knew that their belief was flawed—that their hearts were infected with the anti-Christ spirit which would turn against Him given the right impetus.

He told them even before it was in their heads that their hearts sought to kill Him. And He was proved right. His words

confirmed that He is the Word of God who has existed from eternity, being YHWH, the only-begotten Son of YHWH the Father.

How can Jesus and the Father both be YHWH?

YHWH is God’s name. We all bear the names of our fathers. Jesus—the Word of God who came forth from the Father—bears the same name as His Father: YHWH. It is He who walked with Adam; it is He who spoke with Abraham, Moses, and others throughout His pre-incarnation. This is why He could say, “Before Abraham was, I AM.” This is also why John the Baptist said that Jesus was before him, even though, physically, John was about six months older than Jesus.

Jesus’ revelation of Himself as the Word of God, making Himself equal with God, was the final straw in his enemies’ minds that made Him worthy of death. It was the truth the anti-Christ spirit used in a futile attempt to destroy the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Jesus again turned many of His disciples against Him when He said that in order to attain eternal life one must eat His flesh and drink His blood. They took Him literally, and did not understand that His words were spirit (John 6:63). Again He demonstrated a nature contrary to many modern portrayals.

Even among the apostles the anti-Christ spirit worked to sow division. There came a time when they began to argue who was the greatest among them. Jesus put them to shame by telling them that he who wants to be first, must be last, emphasizing that service in the Kingdom of Heaven must be accompanied by humility—just the opposite of the anti-Christ spirit of pride and self-promotion.

At one point He demonstrated this by washing the apostles’ feet. And He rebuked Peter for not wanting Him to do so, exposing Peter’s lack of obedience, until Jesus told Him that unless He washed Peter’s feet, Peter had no part in Him.

We do not normally think of Peter’s protest as the spirit of anti-Christ, but anything, no matter how great or how small, is anti-Christ if it is contrary to the will of God. Even if it comes from a pure motive such as Peter’s, not to allow the Lord to humble Himself before him.

It may not seem proper to the natural mind that God should serve His children, but consider: do parents not serve their children, especially when the children are still in infancy? Does it not take humility for a parent to clean a child or to pick up after him? Is God not a better parent than any human being?

We must allow God to do what He wishes to do, regardless how we perceive His service to us with our natural minds.

This doesn’t mean we make demands on God; it doesn’t mean we take Him for granted; it doesn’t mean we don’t continue to serve Him. It means we conform our minds to the mind of Christ who did not think equality with God to be something to grasp, but left His place in Glory and became humble to the point of dying on the cross at the hands of His own creation (Philippians 2:5-8).

The anti-Christ spirit worked against Jesus even through His own brothers who taunted Him to go to the Feast of Tabernacles in Galilee and perform miracles there.

The same spirit was at work among the crowds that followed Jesus, not only taunting Him, but sowing seeds of doubt among those inclined to hear Him.

Often the religious leaders attempted to seize Jesus; crowds attempted to stone Him or cast Him off a cliff; these occurrences followed His affirmation of His deity. But until His time came, they were powerless to harm Him. And the Jews were divided whether He was from God or the Devil.

Even when Jesus demonstrated His power over death by raising Lazarus, the anti-Christ spirit was hardened all the more in those who refused to believe in Him.

Then many of the Jews who came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees and told them what things Jesus had done.

Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What do we do? For this man does many miracles. Thus, if we leave Him alone all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.

And this he spoke not from himself, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation. And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Then from that day forth they took counsel together in order to put Him to death. (John 11:45-53)

Caiaphas spoke prophetically in the role of high priest, that the Messiah must die for the people. Only his anti-Christ spirit kept him from realizing or understanding the prophecy.

Adding to their sin, the chief priests even plotted to kill Lazarus because many Jews believed in Jesus on account of Lazarus being raised from the dead.

How blind is the anti-Christ spirit to want to undo the work of God in the name of religion.

As Jesus entered Jerusalem to the shouts of "Hossannah!" "Blessed is He who comes in the name of YHWH!" and "Blessed is the King of Israel!" His enemies were plotting His death.

Again Jesus cleansed the temple of the merchants and moneychangers, all the more inciting the anti-Christ spirit to kill Him. But the religious leaders were afraid of the people, many of whom were following Jesus. They knew that if they were to take Him it must be done in secret.

Their opportunity came during the week leading up to the Passover.

Then the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled together at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and determined that they would take Jesus by deceit and kill him. But they said,

"Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." (Matthew 26:3-5)

Now the feast of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover, drew near. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being among the number of the twelve. And he went his way and consulted with the chief priests and captains how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude. (Luke 22:3-6)

Matthew tells us that Judas received thirty pieces of silver for betraying Jesus, the sum recorded in Zechariah (11:12-13).

Thus did Messiah's earthly life come to an end, ignominiously crucified in the presence of His enemies, taunted and humiliated. The Son of God—the eternal Word of God in the flesh of man—hung among criminals for the crimes and sins of all mankind since Adam to the last yet to be born.

Anti-Christ had gained the victory he so eagerly sought. Certainly he had thwarted God's plan to restore Israel by putting to death the God he so hates.

How would God ever gain the victory now?



With the death of Jesus on the cross Satan and his anti-Christ minions in both the spirit and physical realms must have believed they had won the day. Surely God's plan of redemption had been thwarted. At the least they must have thought that they had delayed God's plan of redemption. The Savior's blood had been spilled and mingled with the mud of the earth, defiled and trodden underfoot by the crowd that followed Him to the cross and that stood mocking Him. What a victory for His enemies to savor.

As He was dying in agony they taunted Him:

And those who passed by vilified Him, wagging their heads, and saying, "You who destroys the temple, and builds it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!"

Likewise also the chief priests with the scribes and elders, mocking Him, said, "He saved others, but He cannot save Himself! If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross now, and we will believe Him! He trusted in God! Let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him, for He said, 'I am the Son of God!'" (Matthew 27:39-43)

Picture, if you will, these blasphemers laughing at the pitiful figure impaled before them. The more He writhed in agony the more they mocked Him.

Truly, the spirit of anti-Christ is cruel and profane. For even if Jesus were not the Son of God—even if He were a deceiver as they claimed—had those religious leaders possessed hearts toward God they would not have rejoiced at seeing Him die, especially in such a terrible manner. Their own law indicts them:

Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles lest YHWH see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him. (Proverbs 24:17-18)

If your enemy is hungry give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink, for you will heap coals of fire upon his head, and YHWH shall reward you. (Proverbs 25:21-22)

This latter verse is often quoted with the suggestion that treating one's enemies with kindness should be motivated by seeing him ultimately suffer. But that is not the intent. It is merely stating what will happen to him should he not reconcile with us. We are not to rejoice at his fall, or hope for coals of fire to be heaped upon him. Rather, we should pray in hope that he will be converted and become a brother in Christ.

Jesus' commandment that we love our enemies does not allow for us to hold animosity toward them while offering only outward solace.

Even God does not rejoice at the destruction of His enemies:

"Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord YHWH, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn you, turn you from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel!'" (Ezekiel 33:11)

If God takes no pleasure in the death of the evil, what justifies any man doing so?

But such is the spirit of anti-Christ which is alive today, even in the hearts of many of God's people. An example is found in Luke 9:51-56 where James and John wanted to call down fire from Heaven upon the Samaritans that rejected Jesus. The Lord told them they did not know of what spirit they were.

How often do Christians harbor in their hearts the desire to see the enemies of God destroyed? Is it not because those enemies of God impose upon their comfort and convenience? It takes far more effort and submission of one's own self to reach out to those who hate us than it does to hate in return.

The anti-Christ spirit that surrounds us knows how to take advantage of our proclivity to hate those who merely rub us the wrong way, let alone those who seek our destruction. We must follow the example of Jesus who said, "Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing."

But suppose Jesus had acted upon their words that if He came down from the cross they would believe Him? What do you suppose would have happened (although knowing the purpose of the cross we know it never would have happened)?

I believe they would have fled in terror, regrouped in the nearest synagogue, and said, "Okay, now what do we do?"

So corrupt were their hearts that they would defy their own Scriptures and act lawlessly in condemning and crucifying their own Messiah—and that in a mocking manner.

So on that Passover afternoon the sinless Lamb of God was slain for the sins of the world. He was put in a tomb that was sealed at the order of Pontius Pilate acquiescing to the request of the Jewish religious leaders, and guarded by a company of Roman soldiers. And the day following Passover day—the high Sabbath beginning the Feast of Unleavened Bread—drew on.

The followers of Jesus went into mourning. The hope they had for the Kingdom and its King had been shattered. The finality of death impressed upon them the loss of great promises.

But the Sabbath of all Sabbaths was coming!

The day after that high Sabbath, the women bought spices and prepared them for the Lord's burial, then rested for the weekly Sabbath that followed. As the weekly Sabbath came to a close the soldiers that guarded the tomb were stricken with tremendous fear as they saw the angel of God come down from Heaven and roll away the stone.

Now late on Sabbath, as it was getting dusk toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

(And, look! There had been a great earthquake. For the angel of the Lord, having descended from Heaven and having come and rolled back the stone from the door, was sitting on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him, those keeping guard trembled and became like dead men.)

And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not fear, for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for He has risen as He said. Come look at the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead. And, look, He goes ahead of you into Galilee. There you shall see Him. Look, I have told you."

And they left quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. (Matthew 28:1-8)

When the women came to the tomb, the weekly Sabbath had not yet ended. The angel had already rolled away the stone; the Lord had already risen; the guards were either still lying on the ground, or had fled to the Jewish leaders to seek an alibi:

Now when they were going, look, some of the watch came into the city, and revealed to the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were gathered with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave much money to the soldiers, saying, "You say, 'His disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and keep you safe."

So they took the money and did as they were told. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. (Matthew 28:11-15).

Even the Lord's resurrection did not soften the hearts of the anti-Christ religious leaders. They purposely instructed the soldiers to lie in order to cover up a miracle beyond human explanation.

Just as Jesus prophesied, His body had lain in the tomb for exactly three days and three nights (Matthew 12:38-40).

The truth that the Lord rose on the weekly Sabbath was corrupted by anti-Christ who, by the third century, had convinced the paganized Christians in Rome to assign what they called "the Venerable Day of the Sun" as the alleged day of the Lord's resurrection. Thus, "Sun-day" replaced the Sabbath as the day of gathering to worship weekly. It was also a ruse to distance Roman Christianity (which would encompass virtually the entire world known to the Romans and Greeks) from its roots in the faith of Israel and Judah, with whom Jesus established His New Covenant. That Covenant was hijacked by an apostate Christianity that saw itself as the replacement for Israel in God's economy rather than as a people who would be grafted into Israel through faith in Israel's Messiah.

We've seen how the faith had become perverted by rabbinical Judaism by the time Jesus appeared on earth; in future installments we will see how the faith as interpreted by the very giver of the faith would be perverted by pastoral Christianity in like manner.

After His resurrection Jesus appeared to His disciples on numerous occasions over a period of forty days, instructing them on how they should proceed as His witnesses throughout the whole world. In the process He further confirmed His authority and power through miracles. But for some, there would be no belief without experience. The most notable doubter in Scripture was the apostle Thomas who, not being present when Jesus had previously appeared to the other disciples, said, "Unless I see the nail marks in His hands, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

As innocuous as this may seem, it is also evidence of the anti-Christ spirit. Thomas had been with Jesus almost from the beginning. He had seen the miracles—the healings, the raising from the dead, the Lord's authority over nature—but he hardened his heart against the idea that God could or would raise Jesus from the dead. That is, until Jesus appeared to him also, and told him that those who believe without having seen would be the more blessed.

In that encounter, there is something that escapes the anti-Christ spirit in many people: when Thomas saw the Lord he did not touch His hands or put his own hand into the Lord's side. Rather, Thomas merely confessed, "My Lord and my God!"

Anti-Christ's have seized upon the Lord's silence about being God when He walked the earth as a man. They say, "Jesus never claimed to be God." Even word-faith guru Kenneth Copeland famously (or infamously) said, "Jesus never claimed to be God. He only claimed to be the Son of God." Yet when Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus did not reprimand him for it, or deny that He is Thomas's God.

He could easily have said, "No, Thomas, I am not God; I am only the Son of God." But as the Word of God who created

all things, He became as a man to die for mankind's sins. Now, with His resurrection, He would resume His status as a member of the Godhead.

He had set aside His glory to become totally reliant upon His heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit who guided Him. This is why He said in His prayer at the close of the Last Supper, "And now, O Father, glorify Me with Yourself with the glory that I had with You before the world existed."

Jesus was anticipating that He would attain the same glory as the Father, which He had with the Father before the creation. As the Word of God who came forth from the Father, uncreated, His nature is the same as the Father's—divine. He is the second person of the Godhead. Within Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).

This truth has been one of the most assiduously attacked by the anti-Christ spirit from the time of Jesus' birth until today. And it will be attacked until He appears again to rule the nations with a rod of iron.

Why is anti-Christ so determined to destroy faith in the truth of Jesus' divinity? Because unless Jesus is God in the flesh, then His death cannot be an atonement for the sins of mankind. He would be merely a sinful man. And a sinful man cannot be a perfect sacrifice for sin. Or, as claimed by the Jehovah's Witnesses of the Watchtower Society, He would have to be an angel (the archangel Michael, as this cult says). This, too, is a lie of anti-Christ. Scripture says God never called any angel His Son:

God, who at different times and in diverse ways spoke in past times to the fathers through the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us through His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds, who, being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when he had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

For to which of the angels has He ever said, "You are My Son: I have fathered you this day?"

And again, "I will be a Father to Him, and He shall be a Son to Me?"

And again, when He brings the first-begotten into the world, He says, "And let all the angels of God worship Him."

And of the angels he says, "Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire."

But to the Son He says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of Your Kingdom is a scepter of righteousness. You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God—Your God—has anointed You with the oil of gladness above your fellows. And, You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands. They shall perish, but You remain, and they all shall grow old as a garment does, and You shall fold them up as a garment, and they shall be changed, but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail."

But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit on My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool?"

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation? (Heb. 1)

The Son is subservient to the Father, but the Father exalts the Son with His own glory. This is why the Father says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever." He acknowledges that the Son is of the same essence and nature as the Father—God.

This truth is the most destructive to the purposes of the anti-Christ. For all who believe this truth and worship the Son will escape the anti-Christ's snare that leads to eternal damnation.

Just before He ascended into Heaven Jesus gave two commands to His disciples:

And being assembled together with them, [He] commanded them that they should not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, "you have heard through Me. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Therefore, when they came together they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You restore again the kingdom to Israel now?"

And He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons that the Father has put in His own power. But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth."

And when He had said these things, while they looked He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (Acts 1:4-9)

Thus ended the anti-Christ's direct assaults against the Son of God. Now he would have to turn his focus toward the small group of called-out believers who, prior to the day of Pentecost, would be utterly powerless against him.

Pentecost was a day of spiritual significance to the Jews. Its commemoration is commanded in Leviticus 23:15-21:

And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath [the high Sabbath after Passover day—the first day of the feast of unleavened bread], from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, seven Sabbaths shall be complete, even until the day after the seventh Sabbath you shall count fifty days. And you shall offer a new offering to YHWH.

You shall bring out of your homes two wave loaves of two-tenth deals; they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. They are the first fruits to YHWH.

And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams. They shall be for a burnt offering to YHWH, with their food offering, and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire, of sweet savor to YHWH.

Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of

peace offerings. And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first fruits for a wave offering before YHWH, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to YHWH for the priest.

And you shall proclaim on the same day, that it may be a holy assembling for you. You shall do no work; it shall be a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

Pentecost fell fifty days after the first day of the feast of unleavened bread. It appears as if Pentecost occurred about one week after the Lord ascended into Heaven, counting three days from His crucifixion, then forty days when He remained with His disciples. So it wasn't a very long time before He sent the Holy Spirit upon them.

The significance of Pentecost was that it was a day for a new offering to God. These offerings were to be presented with the bread (the body) of the first fruits (Christ) as a wave offering to God.

The disciples upon whom the Holy Spirit fell were the first fruits of the Body of Christ. In a very real sense they were a new offering that would be sacrificed for the witness of Jesus.¹

With the Lord's resurrection and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all believers beginning at Pentecost, the anti-Christ's focus became channeled against the Body of Christ. As faith in Jesus grew through the witness of the disciples, anti-Christ stirred up the Jewish religious leaders once more. The first instance recorded in Scripture came in much the same manner as when Jesus ministered healing to the people.

Peter and John went up to the temple for prayer one day when they encountered a man crippled from birth being carried to the temple. When the man asked them for money Peter famously replied, "I have no silver or gold, but such as I have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk."

The people who witnessed the miracle were astonished and came running to Peter and John. Peter then indicted Israel for having killed its Messiah, and called upon the people to repent of their sins. This greatly disturbed the priests, so they had Peter and John arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin. The next day they were questioned by what authority or name they performed the miracle.

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "You rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we are examined today about the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name

of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him does this man stand here whole before you.

"This is the stone that was set aside by you builders, who has become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:8-12)

Unable to counter Peter's words, and seeing the evidence of God's power standing before them in the person of the healed man, the religious leaders conferred how they could prevent further spread of the Gospel. They commanded Peter and John never to speak or teach about Jesus. But again, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge, for we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard."

For fear of the people the Sanhedrin allowed them to leave, but this was merely the first of many attempts by the anti-Christ to thwart this new move of God among men.

The next recorded move by anti-Christ came in the persons of Ananias and Sapphira as an attempt to defraud the believers who had come to unity in deciding to share all their possessions in common with one another. Having sold a property, both Ananias and Sapphira separately lied to the apostles about how much they had received. They were immediately judged by God and paid the ultimate price.

Some think their deaths were too severe a penalty to pay, but the Lord had His purpose in taking their lives: 1) they were an example to those who would lie to God; 2) they had tested the Lord; 3) they threatened the unity of the Body of Christ at a time when that unity was most important—the beginning of the Gospel being proclaimed by men without the Lord present among them in the flesh.

As the Gospel began to spread throughout Jerusalem and Judea the apostles performed many miracles to prove their authority came from God. Many Jews came into the Kingdom as a result. But the more success they had, the more they came under scrutiny of the religious leaders. And the more they began to experience the wrath of the anti-Christ.

They were arrested and put in prison. But an angel of the Lord released them and told them to go to the temple and proclaim the Gospel. Because the religious leaders feared the people, they did not arrest them again at that time, but they brought them before the Sanhedrin and gave them a stern warning, upon which the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than men!" They again indicted the religious leaders of murdering their Messiah, causing the leaders to call for their death.

Upon the wise counsel of Gammaliel, the Sanhedrin spared the apostles' lives, but had them flogged.

The apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing that they were counted worthy by God to suffer for the name of Jesus.

The next recorded incident of persecution from anti-Christ resulted in the first martyrdom—that of Stephen, one of the seven chosen by the disciples to minister to the needs of the widows among them. Stephen is said to have been a man full of faith

¹ There are reasons why God does what He does when He does it. The Jewish feasts have significance to us because of their prophetic nature relative to the Messiah's appearance, ministry, sacrifice, and rule over the Kingdom of Heaven. But much of that significance has been lost due to the anti-Christ's work in turning Christians away from their Hebrew roots during the first few centuries, again particularly through the imperial power of the Roman papacy. Thus the vast majority of Christians today do not have a solid grasp on their faith, not understanding the significance of the Lord's work as prophesied in the Jewish feasts. Of great prophetic significance is Passover, which typifies the sacrifice of Israel's Messiah. The papacy substituted for Passover the celebration of Easter—a pagan feast to the goddess Ishtar (see our special report, *Facts and Fallacies of the Resurrection*).

and power by the Holy Spirit. Jews from a particular synagogue disputed with Stephen who had been working miracles and wonders among the people. When they could not resist the wisdom by which he spoke they hired false witnesses who claimed that Stephen had blasphemed against God and the Law of Moses (Acts 6:11).

In the face of these accusations Stephen testified the truth from Abraham to Jesus, accusing his captors and their fathers of murdering the prophets, including Jesus. Hearing his words they were “cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth” (Acts 7:54). When he said he saw Heaven opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God the entire council ran at him, cast him out of the city, and stoned him to death as he called upon the Lord to receive his spirit.

Acts 7:58-8:1 records that standing by with the murderers’ clothes at his feet was a young man named Saul who was consenting to his death. This Saul would be for a time anti-Christ’s greatest emissary of persecution and death against the saints, though Scripture does not reveal that he ever personally murdered any of them. The Lord may have stayed his hand in order that he not carry even greater guilt.

Whereas Satan thought to destroy the fledgling group of disciples, the result of his persecution was to scatter them abroad where they would spread the Gospel far and wide.

Scripture testifies of many signs and wonders granted by God through the disciples as they fled persecution.

This prompted the anti-Christ spirit in Saul to go to the high priest for letters that he could use to take prisoner those in the Damascus synagogues who preached faith in Jesus Christ. But on the way to Damascus he was struck to the ground and blinded by the Lord who accused him of persecuting Him. It was at this point that anti-Christ lost one of his greatest warriors, named Saul, and the Kingdom of Heaven gained one of its greatest warriors, the apostle Paul. Because of his conversion Saul would become arguably anti-Christ’s greatest enemy, marked for death.

Even while he was still in Damascus the Jews took counsel to kill him, but the disciples learned of their plot and rescued him by night. When he went to Jerusalem and found favor with the apostles there, he disputed with the Greek Jews, so they, too, sought to kill him. Again he was rescued by the brethren who took him to Caesarea and sent him from there to Tarsus.

To fully realize the extent to which Saul was so used by anti-Christ, we need only learn from Scripture that upon his conversion the Body of Christ “had rest throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria, and their numbers multiplied” (Acts 9:31).

For a time, anti-Christ was held in abeyance by God. He was powerless against God’s protection of His growing called-out company of believers in Jesus. But that respite was not to continue for long.

King Herod arrested a number of believers, and had James, the brother of John, put to death by the sword. Seeing how this pleased the Jews he seized Peter also and had him held until he could be tried after Passover. But an angel of the Lord rescued Peter and led him on his way. When the angel left Peter he

realized that what had happened was no dream or vision, and he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John, also called Mark, where a number of brethren were praying.

When Peter was nowhere to be found, Herod had the guards arrested, and ordered that they be executed.

At Antioch the Holy Spirit told the disciples to set aside Saul and Barnabas to embark upon the greatest recorded journey for the spreading of the Gospel, beginning in Cyprus. At Paphos in Cyprus they were called for by the proconsul, Sergius Paulus because he wanted to hear about the Word of God from them. But anti-Christ, acting through the sorcerer Elymas, opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith. But Saul (called Paul for the first time here), challenged Elymas, accusing him of perverting the ways of the Lord and pronouncing blindness upon him for a time. Seeing this, Sergius Paulus believed, not merely because of this wonder, but because he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. Sergius Paulus is the first recorded convert among the Gentiles that came at the proclamation of the Gospel by the disciples.

When Paul went to Pisidian Antioch to proclaim the Gospel in the synagogue on the Sabbath his words were well received by the Jews and by the Gentile proselytes. The next Sabbath day almost the entire city came to hear what Paul and Barnabas had to say. When the Jews saw the crowds they were filled with envy and were incited by the anti-Christ spirit within them to speak against Paul’s teaching, contradicting him and blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing you put it away from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, look, we turn to the Gentiles. For so has the Lord commanded us, saying, ‘I have set you to be a light of the Gentiles so that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. And the Word of the Lord was announced throughout all the region. (Acts 13:46-49)

As Paul and Barnabas began their outreach to the Gentiles, new avenues of persecution by anti-Christ developed. His target was enlarged. It was no longer just the Jews, the Messiah, and His immediate disciples that came under anti-Christ’s close scrutiny. Now he had to contend with an entire world of believers from all backgrounds. The Body of Christ became identified as one Body without distinction among Jew and Gentile, all being one in Christ. Thus began what Scripture calls “the time of the Gentiles.”

But upon most of Israel fell spiritual blindness that has remained until the time of the Gentiles will be completed upon the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly!



After Pentecost anti-Christ's efforts would become focused on the apostles as they ministered the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul, especially, would be the major target. As he and his companions began to take the Gospel to the Gentiles they were strongly opposed by the Jews who were zealous of the Law of Moses and their man-made traditions. Although many Jews also believed the Gospel, most did not. Those who resisted the truth also sought to prevent the apostles from converting Gentiles to the Gospel.

Upon proclaiming that they would henceforth be taking the Gospel to the Gentiles, Paul and Barnabas were expelled from Antioch. Anti-Christ used the Jews to stir up the devout women and chief men of the city to persecute them. Leaving Antioch, Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue at Iconium and gained a large crowd of Jews and Greeks who believed. But again, anti-Christ in the persons of unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and turned them against the believers. So Paul and Barnabas stayed there for a long time, speaking boldly and demonstrating God's power through signs and wonders.

Just as it happened at Antioch, so at Iconium the city was divided, some holding with the unbelieving Jews, and some with the apostles. The anti-Christ elements among the Jews and Gentiles sought to stone Paul and Barnabas, but they became aware of the plot and escaped to Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia. There, and in the regions around, they proclaimed the Gospel.

At Lystra Paul and Barnabas met a different kind of attack by anti-Christ. When Paul spoke healing to a life-long cripple, there was no opposition as before. This time the Gentiles assumed that the gods of Rome had come down to them. They called Barnabas "Jupiter," and Paul they called "Mercury" because he was the chief speaker. Rather than give the God of Heaven the glory they were persuaded to give the gods of Rome the glory, and were ready to make sacrifices to them.

Alarmed, Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes and ran in among the people, explaining that they were mere men, and that

the people should give the glory to the living God who made the heavens and the earth. Even so, they barely restrained the people from offering sacrifices to them.

Anti-Christ blinded the Gentiles, causing them to lean toward their own gods rather than the God of Heaven. He also brought Jews from Antioch and Iconium who convinced the people to turn against the apostles. Whereas they were ready to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas, they were convinced to stone Paul instead:

And there came there certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, carried him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. However, as the disciples stood around him he rose up and came into the city. And the next day he left for Derbe with Barnabas. (Acts 14:19-20)

Anti-Christ knows how to turn the fickle nature of men to his purposes.

It appears as if Paul and Barnabas were able to continue on their journey without opposition for a time. We're told only that they left Lystra for Derbe, then returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the faith of the believers there, and exhorting them to continue in the faith. They also appointed elders in each assembly.

They then went throughout Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga, and Attalia before returning again to Antioch.

At Antioch certain believers in Jesus came down from Judea and taught the brethren that they must be circumcised or they could not be saved. This was the first attempt by anti-Christ to employ the technique of Judaizing to compromise the purity of the faith. But Paul and Barnabas disputed strongly with them, so that it was determined that the question should be taken to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. There it was determined that the Gentile believers should not be pressed into keeping the Law:

Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole assembly, to send chosen men from their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

And they wrote letters by them after this manner: “The apostles and elders and brethren send greetings to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia. Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls by saying you must be circumcised and keep the Law, to whom we gave no such commandment, it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul—men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we have sent Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, from which, if you keep yourselves, you shall do well. Fare you well.”

So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch. And when they had gathered the multitude together they delivered the letter which, when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. And after they had stayed there awhile, they were let go in peace from the brethren to the apostles. Notwithstanding, it still pleased Silas to stay there.

Paul and Barnabas also continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord, with many others also. (Acts 15:22-35)

Paul and Barnabas determined to return to the cities where they had established the Body of Christ to see how they were doing. Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas through Syria and Cilicia. When Paul and Silas came to Derbe and Lystra they met Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess and whose father was a Greek.

There are no recordings of opposition as they continued on their journey until, on their way to Macedonia because of a vision given to Paul of a man beckoning him to come to Macedonia to help them, they came to Philippi. There they met a different kind of opposition from anti-Christ.

At a certain time, as they went to prayer, a girl possessed with a spirit of divination followed them, crying out, “These men are the servants of the most high God, who show the way of salvation to us.”

After several days of this, Paul was grieved and commanded the spirit to come out of her.

Here is an example of how anti-Christ may speak truth, but with an ulterior motive. The people knew this girl had a spirit of divination; her testimony was tainted. People would associate the truth with devils, thus hindering the apostles’ testimony.

After the devil was cast out of the girl her masters who used her for monetary gain turned the city against the apostles, beating them and throwing them into prison. Thus anti-Christ again sought to silence the truth through persecution.

The Book of Acts chronicles the work of Paul and his companions in taking the Gospel to the known world. There we find many different attempts by anti-Christ to thwart the fledgling Gospel through persecution and death of the faithful disciples. History (and tradition) also records how all the apostles with the exception of John were most likely put to death for their testimonies.

James, son of Zebedee: Beheaded in A.D. 44, James was the first of the twelve to be martyred. Acts 12:1-2 records that Herod Agrippa had James executed by the sword. There are no details beyond this, although some traditions state that his remains are in Santiago de Compostela in Spain, considered the third most holy town within Roman Catholicism.

We will see, as we progress through the fates of the apostles, how Roman Catholicism largely usurped claims to the apostles through its fabricated traditions—a ploy by anti-Christ to corrupt the purity of the faith and lay the groundwork for an apostate Christianity.

John, son of Zebedee: This is the John who was exiled to the island of Patmos where he wrote the Book of Revelation. There are no traditions or history about this John being martyred. It is believed that he died of old age in Ephesus around A.D. 100.

Peter: Roman Catholic tradition stemming from the teachings of Origen of Alexandria states that Peter was crucified in Rome in A.D. 64 during the *dies imperii* (anniversary of ascension to the throne) of Emperor Nero. This was some three months after the fire that destroyed Rome, and which Nero blamed on the Christians. It is believed that Peter requested he be crucified upside down because he felt he wasn’t worthy to die in exactly the same manner as the Lord.

There is no empirical historical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. Scripture’s last references to Peter have him in Jerusalem. So while this is a dramatic story, it rests entirely on Roman Catholic tradition, tied to the belief that Peter was the first pope, and thus, had to have been in Rome.

In either case, we see how anti-Christ may have had Peter martyred, or, lacking that, used Peter as a foil to establish the tradition of the papacy. Certainly the latter is true, whether or not Peter was ever actually martyred.

Andrew: Another apostle whose history is largely shaped by tradition, Andrew’s death has two versions. One of the so-called “New Testament Apocrypha,” *The Acts of Andrew*, (ca. third century A.D.) forms the basis for much of the tradition surrounding Andrew’s ministry and death. It has Andrew dying bound, not nailed, to a Latin cross of the type Jesus is said to have died on. But a tradition developed that Andrew was martyred by crucifixion on an X-shaped cross because, like Peter, he did not consider himself worthy to die in exactly the same manner as the Lord. This is believed to have taken place in the city of Patras in Ahaea, on the northern coast of the Peloponnese.

Philip: There are conflicting traditions concerning Philip's death. One has him being crucified upside down in the city of Hierapolis in southern Turkey. It is said that his preaching brought about the conversion of the proconsul's wife which, in turn, brought the wrath of the proconsul upon Philip and Bartholomew, as well as Philip's sister Mariamne. All three were tortured, but Philip and Bartholomew were crucified. It is said that, while crucified, Philip continued to preach, affecting the crowd so much that the people wanted to release both men. Bartholomew was released, but Philip refused to be released, thus consenting to his own martyrdom. Another legend has Philip being martyred by beheading in Hierapolis.

Again, there is no definitive historical evidence for Philip's martyrdom, but there is no reason to doubt that the early Apocryphal writings wouldn't have some basis in truth. Both traditions put his death in Hierapolis; both have him being martyred. **Bartholomew (Nathanael):** As with other apostles, the account of Bartholomew's death is largely based on tradition, some conflicting. He is said to have been beheaded in Albanopolis in Armenia. But a more popular tradition has him being flayed alive and crucified upside down. His death is said to be the result of having converted Polymius, the king of Armenia, to Christianity, prompting Polymius' brother, Astyages, to order Bartholomew's death.

Jude: Armenian tradition places Jude's death by martyrdom about A.D. 65 in Beirut, in the Roman province of Syria. He is said to have been martyred along with Simon Zelotes (the Zealot). But, again, there is no empirical historical evidence for Jude's martyrdom.

Simon Zelotes: One tradition associates Simon Zelotes with Jude who together evangelized Persia, and Armenia after Simon had evangelized Egypt. In Simon's tradition they were martyred in Armenia. Another tradition in Ethiopia is that he was crucified in Samaria. Still another is that he was sawn in half at Suanir, Persia. Other traditions have him being martyred in Iberia or Britain, while yet another has him dying peacefully at Edessa.

Matthew: There is no empirical historical evidence concerning Matthew's death. Some hold to the belief that he died a natural death; others say that he was martyred by being stabbed to death. But neither can be conclusively established.

Thomas: The New Testament apocryphal book, Acts of Thomas (ca. third-century), is the source generally accepted regarding Thomas' ministry and the circumstances of his death. The apocryphal books are regarded as historical, but they have never been accepted as canonical by any mainstream Christian religion. Apart from this source there is no historical account of Matthew's life after the writing of the New Testament books.

It is said that Thomas' ministry was to India. According to the Syriac version of the Acts of Thomas, Masdai, the king at Mylapore, condemned Thomas to death around the year A.D. 72 to appease the Brahmins who opposed the introduction of Christianity into India. His death was by stoning and stabbing with a lance by an angry Brahmin.

James, son of Alphaeus: Often referred to as James the Less, this James was less prominent than James the son of Zebedee. There are many uncertainties surrounding this James' ministry and history, but tradition holds that he was executed by the Jews for violating the Law of Moses. Some historians consider this unlikely since the Jews did not practice execution, and the Roman authorities would not have acquiesced to it. However, contrary to this argument, the Lord Himself was executed by the Romans to appease the Jews.

Matthias: The apostle chosen to replace Judas (Acts 1:26) is also the victim of diverse traditions surrounding his death. Some accounts say that he died peacefully of old age in Jerusalem. One tradition has him being stoned by the Jews at Jerusalem, and then beheaded.

Skeptics dismiss these traditions of martyrdom because there are no secular historical accounts of them. Nor are there any biblical accounts for any other than for James the son of Zebedee. The confusion that surrounds early history can be attributed to faulty intentions on the part of religious traditionalists who fabricate traditions. Unfortunately, even with their supposed good intentions, such fabrications play into the hands of the anti-Christ simply because they call into question the truth of history as it relates to true biblical faith.

Yet there is no reason to doubt that some of the traditions surrounding their deaths are true. Certainly they were met with much opposition by anti-Christ in every land where they took the Gospel. Scripture relates how often the anti-Christ attempted to kill Jesus (eventually succeeding according to the Father's plan), Paul, and others, and how they did manage to kill Stephen and John the Baptist. Those who wrote of the martyrdoms of the other apostles were privy to oral traditions that dated back a couple of generations, and there is no reason to suspect those writers of deliberately falsifying the accounts they received.

Thus ends the account of the apostles and how anti-Christ sought to destroy the faith at its outset. Having failed, anti-Christ was faced with the daunting task of combating the faith for the next 2,000 years in every arena into which the Body of Christ shed the light of the Gospel. That conflict is evidenced in the letters to the assemblies written by Paul, as well as those written by others who exhorted the brethren during the first-century buildup of the Body of Christ.

Although indwelt by the Holy Spirit, many believers in those first-century assemblies had to be taught why and how to submit their wills to the will of God. The flesh is strong and unwilling to die so easily, and the spirit of anti-Christ is always lurking within the flesh of believers to act contrary to righteousness.

This is why Paul had to consistently exhort the brethren to live by the law of love and to submit themselves to godliness at the expense of their own pleasure.

A most notable example is that of the brother in the Corinthian assembly who had taken his father's wife for his own spouse or mistress. The details aren't provided, nor are they

necessarily important. What is important is that Paul had to chastise the Corinthian believers for tolerating that sin. To their credit they dealt with the brother in a way that brought him to repentance.

Another problem that reared its head was the attempt to Judaize the assemblies by some insisting that the Law of Moses must be kept, and that circumcision was required. Still other ways anti-Christ sought to destroy the assemblies was by false brethren bringing in what Peter called damnable heresies (2 Peter 2:1).

Paul had to deal with those who opposed his authority, and others who sought to rule over the assemblies in ungodly ways. The assemblies were often on the verge of schisms that threatened scandal and the unity of the Body. In the world, anti-Christ was devising other ways to keep the heathen in their unsaved condition and to thwart the spreading of the Gospel. His ultimate goal, however, has remained constant—to gather all humanity into a globalist Babel through which he hopes to lift himself above the heights of the clouds. All the major world events that have seen one kingdom after another rise and fall has been to that end. Now, after the Lord had effected the means by which the world would be redeemed—the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world—anti-Christ’s efforts toward globalization would increase exponentially.

Rome, the last of the great kingdoms prophesied through Daniel’s interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, would have to be subordinated for a season in order for those efforts to come to final fruition. But Rome would not go quietly; anti-Christ would continue to use it in his attempts to stamp out the new faith in Jesus Christ. Yet at the same time, the Roman Empire provided the means by which the Gospel could be taken throughout the world. Historian J.M. Roberts attests how Rome was perceived by the early Christians as God’s creation for the benefit of the faith:

...It can be argued that Paul was the real maker of Christianity. Certainly most of the theology of the Christian Church has its roots in his interpretation of Jesus’ teaching. Here there is room only to note that he seized the opportunity presented by a world at peace, protected by a framework of government and law in which men could travel easily and securely, a world in which the widespread Greek language made communication of ideas easy, to launch Christianity on its huge career of expansion. It is not surprising that Christians soon began to think that the Roman empire itself was somehow created by God to make the spreading of the Truth possible. It was divinely intended, some of them thought, to further Christianity. A more sinister reflexion also occurred to some of them as time passed: it was not the Romans, after all, but the Jews who had actually killed Jesus.¹

It wasn’t long before Christian assemblies sprang up in all Roman provinces. And it was tasked to Paul, Peter, Jude, John,

¹ J.M. Roberts, *A Concise History of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 147-148.

Luke, and the writers of the Gospels to bring testimony of Jesus’ finished work on the cross and clarification of the faith, as well as exhortation to live godly and defend the purity of the faith. But two things happened that threatened that purity: 1) as the Gentiles began to outnumber the Jews within the assemblies, the approach to Scripture took a turn away from Hebraic understanding toward Hellenization; 2) a strong desire for organization led to a hierarchical and eventually centralized authority over the originally autonomous assemblies. Both of these developments, we will see, were attempts by anti-Christ to turn faith in Jesus Christ into a religious system largely controlled by men of ambition who would use it for personal gain and/or propagation of their peculiar philosophies. There was also a desire to have preeminence over the people (3 John 9).

Because Christianity was perceived as a sect of Judaism rather than the continuation of the faith once delivered to the saints of old, men following their fleshly instincts soon began to follow the pattern of the synagogue. Thus, assemblies became less and less autonomous communities of believers guided lovingly by a plurality of elders meeting in homes and other non-descript environs, instead evolving into hierarchical institutional gatherings in buildings designed for the institution’s benefit.

As well, heretical sects began to break off from the mainstream of biblical faith, establishing beliefs that challenged the nature of Jesus as the Word of God incarnate. Soon false gospels were being written and attributed to the apostles. These purported to offer insights into the mysteries of God while redefining Jesus as a mystic—a mere man who had attained higher consciousness through adherence to tenets and practices within eastern mysticism.

Gnosticism, which predates Christianity, found among some of its sects an affinity to Jesus, as well as some of His apostles, whom they considered Gnostics. In some Gnostic texts Mary Magdalene was seen as a Gnostic leader superior even to the twelve apostles. Simon Magus (Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8:9-24) is said to have been a Samaritan proto-Gnostic. This Simon is mentioned in several Gnostic texts as one of the leaders of early Gnosticism.

Gnosticism is a form of mysticism that purports to impart esoteric knowledge leading to realization of one’s alleged divine origins. Gnosis is knowledge—spiritual knowledge attained by mystically enlightened human beings. The influence of Gnosticism came into Christianity early on, and has remained in various forms over the centuries. It is the basis for belief in divine principles which, if learned and applied, will elevate the believer to a state of spiritual maturity that will give him power over the physical and spiritual worlds.

It would be some 100 years before the Gnostic “gospels” would be written, but we will see as we progress how Gnosticism is at the heart of many of today’s false teachings.

At the same time anti-Christ was employing Gnosticism, Hellenization, and Judaizing to wreak havoc upon the assemblies internally, externally the assemblies were suffering persecution from the world.

Although the Roman world afforded the Gospel easy inroads into the nations, the empire began to perceive Christianity as a threat to its stability which rested largely on the belief in the divinity of the emperor. The pantheon of Roman gods was under attack by the proclaiming of the Gospel which insisted that there is only one God, and that the way to Him is only through His Son, Jesus Christ.

It wasn't long before persecution of the most horrific kind was instituted by the Romans against Christians. The first imperially supervised persecution of Christians within the Roman Empire began with Nero (37-68). When in A.D. 64 a great fire broke out in Rome, destroying much of the city, Nero came under suspicion by Roman historian Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus. Suetonius accused Nero of playing the lyre and singing the "Sack of Illium" during the fires. Tacitus stated that "to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace."

Nero's persecution of Christians was merely one of anti-Christ's attempts to stamp out the faith. Nor was it the worst under the Roman Empire. As time passed succeeding emperors would devise ever more cruel ways to dispose of the hated Christians.

As Christianity is spreading throughout the Roman Empire, Buddhism also expands, reaching China from central Asia and India around A.D. 60. The spiritual darkness that enveloped the world was just beginning to be pushed aside by the light of God's Word. Anti-Christ still held sway over the minds of the vast majority of men and women.



When the year 100 A.D. turned, it was not as huge a deal as some may think. For starters, the world, including the Body of Christ, was not yet basing its calendar on the birthdate of Jesus. In effect for the known world at that time was the Julian calendar which began in 45 B.C. It was a revision of the Roman calendar under Julius Caesar, converting from a lunar to a solar calendric system. The old Roman calendar had undergone a number of revisions from the time of the founding of Rome to Julius Caesar. It would be over one-and-one-half millennia before the Julian calendar would be replaced by the Gregorian calendar which is used virtually worldwide today.

The difference between the Julian and Gregorian calendars is not so significant that it would throw off the dating of historical events by too large a margin. The purpose of the change under Pope Gregory XIII in 1582 was to correct the inaccuracy of the Julian calendar that gained one day every 134 years. By 1582 it was 10 days out of sync with the solar cycles, throwing off the Roman Catholic celebration of Easter as it related to the spring equinox.

Yet over 1,000 years prior to Gregory XIII a Roman Catholic monk by the name of Dionysius Exiguus (“Dennis the Small, meaning “humble”), residing in Rome, developed the Anno Domini year numbering while calculating the date for Easter. He was no obscure figure, but was a well-educated member of the Roman Curia, the administrative arm of the papacy. Dionysius translated hundreds of ecclesiastical canons, including the decrees of the councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Chalcedon and Sardis. His writings still guide Roman Catholic administrations.

We may visit this issue again when we deal with the 6th and 16th centuries A.D. I mention this now merely to illustrate that to the Roman world the year that we know as A.D. 100 was just another year—ca. 853 A.U.C. (*Ab Urbe Condita*, “from the foundation of the city” [Rome]), used mostly by modern historians to relate events from 753 B.C., the traditional dating of the founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus. The ancient Romans dated their years according to the times of emperors and/or the two consuls who reigned at a given time.

So the year A.D. 100 held no particular importance to the people living at the time. It is only since the A.D. dating system that centuries and millennia have held much importance. For some reason mankind attaches mystical properties to the turning of centuries and millennia, even though dating has largely been arbitrary according to specific civilizations. (The Hebrew calendar is probably the only exception, likely used from before the time of Moses and based on the assumed time of the creation of Adam.) History records expectations of cataclysmic occurrences—the end of the world, doomsday, natural disasters, societal breakdown, and other apocalyptic scenarios. Much of this is based on superstition surrounding astrological calculations. The fact that man’s calendars have always been based not only on astronomical observations but also on astrological assumptions most likely plays a part in these unfounded fears. That alone is sufficient evidence of anti-Christ’s imposition of pagan influences in the world’s functioning. What is of concern is that Christianity—particularly influenced by Roman Catholicism and its inheritance of the Roman pagan religio-political system—also functions largely on superstition.

By the time one hundred years had passed from the estimated date of the Lord’s birth, superstition had increased within the assemblies that had been birthed through the work of the apostles and their successors. The simplicity of faith in Christ had already begun to give way to the religious spirit that suggested the only way to express that faith was through ritual and submission to hierarchical authority.

The deception started slowly, of course. But its growth would be exponential, increasing rapidly over time until it came to dominate the vast majority of those who claimed to believe in Jesus. Before we examine how the faith fared during this time we will turn our attention to the world at large.

The early part of the second century saw Rome at its peak under Emperor Trajan who extended the empire further to the Middle East. Roman trading posts reached from the southwest coast of India to the southern edge of the Sahara. Human industriousness took strides that saw inventiveness begin to increase. In A.D. 100, Italy became the first country to use

under-the-floor heating, and Hero of Alexandria developed a machine that demonstrated the power of steam; In 105 the Chinese first used paper made of vegetable fibers; around 120 the Chinese scientist, Chang Heng, invented the seismograph to record the strength of earthquakes; In 122 the Roman emperor Hadrian built Hadrian's Wall to stop the Picts of Scotland from invading Britain.

PERSECUTION OF BELIEVERS

In spite of the Gospel's reach into virtually the entire known world, anti-Christ still held sway over the vast majority of mankind which he used to oppose the Gospel wherever it went. Persecution of Christians continued under the Roman Empire, but it was an on-again-off-again affair depending upon who was emperor at the time. Vespasian, late in the first century, was not inclined to persecute the Jews and Christians for failing to worship the Roman gods, but his son Trajan, who reigned from 98 to 117, did so. Although regarded by Medieval Christian theologians as a virtuous pagan, and counted by historian Edward Gibbon as the second among Rome's "Five Good Emperors," Trajan declared Christianity illegal and consented to persecution of Christians. His edict stated that Christians were not to be sought out, but punished if the charge against them of being Christians was proven. Following is Trajan's reply to Pliny the Younger's letter (10.96) in which Pliny as governor of Bithynia et Pontus province in 110 described his execution and other forms of persecution of Christians:

"You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it, that is, by worshiping our gods...shall obtain pardon through repentance." (Pliny the Younger, Letters 10.97)

The Roman emperors were charged with protecting the culture of Rome, which included their pantheon of gods. Anti-Christ used this in an attempt to stamp out faith in Jesus. But it wasn't only the emperors who were moved to destroy faith in Jesus. Eusebius records in his *Ecclesiastical History* (5.1.7) that during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180) civilian mobs, often mobilized by religious sects, assaulted, robbed and stoned Christians. During Marcus Aurelius' tenure there occurred the Persecution in Lyon, Gaul (ancient France), where Christians were forbidden from public areas including the marketplaces. Mobs attacked the Christians, and the authorities imprisoned them, eventually killing all but those who recanted.

Not all executions were instigated by Roman authorities or mobs. Many early Christians, thinking they would obtain a better resurrection, actually sought to be put to death for their faith, prompting Roman authorities to try hard to avoid Christians. In 185 the proconsul of Asia, Arrius Antoninus, was approached by a group of Christians who demanded to be executed. The proconsul obliged some of them and sent the rest away, saying

that if they wanted to kill themselves there was plenty of rope available or cliffs from which they could jump off.¹

Nor was it solely through the Roman imperial system that anti-Christ persecuted Christians unto death. Pagan and Jewish religious leaders of all stripes were jealous of their positions of authority and control over the masses. They were not inclined to surrender themselves or their constituents to what they considered a new religion invading their territory. Persecution continued increasing the more the Gospel went forth. By the turn of the century all the original twelve apostles, with the possible exception of John, had fallen asleep in the Lord, most of them martyred for the faith. It was left to those whom they entrusted with the souls of the saints to be faithful to the call. Some discharged their duties admirably; others failed, succumbing to the seduction of anti-Christ who often came as an angel of light, his ministers appearing as ministers of righteousness.

We should pause for a moment to remind our readers that the history of anti-Christ is a record of conflict between Satan and his minions against the creator God, YHWH, and His saints and angels. Every nation and territory has over it spiritual entities that work on behalf of either side. We read in Daniel 10 of how there are superior principalities who rule over the major kingdoms of the world. Daniel records a vision in which he saw a heavenly visitor who had come in response to Daniel's desire to understand the things of God. This visitor spoke of two spiritual principalities—the prince of Persia who was to give way to the prince of Greece. Some believe this visitor was the angel Gabriel; others say He was the pre-incarnate Son of God, Jesus (cp. Rev. 1:12-16). In any case, this visitor revealed that there are indeed principalities that rule in the heavens, and that there is warfare among them for dominion over the earthly kingdoms.

We are reminded of Paul's words to the Ephesians that we do not struggle against men, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual evil in high places (Eph. 6:12).

The objective of Anti-Christ is to unite all mankind in rebellion against the creator God, YHWH. That has been the purpose in the anti-Christ spirit inspiring man to attempt to conquer the world. Those men did it for their own glory, unaware of the spiritual forces directing them. But each has succeeded in turn because God's time for the end of this age has not yet come. When it does come the final kingdom of the Anti-Christ—the revived final kingdom of Daniel's vision—will succeed in uniting mankind to oppose the Lord when He returns.

In contrast, the Lord has deigned that His people should be united in their affection for Him and for one another. It is only within the Kingdom of Heaven that men can truly be united regardless of race or national origin. Even the United States of America, the greatest attempt of man to achieve unity, has failed to bring true unity. This is because true unity can come only through the spirit; the flesh cannot achieve it. This is why the final empire will also fail; it will be a mixture of iron and clay (Dan. 2:33-45) which cannot adhere. It will be destroyed by the Kingdom of Heaven with the coming of the Lord (Rev. 11:15).

For believers on earth our goal in fellowship must be unity in the bonds of love. That is the Lord's command, and for good reason. It is the only way we can stand in the face of the evil that threatens to destroy us as representatives of our Lord's Kingdom.

What has escaped so many believers in Jesus is that our time on this earth is a time of warfare against these spiritual forces of anti-Christ. Unless we comprehend that truth we will be ineffective for the Kingdom of God, and many will live lives of spiritual defeat and shipwrecked faith. The enemy targets us in our assemblies, attempting to create division in order to render us powerless against his wiles. Without the love that the Lord commands, we will succumb to faithlessness.

This is the primary message behind the letters from the apostles to the assemblies: love one another; stand firm for the Kingdom of Heaven; do not give in to factions; let no one have preeminence except to esteem others better than ourselves.

And this is how faithless Christians, either oblivious of this truth or unwilling to face it, from the very beginning began to surrender spiritual ground to the anti-Christ. The further time passed from the apostles' direct influence, the further away from the truth of God's Word and from the purity of the faith the assemblies began to stray.

Yet in the midst of persecution, the influences of Gnostic and Ebionite heresies and other attempts by anti-Christ to destroy faith in the Messiah, there remained faithful brethren, many of whom gave their lives for the faith.

Here, some two millennia from the time of Jesus, we tend to look upon the early assemblies as models of spiritual perfection, loving brotherhood and pure faith. Yet if the apostles had to constantly guard the assemblies and issue letters of conviction and correction, would we expect the assemblies to be more perfect upon the apostles' deaths? Not if the anti-Christ spirit that had begun to invade the assemblies at their inception could help it.

So we see in the second century an increase in the spiritual warfare that was now waged, not merely for the kingdoms of the world, but for the Kingdom of Heaven—the souls of the saints who were charged with manifesting the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Yet God has never been without knowledge and understanding of that struggle and how even regenerate men must continually wage warfare against their own flesh which would hamper them, let alone against the world and the devil.

Man's flesh tempts him to sin by inordinate desire for the things that satisfy the flesh—everything from illicit sex, alcohol, drugs, even good things like food that may be used to feed the sin of gluttony, or comforts that may cause him to become lazy, even slothful.

The world tempts man with promises of riches, power and esteem in the sight of others.

The devil tempts man through vain philosophies and deceit, even within the framework of the true faith.

All these must be overcome if we are to remain faithful to the Lord and productive in serving Him. Unfortunately, the history of Christianity is more a history of failure in all these areas than it is a history of triumph. But for our Father's help

through His Holy Spirit guiding us by His written Word we would have no chance of succeeding.

So we see in the second century a continuation of the onslaught by anti-Christ to destroy the Gospel. And men both inside and outside the Body of Christ would be complicit in that plot.

On the one hand the Jews considered the followers of Jesus, both Jew and Gentile, as aliens to their religion that had devolved into rabbinical Judaism. And rightly so they considered them thus. After all, Jesus' greatest conflicts in His earthly ministry came at the hand of the religious leaders of the Jews. By the time He appeared, the faith of Abraham and the Law of Moses had been so convoluted by the traditions of the Jews that it was hardly recognizable to them. When Jesus brought clarity to them, only a minority from among the Jews believed in Him, and many of them eventually fell away when His sayings became too hard for them. The hatred that followed Jesus and His apostles did not abate during the second century.

Yet even as late as the Bar Kokhba Revolt (A.D. 132-136), Messianic Jews were still considered a minor sect of Judaism because of their roots in the Old Covenant. Most historians attribute the schism between the rabbinic Jews and Messianic Jews to Simon bar Kokhba being acclaimed as the Messiah who would restore Israel's glory. The Messianic Jews knew that Jesus is the Messiah, and had to make a clean break from the rest of Jewry rather than follow the masses that championed bar Kokhba.

Although bar Kokhba succeeded in establishing independent Jewish rule over parts of Judea for over two years, the Roman army eventually crushed the rebellion and barred Jews from Jerusalem, allowing them access only to celebrate Tisha B'Av—the ninth day of the month Av commemorating the destruction of both the first and second temples.

Now that the Jews again possess Jerusalem even in their current state of unbelief, the stage is set for the Lord's return. The only thing that remains is for the man of sin, the son of perdition, also called the Anti-Christ, to be revealed (2 Thess. 2:1-3).

The Jewish revolts of the second century brought much suffering upon the Jews. The minor victories they attained and the constant rebellion against Roman rule caused the emperor Hadrian to wage a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Jews. He prohibited the Hebrew calendar to be used, and did not allow the Jews to function under the Law of Moses. Many Judaic scholars were executed, and the sacred scroll, the Torah, was burned. He erected two statues where the temple sanctuary had formerly stood—one of Jupiter, and another of himself. To complete the cleansing he replaced the names of Judaea and Israel with Syria Palaestina after the Philistines.

From the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 until the Six-Day War in 1967 when Israel annexed East Jerusalem, Jerusalem has been in the hands of anti-Christ pagan rulers with the exception of bar Kokhba's brief victory (and even bar Kokhba could be named among the anti-Christ). And no wonder. Anti-Christ knows that the prophecies pertaining to the Lord's Second Coming clearly reveal that the Jews would possess Jerusalem at the time. The prophecy recorded in Luke 21:12-24

relates to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 until the coming of the Lord. It states that Jerusalem would be trodden underfoot by the Gentiles until the time of the Gentiles has been completed. For some two millennia anti-Christ has managed to prevent the Jews from being placed in that position, rightly supposing that as long as the Jews did not possess Jerusalem Christ cannot return without failing His own prophecies.

Anti-Christ could be seen on both sides of the Jewish revolt against the Romans. He stirred up the unbelieving Jews to create the conditions that would bring down the wrath of the Roman Empire upon them, resulting in the Gentiles occupying Jerusalem for some 2,000 years. He stirred up the Roman emperors to try to wipe out the Jewish nation, which would effectively prevent the redemption of Israel and the return of the true Messiah. All the while Christians were being persecuted from both sides in anti-Christ's campaign against the Gospel.

The pagan world was no less culpable than the Jews in attempting to destroy the Gospel. It, too, sought to destroy faith in Christ, and it was through the introduction of significant heresies that the assemblies faced the most insidious threat to their faith.

HERESIES OF THE SECOND CENTURY

The second century saw the faith become decentralized from Jerusalem where the apostles first guided the fledgling community of believers in Jesus. It was the era of what modern theologians call the "Apostolic Fathers," who are said to have been students of the original twelve apostles. Prominent among these was Ignatius of Antioch, also known as Theophorus ("God-bearer") (ca. 35 B.C. - A.D. 108). Ignatius is considered the progenitor of sacramentalism and hierarchical ecclesiology, applying the word "bishop" to the Greek term *episkopou* (1Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:7). Whereas the simple application of the word was one of "overseer," and the practice of overseeing was administered by a plurality of elders, Ignatius' concept of bishop was that of one possessing hierarchical, even monarchical authority. This would devolve into the clergy-laity model that has permeated Christianity from that time until today. It would be two more centuries before formal institutionalism via Roman Catholicism would enshrine the title "bishop" as representative of a ruling class within Christianity. In A.D. 115, while being taken to Rome for his execution, Ignatius wrote letters to various assemblies stressing the importance of the bishop as indispensable, and whose authority was absolute.

In spite of this shortcoming on the part of Ignatius, he went to his death for his faith, and never denied Christ. It may be said that his purpose largely rested on a desire to combat other serious heresies that were threatening the faith.

A contemporary of Ignatius, Polycarp, who was named bishop of Smyrna, assumed the authoritarian role that Ignatius promoted. In A.D. 156 Polycarp, like Ignatius, was also martyred for his faith.

Lest we judge these men too harshly we must also consider their zeal in combating other serious heresies that began springing up during their time. Among those promoting what would come to be called heretical teachings were Marcion of Sinope,

Valentinus, Montanus, Basilides, Carpocrates, Tatian, and others lesser-known.

Marcion of Sinope (ca. 85-160) was said by Hippolytus to be the son of the bishop of Sinope in Pontus. Around the middle of the second century he developed his particular theology which became known as Marcionism. Marcion found himself in conflict with the "bishops" of Rome who were even then beginning to assume authority over the assemblies at large, and was eventually excommunicated by them.

Central to Marcionism was a dualist system of belief based on the teaching that the God of the Torah was not the same God Jesus proclaimed as His Father. In his *Antitheses*, he contrasted what he called the "Demiurge" of the Old Testament with the heavenly Father of the New Testament. Marcion believed that Jesus' teachings of love and mercy were incompatible with the actions of the God of the Torah who Marcion believed was a jealous tribal deity of the Jews, and whose Law was based on reciprocal justice. Marcion failed to see the love and mercy of YHWH within the teachings of the prophets.

Additionally, Marcion taught that Jesus was the son of the heavenly Father, but he held a docetic understanding of the Lord's incarnation. That is, he believed Jesus' body to be merely an imitation of a material body—an illusion—a belief held by Gnostics. Yet he also believed that Jesus paid the price for mankind's sins through His crucifixion and death.

Valentinus (ca. 100-ca. 160) founded a school in Rome that taught a form of Christian Gnosticism. He was said to be a candidate for bishop in Rome but started his own sect when another was selected.

Valentinus developed a theology that espoused three distinct groups of people—spiritual, psychical, and material. Only his followers were considered of a spiritual nature, able to receive the knowledge (gnosis) that would allow them to return to the divine Pleroma—the totality of the divine nature. (This is similar to the Mormon doctrine of attainable godhood.) The psychical people (unenlightened Christians) would attain a lesser form of salvation; those of a material nature (pagans and Jews) were doomed to perish.

The extent of these fates is not fully understood due to the scant physical remains of Valentinus' writings. Most of what is known of his teachings is found in the writings of his disciples and his opponents.

The teachings of Marcion and Valentinus fell within the scope of Gnosticism.

Montanus developed a theology called by his disciples "New Prophecy." He held to the basic tenets of Christianity, but because of his emphasis on ongoing revelation and prophecy outside the parameters of the Scriptures he was regarded as a heretic. He and his two female colleagues, Prisca and Maximilla, claimed to receive direct revelations from the Holy Spirit, and spoke in ecstatic trances. Montanus would often speak as an oracle of God, sometimes in the first person as God. This led some to misunderstand him as claiming to be God. (This would be akin to several of today's word-faith and new wave doctrines.)

Montanus' New Prophecy enjoyed the endorsement of Tertullian, famous for his defense of the Trinitarian doctrine in his *Against Praxeas*. Tertullian is known as "the father of Latin Christianity" and "the founder of Western theology" which developed into the Latin Rite of Roman Catholicism.

In all these teachings, and others, we see many attempts by anti-Christ to subvert the purity of faith in Jesus. It was because of such diabolical attempts to subvert the faith that well-meaning men were impelled toward developing a systematized set of beliefs that became the foundation for "orthodox Christianity." This eventually developed into the establishment of church law and the structuring of Roman Catholicism which, because of its imperial power and military might, went virtually unchallenged by any large segment of Christianity until the Protestant Reformation.

So we see how anti-Christ first introduces spiritual error, laying the groundwork for correction—which correction itself becomes spiritual error through its overreaction to the original spiritual error.

It was a desire to correct such serious errors that the earliest so-called "Church Fathers" came to replace the apostles as the source for spiritual truth. These included Ignatius of Antioch, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and Polycarp. To establish the authority of the Roman Church a lineage of bishops who operated in Rome was developed into what the Roman Catholic Church offers as a historical link to Peter as the first pope.

There is no scriptural or historical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome, and the earliest records trace back to a list of Roman bishops that existed in the time of Pope Eleutherus (ca. 174-189). Yet the Roman Catholic Church developed its papal lineage beginning with Peter and continuing through the first and second centuries by the following:

Linus (67-76); Anacletus (76-88); Clement I (88-97); Evaristus (97-105); Alexander I (105-115); Sixtus (115-125); Telesphorus (125-136); Hyginus (136-140); Pius I (140-155); Anicetus (155-166); Soter (166-175); Eleutherius (175-189); Victor I (189-199).

No one should doubt that these were pious men who believed they had the responsibility to preserve the faith against heresies. But what was developing was a different heresy—a hierarchical system of fallible men who took it upon themselves to be the spiritual authority over the Lord's people. This was also a time of persecution and turmoil that threatened the stability of the assemblies and the lives of the saints. Men of learning within the assemblies were expected to give guidance and to help ensure that no one would be found guilty of denying Christ or introducing teachings counter to the accepted orthodoxy. But one evil was being replaced by another, far more insidious, evil that would keep much of Christianity in the dark and subject to the authoritarian imperial rule of the popes up to this present time. Thus the role of Shepherd of the *ecclesia* would eventually be passed from Jesus to the pope of Rome as the "Vicar of Christ" on earth. But that is for another installment of this series.

The mistake made by Roman Catholicism and passed to the churches today through its daughters, the Protestant churches and their offspring, is assuming the succession of authority

passed from the apostles to those immediately after them simply because they were contemporaries. If one had become a disciple of Jesus through the apostle Paul, for example, it was assumed that one had the mantle of apostolic authority passed to him, particularly if that one were educated and able to write his theological musings to garner a following.

As a result, the Scriptures have largely been regarded as merely a starting point for God's revelation; now we have the authoritarian pronouncements of bishops, priests, pastors, and other clergy to tell us what is truth.

These are also from the spirit of anti-Christ.

ⁱ Droge, A.J. and Tabor, J.D. (1992:136) *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom Among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (Harper, San Francisco.)



The third century AD saw much turmoil as Anti-Christ continued his persecution of believers in Jesus. The Jews were largely left alone within the Roman Empire even though they did not engage in emperor worship and the worship of the Roman Pantheon. Christians who did not submit to the pagan worship of Rome did not escape so easily. Anti-Christ busied himself with trying to stamp out this ever-growing faith in Christ among the pagan populations of the world. The rest of the nations remained largely enslaved to their heathen gods and continued to war with one another.

Numerous successions to the emperor's throne in Rome ended with murder, several by the emperors' own troops due to discontent with defeats or other causes.

Under the Roman emperor Septimius Severus (146-211), the third century began with severe persecution of Christians.¹ Upholding his predecessors' earlier rulings prohibiting conversion to Christianity, Severus continued the tactic of attacking the leadership of the growing faith community. Christianity's widespread departure from a plurality of elders within the assemblies to the election of primary authorities called "bishops" made it easier for the anti-Christ forces of Rome to target the assemblies within the empire.

Some of those bishops had to flee to avoid capture as persecution under Severus reached Egypt. This illustrates a major problem with the clergy-laity system under which the vast majority of assemblies called "churches" operate: strike the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered. Anti-Christ knows well how to employ this tactic.

All departures from the truth of God's Word are anti-Christ in nature. In this case, Anti-Christ fomented the clergy-laity model, then used it to weaken the assemblies by attacking the clergy. Unfortunately, the vast majority of Christians living under clergy-laity systems throughout the centuries have not recognized the unscriptural nature of that model. Most Christians continue

¹ The word "severe" comes from the Latin, *severus*, coinciding with the name of this Roman emperor. The *Online Etymology Dictionary* says it possibly combines two Latin words, *se vero*, "without kindness."

to subject themselves to it. Even today, wherever the faith is attacked the first to suffer are the clergy.

Those who recognize this chink in the armor of Christianity lament the persecution of pastors and other clergymen, and we must admire them for their willingness to suffer for the faith. Many have paid the ultimate price to protect the Lord's flocks over which they took charge. In some countries devout men take leadership fully aware that they will be the primary targets for persecution. In spite of the unscriptural nature of the clergy-laity system, it's very likely that the Lord has allowed that system to exist in order to protect the congregations at large even though it means suffering by their pastors.

Yet the nobility of such leaders does not fully offset the problems created by the clergy-laity system. It was bound to devolve into authoritarianism simply because of the sin nature of men who seek power over others, and the natural tendency of the average person to look for leadership from others rather than rely upon the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth.

Upon the death of the original apostles, the Anti-Christ saw the opportunity for inroads into leadership over believers in Christ. There was no longer a central authority to which they could go for instruction, and copies of the Gospels and letters they left behind were few and far between. The vast majority of believers were from among the poor and illiterate. In the minds of many the faith was ill-defined. This created fertile ground for men of wealth and education to gain ascendancy within the assemblies and to establish an ungodly authoritarianism. The third century saw strong growth of that authoritarianism as power over the assemblies within the Roman Empire became more and more centralized.

The question arises why the Lord would allow His sheep to come under that authoritarianism. As we continue in this series (if the Lord is willing) we will find that, in spite of the evils that came from it, the Lord used it to accomplish many of His purposes. We must not forget that the Lord uses evil to test His people, and that from the beginning of man's history He has

always retained a small remnant who remained true to His Word and who will inherit His coming Kingdom on the earth.

Just as the Jews fell victim to the religious leaders who usurped power over them, yet a remnant remained, those who have called themselves Christians over the past two thousand years have largely fallen victim to the religious leaders who have usurped power over them. Yet a remnant has remained, and will remain until the Lord returns.

The Jews fell victim to a religious system called “Judaism”—a melding of pagan traditions and the Hebrew Scriptures; Christians fell victim to a religious system called “Christianity”—a melding of Greek pagan philosophy with the writings of the apostles, and with a smaller reliance on the Hebrew Scriptures.

Greek philosophy began to be melded with Scripture to some degree even during the first century, continuing through the second century. The third century saw the Hellenizing of the faith become more aggressive to the point of changing significantly the way in which Christians would from then on understand much of Scripture. In attempts to distance the Body of Christ from its Hebrew roots, partly as a response to the Judaizing of the faith by those insisting on placing it back under the Mosaic Law, some of the bishops began to instill Greek elements of philosophy into their teachings. These bishops became known as “the Church Fathers”² who developed a new discipline based on the integration of Greek philosophy with faith. That new discipline became known as “theology,” and its educated proponents were called “theologians.” It wasn’t long before the theologians became more authoritative in the minds of Christians than the original apostles had been in their day.

Theology is, and has always been, largely anti-Christ because, due to the influence of the “Church Fathers,” it is based mostly on the Greek and Latin philosophies integrated into the institutions that collectively became known as “the Church.” As well, there have developed over the centuries various schools of theology that are at odds with one another (and with Scripture) in many respects. Theologians and clergy learn specific religious traditions according to the particular school of theology under which they study. Each school of theology paints the faith in the light of the theological philosophy that guides it. Anti-Christ has developed many schools of Christian theology started by, and attended by, people whose noble intentions are misdirected into belief systems that pervert Scripture to a lesser or greater degree.

Space does not allow for exhaustive treatment of the subject, so in this installment of our series on the history of Anti-Christ we will deal only briefly with those theologians and Church

Fathers whose influence spanned the third century. I suggest our readers delve further into this subject on their own in order to understand some of the Greek and Latin philosophy that has influenced the teachers who, in turn, may have influenced them. We will see how subtly Anti-Christ has perverted the religious thinking of Christians during that time and afterward.

I must state that although I am focusing on the anti-Christ aspects of these “Church Fathers,” not everything they taught was error. In some cases they came to the defense of some crucial doctrines of the faith, and some paid the ultimate price of martyrdom for their faith. Yet in spite of the noble character displayed in some cases, we cannot ignore the truth that these Church Fathers integrated Greek and Latin philosophy into their teachings, resulting in confusion and the diminishing of the true Gospel of the Kingdom that Jesus commanded His disciples to proclaim. That philosophical integrationism would spawn the great apostasy known as Roman Catholicism.

This was also a time when power struggles increased among the newly formed clergy class. Even before Constantine would later solidify the central authority of the churches in Rome, the bishop of Rome was gaining ascendancy as the primary bishop within the Roman Empire, and was even referred to as “the pope,” or “father” of all the faithful. Yet we find that the real power over Christian thought came from outside of Rome as the Church Fathers developed a hybrid pagan/Christian belief system.

Most came from Egypt, which has historically been one of Israel’s greatest enemies. This fact may have played a large part in the developing anti-Semitism among early believers.

THE GREEK FATHERS

Although those considered among the Greek “Church Fathers” were not truly Greek, they wrote in Greek and were influenced by Greek philosophy which they melded with their understanding of Scripture. Short treatises on the two Greek Fathers of the third century follow.

Clement of Alexandria

Titus Flavius Clemens (150-215?) was the second known leader of the catechetical school of Alexandria in Egypt. His birthplace is unknown, but he was the son of wealthy pagans. He was foremost in synthesizing Greek philosophy with Christian teachings, and attempted to mediate Gnostics and Christians. A devotee of Plato, Clement developed a form of Christian Platonism, suggesting that the goal of Christian life is deification, identifying with Plato’s idea of assimilation into God. Having come from a wealthy pagan upbringing, Clement referenced thousands of quotations from pagan sources in his theological writings.

Although Clement wrote most of his theological treatises during the latter part of the second century, his doctrines became most accepted during the third century as his students promoted them in attempts to further define the faith according to the anti-Christ Greek philosophical school of thought.

Origen

One of Clement’s most famous students was Origen Adamantius (184?-254?), an Alexandrian scholar and theologian,

² The title “Church Fathers” is apt because these men begat the institutionalism that formed the basis for “the Church” (Gr., *kyriake oikia*: “the Lord’s House”), as opposed to the true *ecclesia* (the called out, or assembly of believers). God does not dwell in temples (church buildings and “sanctuaries”) made by hands (Acts 7:48; 17:24), but in the bodies of His called out people. The only true Father of the Body of Christ is our Heavenly Father, although Jesus could be called the Father of the New Covenant (this could be one reason He is called “the Everlasting Father” in Isaiah 9:6). If any men were to be called the “Fathers of the Faith,” as opposed to “Fathers of the Church,” they would have to be the original apostles who walked with the Lord, not these come-lately philosophical integrationists. However, because “the Church” refers to the institutionalization of the faith and to the buildings that house them, it’s not altogether inaccurate to call these men “Church Fathers.”

another of the Church Fathers from the Greek school who was Egyptian by birth, but to Christian parents. His father, Leonides, was a man of means, but when he was martyred under the persecution of Severus, his family became impoverished. Origen came under the protection of a wealthy woman for a time, and was able to muster some possessions including an extensive library of Greek philosophy.

Origen is considered the first systematic theologian and philosopher of the Christian Church. In 203 Origen succeeded Clement as leader of the catechetical school of Alexandria. Among other theological/philosophical writings, Origen wrote *De Principiis* (*On First Principles*), what some consider the seminal work of Christian Neoplatonism. Neoplatonism developed from Hellenistic syncretism and spawned movements such as Gnosticism and Hermeticism. Yet a dichotomy existed in that Origen opposed Gnosticism as a philosophy. He did, however, admire Gnosticism's system for reaching others with one's philosophy.

Hermeticism is the basis for much Western esoteric tradition, incorporating three primary disciplines: alchemy, astrology (the operation of the Moon), and Theurgy (the operation of the stars). Neoplatonism can be found as an undercurrent in such occult traditions as Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism, both of which have ties to ancient Christianity through the Hellenization of the faith.

So although Origen did take a strong stand for the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and opposed much pagan thought, his pagan philosophical background influenced much of his thinking in producing his syncretistic melding of Scripture with pagan philosophy.

Origen taught the preexistence of souls, and that, in the end, all beings, including perhaps even Satan, will be reconciled to God. However, his position on this belief (called *apokatastasis*—"restitution") seemed to vary in different writings. In some cases he stated strongly a case for universalism; in other cases he stated just as strongly that only those who choose God and live according to the virtues of God will enter into Heaven.

Origen's *On First Principles* begins by laying the basis for his understanding of a divine hierarchical triad, or "Trinity." Briefly, Origen posits that the God and Father, who holds the universe together, is superior to all beings; the Son is less than the Father but superior to all other creatures; the Holy Spirit is still less than the Son and lives only within the saints. This theory, called subordinationism, asserts that the Son and the Holy Spirit are subordinate to God the Father not only in position, but in being and nature. The difference between Origen's theory and that of Arianism is that Origen believed that the Son and the Holy Spirit emanated from the Father, and Arianism considered the Son to be a created being. The dispute was settled in the fourth century with the doctrine of the Trinity, which we will address in the next installment of this series.

Origen adopted a rigid ascetic lifestyle, no doubt influenced by the asceticism of various Greek religious sects that demanded purity of life for priests who would offer sacrifices to their gods. According to Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, Origen's asceticism was so severe that he had himself castrated in keeping

with a literal application of Matthew 19:12, which states that there are some who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The asceticism of early Christianity, adapted from Greek and other forms of asceticism, formed the basis for the establishment of monastic communities, and the Roman Catholic religious orders of priests and nuns which would come later.

Other Greek Fathers would be influential during the fourth through eighth centuries in developing Christian doctrine and combating heresies (and perceived heresies) that would arise as struggles for supremacy over an increasingly centralized "church" ensued.

THE LATIN FATHERS

The Latin Fathers are early Christian theologians who wrote in Latin. They continued the clergy-laity model and worked to refine it. Although called the Latin Fathers, their philosophical education was largely based on the Greek tradition, and further contributed to the Hellenization of the faith.

Tertullian

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullian (ca. 160-ca. 225), the son of a Roman centurion, was converted to Christianity a few years prior to the beginning of the third century. He wrote prolifically on theology and apologetics, and promoted asceticism in line with many of the Church Fathers' views on the evil nature of the physical realm, particularly man's flesh. Although Tertullian's and others' understanding of the fallen nature of man was correct, their adoption of asceticism was an overreaction, and intruded greatly on the individual believer's freedom in Christ.

In keeping with his moral rigorism and stand against worldliness, in his later life Tertullian joined the Montanists, a sect that engaged in mystical practices and alleged prophetic utterances by adherents while in a trance (see Part XVII of this series).

Despite his shortcomings Tertullian offered strong resistance to philosophical integrationism. In his writing on *Heretics*, he correctly stated that "philosophy is the material of the world's wisdom, the rash interpreter of the nature and dispensation of God." Charging that heresies are instigated by philosophy, he asked what Athens has to do with Jerusalem, and what the Academy has to do with the Church.

Because of this he has been falsely charged over the centuries as epitomizing the "anti-intellectualism" of the early Church, this in spite of being highly intellectual himself. This charge is an example of how the anti-Christ spirit within the churches has consistently maligned those who object to the influences of the world's philosophies within the Body of Christ.

Yet in spite of his polemic against Greek philosophy Tertullian did integrate Greek thought into his teachings. Thus he represents some of the best and some of the worst among the theologians that arose during the early centuries of faith in Jesus Christ.

Cyprian of Carthage

Thascius Caecilius Cyprianus was born of pagan parents sometime during the early third century. He was known as a

prominent trial lawyer and teacher of rhetoric after the Greek philosophical schools. In the early days of his conversion to Christianity Cyprian was influenced by the writings of Tertullian, prompting him to write *Epistola ad Donatum de gratia Dei* ("Letter to Donatus concerning God's Grace") and the *Testimoniorum adversus Judaeos* ("A Testimony against the Jews"). An apology against the Hebrew roots of the faith, this latter work fueled the anti-Semitism that festered under the continued influence of the Anti-Christ.

Another ploy of Anti-Christ has been to place new converts in positions of authority over the saints. In this case, Cyprian, who was baptized sometime between 245 and 248, was "ordained" a deacon, and soon after that he was "ordained" a presbyter. Sometime between July 248 and April 249 he was chosen bishop of Carthage.

Cyprian's essay, *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*, was an appeal for unity among Christians and for the importance of bishops to ensure that unity. Although the term "Catholic" at that time did not refer to the institution later formed under Constantine, but merely meant "Universal," Cyprian's idea of unity under the bishops contributed to the increasing move toward centralized institutional authority, with the bishop of Rome holding supremacy. Cyprian offered arguments both for and against such papal authority.

Due to the persecution of Christians within the Roman Empire at the time, many fell away and became known as *lapsi* ("the lapsed"). As many of them asked to be received back into fellowship Cyprian insisted that they demonstrate earnest repentance of their failure. This met with much opposition among the more liberal clergy who were eager to receive them without conditions.

Cyprian himself had fled Carthage to avoid having to either make sacrifice to the emperor or take a public stand against the edict to do so under the Decian persecution. However, he later would die a martyr.

THE DESERT FATHERS

During the third century communities comprised of Christian hermits, ascetics, monks, and women committed to asceticism congregated in the deserts of Egypt. The more prominent of the men who formed and led these communities came to be known as the Desert Fathers. The communities formed by and around these men were the beginnings of monasticism within Christianity. The women formed communities of separation, eventually coming to be known as "nuns."

Although monasticism seems a pious endeavor for holiness, the end result is to cloister Christians away from the general population where they can have little or no influence in spreading the Gospel. This is another of Anti-Christ's ploys to disrupt the Great Commission. On the other hand, monasticism did provide the means by which the Scriptures would be copied and preserved over the centuries, demonstrating how God can use anything, even those things inspired by the anti-Christ spirit, to accomplish His purposes.

Paul of Thebes

Not much is known of this Paul, but legend has it that as a young man he fled to the desert wilderness during the persecu-

tion of Christians by Decius and Valerianus around AD 250. He is said to have lived in a desert cave for almost one hundred years. Although Paul of Thebes is not numbered among the Desert Fathers, his influence on Anthony the Great resulted in the creation of the desert communities, among which Anthony was most prominent. It is said that Anthony the Great visited Paul of Thebes to learn from him. But Paul's self-imposed exile to the desert was not for ascetic reasons as much as it was to avoid persecution, at least initially.

Anthony the Great

What is known of Anthony the Great (ca. 251-356) is found in the *Life of Anthony*, written in Greek around AD 360 by Athanasius of Alexandria. Through Latin translations of the *Life of Anthony* the concept of monasticism spread throughout Western Europe during the fourth century and afterward.

Although there were many ascetics before him, Anthony was considered the first known ascetic to go into the wilderness. Around the age of 19 Anthony heard a sermon on Matthew 19:21, stating that perfection could be achieved by selling all of one's possessions, giving the money to the poor, and following Christ. Around the age of 34 he made the decision to take Jesus' words literally to mean that he should live in solitude, or at least away from the mainstream population. He gave away some of his family's estate to neighbors, sold the rest, and gave the proceeds to the poor. He then submitted himself as a disciple to a local hermit.

Anthony became known as "Father of Monasticism," which wasn't truly accurate because Christian monasticism was already being practiced in the Egyptian deserts by ascetics who lived on the outskirts of cities. But Anthony was known to be one of the first ascetics to live away from the cities, cut off completely from civilization.

Athanasius credits Anthony with suffering persecution directly by Satan, even to the point of being beaten into unconsciousness. Eventually he moved farther into the desert, living in an abandoned Roman fort for some twenty years.

Wishing to become a martyr, he went in 311 to Alexandria and visited those imprisoned for their faith in Christ. Refusing the threats of the governor who ordered him not to appear in the city, Anthony argued with him publicly, hoping to be tortured and martyred for his faith, but the governor did not oblige him.

He then returned to his desert refuge in the old Roman fort where he taught those who came to learn from him. But because these visits pressed upon his time for worship he moved even farther into the Eastern desert of Egypt.

Again we see how a devout believer might be deceived into thinking that solitude is the ideal life for believers in Jesus rather than living and ministering to the lost wherever one may be. Anti-Christ used this pious man to teach others how to shrink from the commandment of the Lord to go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the lost. Indeed, Anthony is reported to have availed himself only to those who were spiritually disposed, leaving ministry to the lost to others.

Other Desert Fathers would follow Anthony, but the more prominent of them would be active during the fourth century along with certain Desert Mothers (women who lived ascetic lives in the deserts of Egypt, Palestine and Syria).

It was from the Desert Fathers and Desert Mothers that ecstatic experiences, contemplative prayer, and other forms of mysticism would become central to the future institutional church that became Roman Catholicism.

It is probably no coincidence that the earliest of these Church Fathers strove to remove the faith from its Hebrew roots.

Many of the Church Fathers who gained ascendancy over the assemblies rejected the idea that Jesus will one day return to establish His millennial Kingdom on the earth and again gather Israel in peace to the Promised Land. They saw the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures as nullified because Israel rejected her Messiah. The only writing of the apostles that details the fulfillment of those promises is the Book of Revelation. But because the Church Fathers largely rejected the millennial Kingdom, they deemed the Book of Revelation too cryptic to understand (as if God gave His Word with the intent that no one understand it—at least no one outside the priests of the hybrid religion of Christianity).

As anti-Semitism grew among the developing clergy class, the “Church” became the fulfillment of the promise—the Kingdom of God on earth, destined to rule the world with a rod of iron. Anti-Christ was setting the stage for centuries of bloodshed at the hands of “the Church” which would soon become consolidated under the bishop of Rome. The military might of Rome would be the instrument through which the rod of iron would be administered.

The third century closed with the reign of Gaius Aurelius Valerius (Diocletian [244-311]), who would abdicate voluntarily in 305.

The most significant birth during the third century would be that of Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus Augustus (272-337), who would come to be known as Constantine the Great.



Historians have segmented the history of mankind into nine “Big Eras”—periods that have seen significant changes in mankind’s relation to the cosmos and to each other. The year 300 marked the beginning of what historians call Big Era Five, which lasted until the start of the 16th century. This was a time when empire building nearly ended and, for a time, even reversed itself. Independent city-states, kingdoms, and empires began to appear in West Africa and the Americas. Early in the era the Roman Empire began to fade, and throughout the era it would eventually be fragmented into independent nations that resided primarily throughout Western Europe and Asia Minor.

As we saw in previous chapters, the anti-Christ philosophy of ecclesiastical hierarchy had begun to take root as early as the latter part of the first century. So-called “bishops” were installed as authoritarian personalities among the previously autonomous assemblies of believers in Jesus, and new assemblies, which would come to be called “churches,” would be established upon that foundational structure.

Until the fourth century, Christianity was an outcast religion among every society in which it found converts. At the start of the fourth century, however, it began to enjoy official recognition by the kingdom of Armenia, becoming the state religion in AD 301.

Older even than Roman Catholicism, today the Armenian Apostolic Church holds the distinction of being the world’s oldest national church as part of Oriental Orthodoxy. Oriental Orthodoxy is not to be confused with Eastern Orthodoxy which holds some distinct doctrines and affiliations primarily within Eastern European nations.

The departure from autonomy for independent assemblies does not diminish the legitimacy of those church’s claims to historical succession to the apostles of Jesus. All Christianity can lay that claim. But the penchant for hierarchical authority caused them to confuse historical succession with apostolic succession. That is, they claim that because their community was initially founded under the headship of “bishops” who had been trained

by other “bishops” in a continuous line back to the apostles, their legitimacy as the one true church should be recognized by all of Christianity. Nearly every church that can trace its roots to antiquity makes this claim.

But historical succession does not equate to apostolic succession. The departure from apostolic succession was realized during the second century with the general acceptance of “bishops” who enjoyed autocratic rule over the faithful; that autocratic rule grew into widespread acceptance during the third century. As we have seen, the various bishops gave primacy to the bishop at Rome, largely because of proximity to the central power of the empire.

As early as the second century the bishops began to actively move their adherents away from the idea that Gentile believers in Jesus were grafted into the faith of Abraham through the New Covenant that Jesus made with the houses of Judah and Israel (Jeremiah 33:33; Hebrews 8:8; Romans 1:1-25). They began to adopt pagan festivals in place of the Hebrew feasts, and convoluted Scripture to fit their desire to separate from their Hebrew roots. The Babylonian feast to Ishtar took the place of the Passover feast under the name “Easter.” The worship of the Sun god melded with worship of the Son of God with the false claim that Jesus rose on a Sunday morning. It became an excuse to replace the Sabbath with the so-called “Lord’s day” (See our special report, *Facts and Fallacies of the Resurrection*). By the time the fourth century came around, the churches had become so far removed from their biblical roots that they were easy prey for anti-Christ to lead into full-blown apostasy those who had escaped persecution.

Although Christians in Armenia found favor with their king, Christians throughout the Roman Empire were still suffering persecution. We can discern how assimilation into the world system such as happened in Armenia would work to anti-Christ’s advantage by eventually rendering Christians apathetic and even dismissive of biblical truth. Yet in the early fourth century anti-Christ’s primary method of attacking the true faith in Jesus remained persecution.

In AD 302, Emperor Diocletian began to purge his army and his court of Christians. One year later his co-emperor Galerius Valerius Maximus persuaded Diocletian to forbid Christians to worship in groups. His edict would result in thousands of Christians being put to death over the following ten years.

Diocletian's appetite for killing Christians was whetted further by four more edicts specifically aimed at destroying Christianity. Church buildings were destroyed, clergymen were arrested, and Christians were forced to make sacrifices to the Roman gods upon sentence of death.

One martyr was Agnes, a 12-year-old girl who had refused marriage in order to consecrate her virginity to God. She would become honored as the "patron saint" of virgins by a church that, even as it suffered for its faith, was gradually being undermined by anti-Christ to incorporate pagan beliefs and practices, but in the name of Christ. "Patron saints" were devised by the Roman church as an answer to the Roman pantheon of specific gods worshipped and petitioned for specific causes. This may be attributed somewhat to the penchant of converts to want to hang on to some of the comfortable traditions of the religions they ostensibly renounced in receiving Jesus as their Savior.

In 304, the bishop of Rome, Marcellinus, died after an eight-year reign as "pope." He would have no successor until 308.

Another well-known martyr was Catherine, a young woman of royal lineage. Upon making a public confession of the Gospel at a sacrificial feast ordered by Galerius, she was tortured on a spiked wheel, then beheaded.

Because the expansion of the Roman Empire demanded more oversight than one emperor could handle effectively, Diocletian had elevated Maximianus Herculus as co-emperor in AD 285. Diocletian administered affairs in the eastern regions of the empire while Herculus took charge of the western regions. In 293 the two mutually consented to expansion of the imperial college by appointing two Caesars, Constantius Chlorus and Galerius, thus forming the first Roman Tetrarchy (rule by four). Constantius as Caesar was responsible to Herculus as Augustus in the west, while Galerius was the Caesar responsible to Diocletian as Augustus in the east.

In 305 Diocletian and Herculus abdicated to retire, which allowed Constantius and Galerius to be elevated to the positions of Augusti. They in turn appointed two new Caesars—Severus in the east under Constantius, and Maximinus in the west under Galerius.

In October, 306, Herculus' son Maxentius was proclaimed emperor at Rome to the disapproval of Galerius. We will dispense with the political intrigue that ensued involving the Tetrarchy and Maxentius. The important thing is that Maxentius brought some comparative peace to Roman Christians. Yet it took two years for the alleged papal line of succession to be revived with the election of a cleric named only as Marcellus I.

Finding Christians in great confusion due to persecution, the destruction of their meeting places, and dissension as a result of many falling away because of the severe persecution, Marcellus divided the territorial administration of Rome's Christians into twenty-five districts and appointed over each a pastor or presbyter who would oversee the ritual aspects of the developing Roman

Catholic Church, including baptism, marriage, burial of the dead, and various celebrations, particularly those commemorating the deaths of martyrs.

Marcellus insisted that those who had lapsed from the faith (the *lapsi*) because of persecution must perform the prescribed penance in order to be reinstated to fellowship. This caused great dissension and even violence among the *lapsi*, many of whom were led by an apostate (unnamed by historians) who had evidently denied the faith even before the persecutions broke out.

Although Maxentius had scaled back the persecution of Christians to a great degree, he was, nevertheless, despotic. Perhaps to quell the dissension among Christians, he had Marcellus exiled sometime around the new year's beginning. Marcellus died shortly after, in January, 309, to be succeeded by Eusebius, whose reign as "pope" would also be brief—a mere four months.

The next few years saw a significant change in the political landscape of the Roman Empire. Of particular importance was the rise of Constantius' son Constantine, who initially was rejected as the successor to Diocletian in favor of Galerius. Serving in peril under Galerius in the east, Constantine appealed to his father to rescue him. Using subterfuge, Constantius convinced Galerius to give leave to Constantine, ostensibly to help in Constantius' campaign in Britain.

Succumbing to illness in 306, and aware of his impending death, Constantius declared his support for raising Constantine to the position of Augustus. The army, loyal to Constantius, put their support behind Constantine. Upon receiving Constantine's request for recognition as Augustus, Galerius became furious. His advisors cautioned him that refusal of Constantine's claim to the title would mean war. Galerius compromised, granting Constantine the title of "Caesar" instead, and giving the position of Augustus to Severus. Constantine accepted the lesser position knowing that it would cement his legitimacy, and he ruled Britain, Gaul and Spain at the head of one of the largest Roman armies.

In 310 Maximium rebelled against Constantine while the latter was engaged in combat against the Franks. Constantine drove Maximium to Massilia (Marseille) where he hoped to find asylum. He was captured by Constantine when the townspeople opened the gates to allow Constantine's army entrance. Constantine granted Maximium clemency but strongly urged him to commit suicide, which he did in July, 310, by hanging himself.

In 311, Galerius, in a final act before death, issued an edict ending the persecution of Christians and granting them tolerance in the Roman Empire. They were allowed to rebuild their places of worship and resume normal activities. That same year, the brief vacancy in the papal line of succession ended with the election of Miltiadea (aka Melchiades), a native of Africa. He was given by the emperors the right to receive back all buildings and possessions that had been confiscated during the persecutions. This gave greater power to the "pope" to reorganize the ecclesiastical administration and religious life of Christians in the Roman Empire.

Meanwhile, the Tetrarchy was falling apart as the various members continued to conflict with each other. Ultimately it came to a showdown between Constantine and Maxentius—a battle that would have the most far-reaching effect on Christianity, lasting until the present day. And it will last until the Lord returns.

On October 28, 312, Constantine met Maxentius in battle at the Milvian Bridge. Maxentius, whose forces were twice those of Constantine, took his stand in front of the bridge that crossed the Tiber River en route to Rome. He mustered his army in long lines with their backs to the river. When Constantine's army arrived to battle they bore a strange symbol on their standards and shields—the letter *Chi* (X) traversed by *Rho* (P), the first two letters of the Greek spelling for *Cristos* (Christ).



CONSTANTINE'S LABARUM WITH THE "CHI-RHO" ABOVE

Constantine's victory was decisive, ending with Maxentius drowning in the Tiber from the press of his retreating troops.

Alternate histories have Constantine putting Maxentius to death the day after the battle, but the former account is held to be more authentic.

Eventually the Tetrarchy crumbled, leaving Constantine and Licinius as co-emperors of Rome. In 313 the two secured an alliance, with Licinius taking Constantine's half-sister Constantia as his wife. The two emperors enacted the Edict of Milan, granting full tolerance to all religions in the empire, including Christianity. The edict legalized Christianity as one of the official religions of the Roman Empire.

Ultimately, Constantine and Licinius would meet at the Battle of Cibalae, and Constantine would emerge victorious. At another conflict, the Battle of Mardia, in 317, the two agreed to a settlement in which Constantine's two sons, Crispus and Constantine II, would be made Caesars along with Licinius' son Licinianus.

The next several years saw Constantine and Licinius at constant odds, culminating in Constantine ultimately defeating Licinius at the Battle of Chrysopolis. Although Constantine promised to spare the lives of Licinius and his Caesar Marinianus if they surrendered, eventually he had them both put to death on the suspicion that Licinius had plotted against him. He also had Licinius' son, his nephew by his half-sister, put to death, thus solidifying his position as sole emperor.

Constantine's triumph over Licinius represented in the minds of many the defeat of the pagan and Greek-speaking East by the Christian and Latin-speaking Rome. To impress his authority

over both the east and west portions of the empire Constantine rebuilt the city of Byzantium and renamed it Constantinopolis ("Constantine's City"), or in English, Constantinople.

To understand anti-Christ's role in the rise of Constantine we must go back to Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge.

According to the Christian author Lactantius, Constantine experienced a dream on the eve of the battle. In the dream he was told to "mark the heavenly sign of God on the shields of his soldiers....By means of a slanted letter X with the top of its head bent round, he marked Christ on their shields."

This account is told differently by Eusebius who stated, "He saw with his own eyes in the heavens a trophy of the cross arising from the light of the sun, carrying the message, *In Hoc Signo Vinces* ("In this sign, you will conquer")."

Eusebius further states that Constantine had a dream the night after the battle, in which Christ appeared with the same sign, telling him to make a standard, the *labarum*, for his army, placing the "*Chi-Rho*" (or "*Khi-Rho*") symbol above.

Today the *Chi-Rho* is a universal sign in Christianity passed on by Roman Catholicism to represent Jesus Christ. But there is more to this ancient symbol than is understood by Christians. Long before Constantine, the *Chi-Rho* represented the Egyptian Pharaoh. An example are coins depicting the likeness of Ptolemy III Euergetes (246-222BC) which also bear the *Chi-Rho* (seen between the eagle's legs, below). This is attributed to the use of



COIN DEPICTING EGYPTIAN KING PTOLEMY III EUERGETES

the *Chi-Rho* to symbolize Horus, the Egyptian god of the Sky, god of War and god of Protection. The Pharaoh was believed to be the embodiment of Horus. Egyptologist and archaeologist W.M. Flinders Petrie (1853-1942) states:

The well-known Christian monogram (*khi-rho*) may be seen in course of gradual formation in Egypt—or possibly in course of alteration; but the *rho* is usually figured as an upright staff with the lock of Horus at the top, and not the letter *rho*. Essentially it is the sign of Horus, and only became Christian by adoption.¹

The *Rho* (X) portion of the symbol is often portrayed in later versions as two transoms at right angles. However, the more ancient versions have them at angles that represent the Celestial *Chi* formed by the solar ecliptic path and the celestial equator.

¹ W.M. Flinders Petrie, *Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt* (Norwich, GB; Jarrold and Sons, 1898) p. 24.

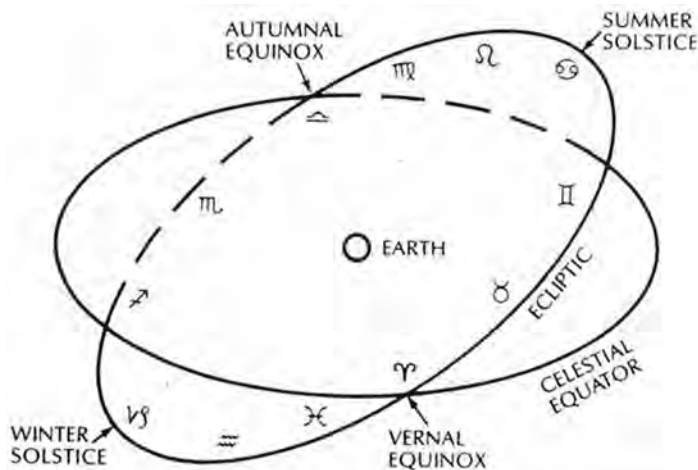


DIAGRAM OF ECLIPTIC AND CELESTIAL EQUATOR

The ancient mystery religions have been adopted from Babel by every empire, and all have centered on a god of primacy associated with the Sun. Constantine maintained his pagan loyalty to the Mithraic sun god Sol. His victory at Milvian Bridge under the sign of the “*Chi-Rho*” caused Christians to associate his victory with Jesus Christ by adopting the *Chi-Rho* symbol to represent the Lord. This tendency to convert pagan symbols and practices to Christianity grew through the centuries under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. This is not to disparage Catholics. Many Catholics love the Lord with limited understanding because of their church’s false teachings. They are victims of their religious institution no less than members of other religious cults. I would say this about many Catholic priests and nuns as well. Their church provides a sense of community and wellbeing that hides the spiritual deception.

The Roman Catholic Church cites the claims by Lactantius and Eusebius to lend legitimacy to Constantine’s role in establishing Christianity as the only true religion, and particularly to the papacy. Apart from these two conflicting accounts no one can state unequivocally that Constantine was given a vision or a dream by God. The truth is that Constantine’s mother Helena may have played a part in his alleged conversion rather than any “miraculous” sign from Heaven. Helena is variously described by historians as Constantius’ “wife,” “consort” or “concubine.” There is no definitive record of a legal marriage, but Jerome, the third-century Roman Catholic priest, theologian and historian, uses both “wife” and “concubine” in describing their relationship.

In any case, Helena is recognized as a Christian empress whose journeys to Palestine netted her some alleged relics of Jesus’ life, including the nails from His cross. It is believed that she had one of the nails placed in Constantine’s helmet and another in the bridle of his horse to provide miraculous advantage in his battles.

The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches’ usage of relics as miraculous talismans is no doubt traceable to Helena, if not as the originator of the practice, certainly as a major proponent. We see in the veneration of relics a Christianizing of the pagan practice of attributing magical (or, in this case,

alleged miraculous) power to inanimate objects (talismans). This has been one way in which anti-Christ has deluded Christians into thinking they can manipulate God or their church’s “saints” into granting their petitions. It is nothing more than magic dressed in Christian clothing—no different than today’s Christian television hucksters promising miraculous power in the trinkets they peddle for donations.

There is no doubt that Helena’s influence on her son caused him to look upon Christianity with some semblance of tolerance. But it was not until 337 when he was on his deathbed that Constantine consented to be baptized.

Although anti-Christ has never left off entirely the persecution of believers in Jesus, he has been wise in adopting other means to render the faith ineffective in its mission to witness for the Kingdom of God and salvation in Jesus Christ alone. The most effective means has been to introduce damnable heresies that nullify the Gospel while demeaning the stature of Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the Word of God. In part, it was in response to heretical teachings rising within the assemblies that the consolidation of authority among bishops was established. It was believed that a more central authority could issue statements of faith to which all Christians should adhere in order to remain in the communion of the faith. It should be stated that this was done with all good intentions on the part of the developing ecclesiastical authority. There is no doubt they wished to keep the faith pure from such false teachings. Unfortunately, the very system they developed was in itself a false system of religion that would eventually produce its own set of false teachings.

By AD 325 the religious controversies had come to a head. The primary issue in question rested upon the relationship of Jesus Christ to God the Father. There had arisen disputes among Christians as to whether or not Jesus as the Son of God had existed from eternity with the Father. Prominent in the dispute was Arius, a presbyter in Alexandria, Egypt, who emphasized the divinity of the Father as superior to that of the Son. Hearing a sermon by Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, in which Alexander expounded on the similarity of the Son to the Father as God, Arius interpreted the teaching to be similar to Sabellianism (the belief that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are different modes or aspects of one God rather than three distinct persons in the Godhead). Condemning Alexander’s oration, Arius declared, “If the Father begat the Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence: and from this it is evident, that there was a time when the Son was not. It therefore necessarily follows, that he had his substance from nothing.” In essence, Arianism teaches that Jesus was more than human but not fully divine.

The conflict pitted Arius against the teachings of the well-respected second-century theologian Origen whose teaching on the *Logos* theorized that the relation of the Son to the Father had no beginning. This question had been left unsettled from earlier times. The general consensus among the bishops was in favor of those who opposed the theological position of *homoousios* (of one substance)—the foundation for the doctrine of the Trinity. On that basis, Arius found strength to argue his position.

From the time of the twelve apostles much Christian doctrine had been unsettled. Due to the influence of Jewish, pagan, Gnostic and Greek philosophy, converts to Christ brought with them different views of God, nature, Christ, the Holy Spirit, even the Body of Christ itself. The writings of the Hebrew prophets and the Lord's apostles were not available to the people at large, and were jealously guarded by a few of the bishops. Copies that circulated among the assemblies were held dear, but their influence in the everyday lives of believers was not as pronounced as the influence of the bishops over the assemblies who believed they were entrusted with the truth. However they interpreted the Scriptures was how their particular congregations understood the nature of these things. Often, bishops were novices to the faith themselves, having just escaped paganism. The influences of their past lives would certainly affect how they delineated truth from error, sometimes discerning error as truth.

Because the Arian controversy threatened the stability of the newly recognized church at Rome, Constantine called upon the bishops to once-and-for-all settle the issue. In 325 he took the unprecedented step of calling together in one council prelates from all parts of the Roman Empire. With the exception of Roman Britain, all sent one or more representatives. Arius himself attended with his bishop, Alexander. This would be the First Council of Nicaea, one of several councils that would come together over the succeeding centuries. Constantine presided over the Council and even led some of its discussions.

Twenty-two bishops, led by Eusebius of Nicomedia, supported Arius, at least at first. The opposition was led by a young archdeacon named Athanasius. The debate raged for some two months, each side appealing to Scripture to support their positions. Arius insisted that the Son was a creature of God through whom God created everything else that exists in the cosmos. The opposition countered that the Father and the Son are of one essence, "consubstantial" and, thus, equal in nature.

Constantine ultimately influenced the majority of the bishops to agree upon a creed or statement of doctrine that should be adhered to by all the churches throughout the empire. The result was the Nicene Creed, which included the word *homoousios* to describe the nature of the Godhead. The purpose was to reconcile the Hebrew Scriptures' statement that YHWH is one YHWH with the apostles' writings that reveal Jesus as the Word of God who is God, and who created all things (John 1:1-14).

The Council as well established the doctrine of the Trinity, declaring that in addition to the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Godhead is also of the same essence and nature, yet distinct in personage. Prior to the writings of the apostles, the Jews knew of the Holy Spirit only from two references in the Tanakh: Psalms 51:11 and Isaiah 63:10-11.

Arius had taught that the Holy Spirit was a created being, while Athanasius claimed that the Holy Spirit is divine in the same manner as the Father and the Son. Yet while the Nicene Council supported Athanasius on the nature of Jesus, it did not delineate any doctrine on the nature of the Holy Spirit. The original Nicene Creed merely stated, "We believe in the Holy Spirit."

The Nicene Creed became the first definitive document that would separate Christians on the basis of a statement of faith created by an elite body of clergy.

Constantine then issued an edict pronouncing death to anyone in the empire who supported the teachings of Arius, part of which follows:

The great and victorious Constantine Augustus to the bishops and laity:

Since Arius is an imitator of the wicked and the ungodly, it is only right that he should suffer the same dishonor as they. Porphyry, who was hostile to anyone who feared God, composed a book which transgressed against our religion, and has found a suitable reward: namely that he has been disgraced from that time onward, his reputation is completely terrible, and his ungodly writings have been destroyed. In the same way it seems appropriate that Arius and those of like mind with Arius should from now on be called Porphyrians, so that their name is taken from those whose ways they have imitated.

In addition, if any writing composed by Arius should be found, it should be handed over to the flames, so that not only will the wickedness of his teaching be obliterated, but nothing will be left even to remind anyone of him. And I hereby make a public order, that if someone should be discovered to have hidden a writing composed by Arius, and not to have immediately brought it forward and destroyed it by fire, his penalty shall be death. As soon as he is discovered in this offense, he shall be submitted for capital punishment.²

As a result, there is a dearth of history remaining sympathetic to Arius. Constantine's condemnation was accepted by the bishops without controversy or objection, and anti-Christ's design to conjure bloodshed among Christians was inaugurated. As well, church historians have generally deemed Arius a heretic.

What the Council of Nicaea came down to was doctrine by majority vote. That doesn't necessarily mean the Council was in error in its conclusions. In truth, they got this one right. But the truth does not rest on the consensus of bishops. It rests on the Word of God. And God's Word does affirm Jesus as divine in His nature as the Word of God:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things came into existence through Him, and without Him not even one thing came into existence that has come into existence.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light appeared in the darkness and the darkness did not understand it.

There was a man whose name was John, sent from God. He came as a witness so that he might testify concern-

² "Part of an edict against Arius and his followers," Fourth-Century Christianity, Wisconsin Lutheran College, <http://www.fourthcentury.com/index.php/urkunde-33>.

ing the light so that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but that he might testify concerning the light. The true light was that who enlightens every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into existence through Him, and the world did not know Him.

He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But to as many as received Him, He gave power to be the children of God—to those who believe in His name, who were born not by blood, nor by the will of the flesh, nor by the will of man, but by God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us (and we saw His glory—the glory of the only-begotten by the Father), full of grace and truth. (John 1:1-14)

Arius' appeal to John 14:28—"the Father is greater than I"—missed the point that Jesus was merely iterating what He had said elsewhere, that He had come to earth to do the will of the Father. His affirmation as the Word of God incarnate clarifies His nature as divine. Arius' other proof text, Colossians 1:15, that Jesus is the firstborn of all creation, also missed the mark. Had Arius (and others who deny the divinity of Jesus) read just a little further he would understand that this means Jesus was the firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18)—the first among all creation to be resurrected.

Do any of the writings of the Hebrew prophets affirm that Jesus, as the Word of God, is of the same nature and essence as the Father? Isaiah 66:5-24 tells us that YHWH will come to rescue Jerusalem and to make an end of her enemies. Who will come but Jesus? Often the Word of God is described in the same terms as the resurrected Jesus, and He is called "YHWH."

YHWH is the name of God and His only-begotten Son. Just as my name is Dager, inherited from my father, so the Word of God's name is YHWH, inherited from His Father. He came out of the Father and therefore is of the same essence and nature as the Father—divine, God.

Just as we existed in Adam from the time he was created, so the Word existed in the Father from eternity. There is no beginning or end to either of them.

Yes, this is a great mystery, but who can understand fully the nature of God? The problem with doctrine by consensus is that it seeks to bring all men into subjection to a teaching without being able to say anything more than that it must be taken by "faith." Faith in what? Faith in the consensus, or faith in God Himself and in His Word rightly divided?

The problem with the bishops at Nicaea is that either they did not disagree with Constantine's edict of persecution to death of anyone holding or disseminating Arius' writings, or they did not have the moral fiber to resist it as an ungodly affront to the name of Jesus. In either case, they proved themselves unworthy to claim leading by the Holy Spirit. The great schisms, bloodshed and wrangling among the bishops fairly begged for the emperor's intervention. And the problems did not end with the First Council of Nicaea. They begged for more and more councils to bring about some semblance of unity. But unity procured by the flesh cannot stand unless it imposes itself unfavorably upon those

who do not see eye-to-eye with the power of the state religion, in this case, the church in Rome influenced heavily by a pagan/quasi-Christian Constantine.

There were many church councils held during the fourth century. Besides the First Council of Nicaea, the next most important was the Council of Constantinople called by Constantine's successor Theodosius I in 381. The topics under discussion were: Apollinarism (Jesus had a human body and lower soul, but a divine mind); Sabellianism, the nature of the Holy Spirit, and, again, Arianism. Out of this council came a revision of the Nicene Creed, called "The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed."

Although the personhood and divinity of the Holy Spirit as a member of the Trinitarian Godhead was held by many of the bishops prior to the Council of Constantinople, it was here that this doctrine was first formalized in the Creed. The words were changed from [We believe in...] "the Holy Ghost" to [We believe in...] "the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets."

This doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity is central to orthodox Christianity, but has been disputed throughout the centuries, particularly by certain sects that believe in the Oneness doctrine, which leans somewhat toward modalism. Just as the two principles in the debate over the nature of Christ were Arius and Athanasius, the same two led the debate over the nature of the Holy Spirit. Arius argued that the Holy Spirit is a "creature," and "angel." Athanasius countered that the Holy Spirit possesses divine attributes such as the ability to sanctify, is immutable and transcendent above creation, actually being involved in the creation. And just as Athanasius' position won the day at the First Council of Nicaea, it was adopted by the bishops at Constantinople.

Today there are many who dispute the idea of the Holy Spirit being a person; he is spoken of as the "active force" of God, something like energy that emanates from the Father. This is most common among Jehovah's Witnesses, but is also held by some who believe Jesus is the Word of God incarnate (which the Jehovah's Witnesses deny) and trust in Him for their salvation.

This is a topic of study that requires and deserves its own attention, and with which we do not have the space to address adequately here. The issue is not the need to separate on the basis of false teachings; the issue is whether or not love forms the basis for that separation. There must always be a desire to receive back those who are found in serious error that threatens the purity of the faith. Certainly there is no excuse for violence against those with whom we find disagreement. The violence of Roman Catholicism toward those it has considered heretics testifies to the ungodly nature of its hierarchy.

Our concern is the anti-Christ's means of causing dissension among believers in Jesus, even to the point of bloodshed, which he has been able to accomplish to great degrees over the centuries since the bishops gave their allegiance to Constantine, largely because of his claim of conversion and the mythic proportions of his conquests under the sign of the "*Chi-Rho*."

The mists of antiquity leave a lot of unanswered questions which pious Catholics and Orthodox Christians claim require faith to answer. So it is left to believers in Jesus to ascertain by Scripture, and whatever history does confirm, whether or not Constantine's vision and/or dream was from God (if in fact such a vision/dream did occur).

Would the true God or His Son give such a vision or dream to Constantine, ordering him to go out and slay his enemies in the name of Christ? First, let us consider what Scripture has to say:

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again and called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered him, "Do you say this by yourself, or did others say it about Me to you?"

Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your nation and the chief priests delivered You to me. What did You do?"

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world My servants would fight so that I would not be delivered to the Jews. But now My kingdom is not from here." (John 18:33-36)

It may be argued that, yes, at that time Jesus denied that the world is His kingdom. But that was just so He might go to the cross. But, then, was Jesus lying?

Perhaps, then, the world became His kingdom when He rose from the grave and ascended into Heaven? Well, His teachings indicate that His disciples were to look forward to eating and drinking with Him in His Kingdom after the resurrection of the saints:

And He said to them, "The kings of the nations exercise lordship over them, and they who exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But you shall not be so, but he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who is chief, as he who serves. For which is greater, he who sits at the meal, or he who serves? Is not He who sits at the meal? But I am among you as He who serves. You are they who have continued with Me in My trials. And I appoint a kingdom to you, as My Father has appointed to Me, so that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:25-30)

No one is sitting on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel at this time, nor have they since Jesus uttered these words.

There is nothing in Scripture to allow for anyone to wage warfare in the name of Jesus. His Kingdom is a heavenly Kingdom that will not be established over the nations until He returns:

And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever. (Revelation 11:15)

This is yet future, the context being the return of the Lord to the earth. In the meantime, Satan remains the god of this world to test the hearts of men (2 Corinthians 4:4). Satan has the world's kingdoms in his hands to do with as he wills until the end of this age:

And taking Him up into a high mountain, the devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "I will give all this jurisdiction and their glory to You because it is given to me, and I give it to whomever I will. Therefore, if You will worship me, all shall be Yours." (Luke 4:5-7)

The Lord did not reply, "The kingdoms of the world have not been given to you; they are Mine." He merely replied, "Get behind Me, Satan, for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'"

The apostle Paul further reminds us that our warfare is not in the flesh but in the spirit (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). The context is spiritual warfare, the only discipline being within the Body of Christ to maintain the truth. And even that discipline can go no further than expulsion from the assembly at the worst.

With these truths in mind, we determine that if Constantine was given a vision commanding him to conquer armies, then that vision was from Satan, not from God. It follows, then, that his influence in building a religious institution that would seek dominion over the earth must be of Satan as well.

But would Satan give a vision in the name of Christ?

The answer is unequivocally yes. How many false belief systems operate today in the name of Christ Jesus? We are warned by God's Word:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also are transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works. (2 Corinthians 11:12-15)

Ministers of righteousness. Satan's emissaries pose as righteous men, preaching holiness and conformity to the Law (contrary to the teachings of the apostles). What they say sounds good, pious and reasonable. But Jesus said:

"Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and in Your name have cast out devils, and in Your name done many wonderful works?'

"And then I will say to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work iniquity.'" (Matt 7:22-23)

Man looks on the outward appearance; God looks upon the heart. And God's Word is the only litmus on which we may make judgments regarding spiritual matters.

Anti-Christ used Constantine's victory to establish the basis for the Roman church to declare itself the Kingdom of God on earth, justifying dominion over the nations and trying to rule

them with a rod of iron. It is the first attempt at dominion theology, and was carried into Reformed Theology with many of the Reformers.

Constantine's victory was of God, yes. All authority on this earth is given by God (Romans 13:1-2). But not all authority is godly; in truth, the vast majority of authority is ungodly. And that applies to religious authority as much as it does to secular authority; perhaps even more so. When religious authority and secular authority are held in the same hands, that authority is all the more ungodly as evidenced throughout history. The fruit of Constantine's religious conversion has been fertilized with the blood of martyrs as well as the blood of Jews and other unbelievers who have throughout the centuries refused to bow to papal authority.

Although Constantine did elevate Christianity to preferred status within the Roman Empire, he not only tolerated all other pagan religions (which, as emperor, he saw as his duty), but he continued to honor those religions in various ways. Acquiescing to the bishops' desire to establish Christianity's own traditions above its Hebrew roots, Constantine consented to establish Sunday as the day of worship for the empire. But he did this not in the name of Jesus who was erroneously believed to have risen on Sunday, but in deference to the Roman Sun god. His decree stated:

On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits because it often happens that another day is not suitable for grain-sowing or vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.

Sol Invictus ("Unconquered Sun" or "Invincible Sun") was the name of the Roman Sun god, an official cult established in AD 274 by Aurelian. The term *Invictus* (unconquered) was an appellation bestowed upon certain deities within the Roman Empire (e.g., *Mars Invictus*; *Jupiter Invictus*; *Mithras Invictus*, etc.). It was especially associated with solar deities. The earliest known use of *Sol Invictus* was in AD 158. So Constantine's decree was an attempt to associate *Sol Invictus* with Jesus' resurrection by declaring Sunday the official day of worship for the Roman Empire regardless which religion one ascribed to.

His veneration of Sol played a role when Constantine erected his triumphal arch in Rome. He made sure that it aligned with the colossal statue of Sol which stood by the Colosseum, allowing Sol to form the dominant backdrop when traveling along the direction of the main approach to the arch.

In truth, he clearly had one foot in the Roman church and the other in the pagan world. While commissioning the building of the first Basilica of St. Peter, begun ca. 326-333, Constantine had the architects orient the apse containing the altar to face west so that the rising sun would shine in through the doors at the east. Thus *Sol Invictus* would play a part in the Roman mass. Pagan sun-worship symbolism in the mass has since evolved even more with the disc-shaped Communion wafer and the mon-

strance used to hold it after being consecrated by a Roman Catholic priest. The corruption of the faith by anti-Christ was effected greatly by the creation of Constantine's pagan-Christian hybrid religion.

Constantine's decree establishing Sun-Day as the day for Romans to worship their gods pandered to the pagan-influenced Christian bishops at Rome who melded Roman mythology with Christianity. The influence of Sol in Roman Catholicism is easily discerned in the use of the monstrance to house the "sacred host" or wafer shaped like the sun, which has since become known as the Eucharist (Latin: *eucharistia*, "thankful") and believed to be the actual body of Jesus, transubstantiated from bread by a priest's incantations (although the official doctrine of transubstantiation was not proclaimed *ex cathedra* until 1215).

Upon the death of Constantine in 337 the Roman Empire began a slow but steady decline. All the emperors after Constantine professed Christianity except for Julian who reigned from December, 361 until June, 363. Known as Julian the Apostate because of his rejection of Christianity, in his short tenure he attempted to combat much corruption within the government that had grown under the alleged "Christian" emperors who preceded him. Those who followed him, though professing Christianity, were generally corrupt.

Upon the death of Emperor Jovian a triarchy was established beginning with joint rule by Valentinian I and his brother Valens in 364, who were joined by Valentinian's son Gratian in 367. After Valentinian's death, his son Valentinian II was proclaimed emperor by the Pannonian army, and accepted as co-Augustus for the west by Gratian. Upon the death of Valens, Theodosius I was elevated to co-Augustus and reigned with Gratian and Valentinian II.

Eventually the influence of the Christian bishops became such that on February 27, 380, the Edict of Thessalonica was delivered by the three emperors, making Christianity the official state religion:

EMPERORS GRATIAN, VALENTINIAN AND THEODOSIUS AUGUSTI

EDICT TO THE PEOPLE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

It is our desire that all the various nations which are subject to our Clemency and Moderation, should continue to profess that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter, as it has been preserved by faithful tradition, and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe in the one deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity. We of Catholic Christians; but as for the others, since, in our judgment they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give to their conventicles the

name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of the divine condemnation and in the second the punishment of our authority which in accordance with the will of Heaven we shall decide to inflict.

GIVEN IN THESSALONICA ON THE THIRD DAY
FROM THE CALENDAS OF MARCH, DURING THE
FIFTH CONSULATE OF GRATIAN AUGUSTUS
AND FIRST OF THEODOSIUS AUGUSTUS

This is the origin of the English word “church” to signify the institutions into which Christians in the Roman Empire would be channeled. It is not a correct translation of the Greek *ecclesia* found in Scripture.

The objective of the Edict was not so much to compel pagans to become Christians as it was to force all Christians under penalty of death to adhere to Nicene Christianity. In a short time, however, the power of the bishops was such that pagans were also persecuted. Their homes and places of worship were destroyed, and many were coerced into accepting Christianity and the rule of the bishops over their lives. The emperors, wishing to placate the growing strength of Roman Christianity did little to quell the persecutions.

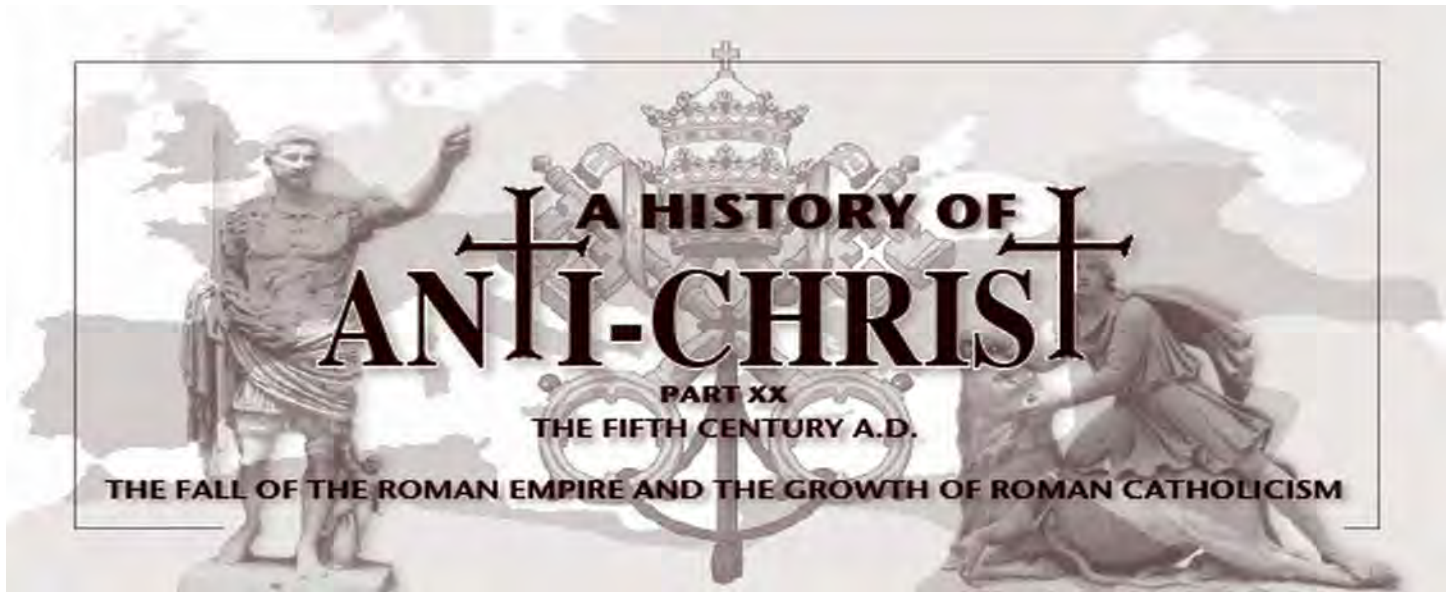
During the fourth century we see a four-pronged attack by anti-Christ against true believers in Jesus. The first prong of attack was through persecution by the enemies of the Gospel. The second prong came through the fomenting of division through the introduction of false teachings, necessitating the defense of truth through a hierarchical system of bishops. The third prong was the melding of the faith with secular government through Constantine and his successors. The fourth prong was the elevating of the “church” to the status of state religion, allowing for the implantation of creeds to which all believers must adhere or suffer consequences, even unto death.

In all cases anti-Christ impresses his standing as god of this world upon the humble pilgrims who trod the earth as aliens.

Anti-Christ’s four-pronged attack against the faith seemed to be working well. The more believers were persecuted, the more they sought organizational strength to resist and maintain their faith. Yet persecution did cause much of the Roman populace to sympathize with Christians, causing them to accept Christians as equals, and contributing to many conversions, even within the royal palace. But this also caused power struggles that often resulted in bloodshed. The organizational strength granted by the emperors would prove to be a greater undoing to the purity of the faith than persecution could ever be.

Yet even in the midst of this great apostasy there remained a remnant of believers scattered throughout the world, living humbly and often in secret to avoid the wrath of the wealthy papacy that was developing, and would develop as the central power throughout the Roman Empire. That remnant has always been fodder for anti-Christ’s desire to purge the earth of God’s glory.

That, of course, will never happen.



The fifth century began with some notable advances for anti-Christ as false religions continued their expansion throughout the globe. Notably, Buddhism was enhanced through the work of a Chinese Buddhist monk named Fa-Xian, who traveled throughout Sri Lanka and India to gather Buddhist writings, particularly the Buddhist Books of Discipline.

After the Roman Empire was ostensibly Christianized by the alleged conversion of Constantine in the previous century, the Roman church began to assume more power over the faith of the people through ecclesiastical councils. The empire's power began to weaken as corrupt "Christian" emperors focused more and more on personal political ambitions and the Roman Senate continued its decline into corruption. It was a time of tremendous instability for the Western Roman Empire which came to an end in AD 476. A succession of weak emperors left the empire tottering on the brink of destruction.

As the empire became increasingly threatened by invading hordes of barbarians, Christians would be tested in much the same manner the Jews had been during the time of Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70.

With the adoption of Christianity as the religion of Constantine and his successors, the Roman Empire became the focal point of Anti-Christ's battle. His approach was two-pronged: 1) the destruction of the empire by the pagan barbarians; 2) the corruption of the religious authority within the empire.

THE TEMPORAL FRONT

On the temporal front, the empire began to experience a series of invasions that would eventually fragment it into several provinces, none of which could sustain itself for long.

Around AD 400 the conquest of Britain began with the withdrawal of Roman troops. By the end of the century Britain would be settled by large contingents of Angles, Saxons and Jutes.

In 401 the Visigoths, led by their king, Alaric I, invaded Italy, but were defeated by the Roman general Flavius Stilicho at Pollentia in April, 402. He was again defeated at the Battle of Verona in June, 402. In 408, Emperor Flavius Honorius had Stilicho and his family executed, thus inciting the Romans to

massacre the families of Goths serving in the Roman military. In response, a large contingent of Gothic soldiers—some 30,000—defected to Alaric to avenge their murdered wives and children. Eventually Alaric would sack Rome in 410.

During this time a group of Eurasian nomads migrated into Europe and established a large empire. The history of these people, the Huns, is speckled and relatively indistinct. It is believed that they were descendants of the Xiongnu, northern neighbors of the Chinese, and were possibly the antecedents of the Turkic peoples who settled in western portions of Asia and in Asia Minor.

From AD 434 until his death in 453, a fierce warrior known only as Attila (Popularly known as "Attila the Hun"), ruled the Hunnic Empire, which encompassed the area from the Ural River to the Rhine River and from the Danube River to the Baltic Sea. He was among the most feared enemies of the Western and Eastern Roman Empires. As Attila conquered numerous barbarian tribes and incorporated them into his army of conquest, he dubbed himself "the Scourge of God." Known for his savage violence in combat, Attila is portrayed as just the opposite in his civilian administration through which he strengthened central authority among the Huns. His self-proclaimed title "The Scourge of God" amply described Attila's attacks against both the Western and Eastern Roman Empires. Yet although he devastated many parts of the empires, he was unable to take either Constantinople in the east or Rome in the west.

In 455 Rome was again sacked, this time by Germanic Vandals. As each attack on Rome and the outlying provinces of the empire in both the west and the east further weakened the empire, the line of emperors would come to an end with Romulus Augustulus (ca. 460 - ?). On September 4, 476, a German soldier named Flavius Odoacer led a revolt that deposed Augustulus. Odoacer assumed the title "King of Italy," and his revolt marked the end of the Western Roman Empire. Although Odoacer was an Arian Christian he did not impose himself upon the now fully-entrenched Roman Catholic Church.

The Eastern Roman Empire would continue for several more centuries as the Byzantine Empire, successfully defending its holdings and even recovering some territories it had previously lost to the Western Roman Empire. But it is the Western Roman Empire that would continue to exist, if not as a distinct, unified empire, as the infrastructure of Western Civilization until today. The Roman Empire's influence in language, culture, jurisprudence, art, and virtually all aspects of Western Civilization, combined with the former Greek influences, would result in the greatest achievements in science, the arts, and technology the world has ever known. Unfortunately, anti-Christ would use all these to continue his battle against the Lord of the Universe.

With the fall of the Western Roman Empire came the beginning of what historians have called "The Middle Ages."

THE SPIRITUAL FRONT

As we have seen previously, Satan's attack against faith in Jesus Christ was well underway by the time the last apostle went to be with the Lord. Ecclesiasticism began to take over the local assemblies of believers with the installation of "bishops," and the recognition of the "bishop" of Rome as the supreme pontiff. By the fifth century the hierarchical system was well established with the political and military backing of the Roman Empire. Although this brought protection to Christians it also brought a weakening of the faith and the apostasy that would spread throughout the world under the force of the Roman pontiff.

For the past few centuries many Romans—particularly within the military—had adopted the Mithraic mystery religion from Persia, devised from Zoroastrian sources. The Persian god Mithras was worshipped through a complex system of seven stages of initiation involving ritualistic meals. Like most mystery religions it centered on symbolism of the Sun or "Sol."

Having melded faith in Jesus with the mystery religions of pagan Rome, particularly Mithraism, Roman Catholicism devised its own esoteric system of belief and ritual which would become the Mass. Soon it would be imposing upon believers in Christ a new set of laws, statutes and ordinances that would destroy the biblical truth of salvation imputed through faith by God's grace. This departure may be largely attributed to the increased acceptance of the fourth/fifth-century theologian Augustine of Hippo (Nov. 13, 354–August 28, 430). Augustine was born in Thagaste (present-day Souk Ahras, Algeria) in Roman Africa to a pagan father and Christian mother, Monica, who raised him as a Christian. As a teenager he left the church to engage in a hedonistic lifestyle for a while. In his thirties he developed an attraction to Manichaeism (a philosophy combining Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism). He would later embrace skepticism and also study Neoplatonism. The influence of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, a master of rhetoric like Augustine, caused Augustine to rejoin the Roman Catholic Church. In 391 he was ordained as bishop of Hippo Regius (present-day Algeria).

Augustine's writings were among the most influential in the development of western Christianity. As the Roman Empire continued its decline Augustine wrote his *City of God*, in which he posited that the Roman Catholic Church is the spiritual abode of Christians in contrast to the material earthly city. As

such, the City of God (Roman Catholicism) should enjoy dominion over the earthly cities (nations), with the Supreme Pontiff (as Vicar of Christ) ruling in the place of Christ. With the collapse of the Roman Empire Augustine's writings had profound influence on the medieval worldview as Roman Catholicism presided over, and much contributed to, the Dark Ages (5th to 15th centuries).

Augustine's *The City of God* remains a classic theological dissertation among Roman Catholics and Protestants (particularly Calvinists), the latter considering him the father of the Reformation due to his teachings on salvation and grace. Calvinists and other Reform Theologians today form the intellectual cadre for the Christian Reconstruction movement's dominion theology.

We can see now, how far removed from the purity of the simple Gospel anti-Christ managed to steer believers in Jesus through the writings of such theologians and bishops who formed the hierarchical system of Roman Catholicism.

Yet Christianity was hardly united in its understanding of some important doctrinal issues. The first seven ecumenical councils of the established hierarchy, from the First Council of Nicaea (325) to the Second Council of Nicaea (787) were attempts to establish an orthodox consensus on what Christians must believe in order to be in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. This was seen as not only important to the cohesiveness of Christianity, but essential to maintaining Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire. Under Julian the Apostate, emperor of Rome from 361 to 363, Christianity lost much of its influence in the empire. Toward the latter part of the fourth century the Roman Church began to regain that influence, and it wanted to be sure that the scare it had received under Julian would not be repeated. This required a consensus on the authority of the church which necessitated consensus on doctrine and practice. Again anti-Christ had the opportunity to sully the waters of faith in Christ through the fomenting of power grabs among the church's theologians and clergy.

We saw how in the fourth century the First Council of Nicaea produced the Nicene Creed in its original form, later modified by the First Council of Constantinople in 381. The Nicene Creed was the first attempt to establish the Trinitarian doctrine on the nature of God, and the beginning of Roman Catholicism's view of Jesus' mother Mary as "the Mother of God."

Four more councils came together during the fifth century: The First Council of Ephesus (431); The Second Council of Ephesus (449); The Council of Chalcedon (451); The Third Council of Ephesus (475). Of these, the most important were The First Council of Ephesus and The Council of Chalcedon.

The First Council of Ephesus

Like the first two councils, this was convened to address disputes among major theological positions that were vying for supremacy. The disputes were between Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, and other church leaders, primarily Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria. Present were approximately 250 bishops.

On trial was Nestorius's teachings, which he developed at the School of Antioch, one of which rejected the accepted title

Theotokos (“Mother of God” or “God Bearer”) for Jesus’ mother Mary. Also in question was Nestorius’s Christology.

Nestorius emphasized the dual natures of Jesus, seeking middle ground between those who insisted that Christ, as God, had been born a man (hence, Mary bore God), and those who posited that the eternal God could not be born; He has existed from eternity. Nestorius called into question how Jesus Christ, being part man, could not be partially a sinner because man by definition is a sinner since the Fall. His solution was that Mary gave birth to the incarnate Christ, not the divine Logos who existed before Mary and even before the creation. Thus, he said, Mary should be called Christotokos (“Birth Giver of Christ”), not *Theotokos* (“Birth Giver of God”).

Nestorius did not believe that the union of human and divine was possible—that Christ could not be con-substantial with God and con-substantial with man, because He would grow, mature, suffer and die, which God cannot do. He would also possess God’s power which would separate Him from humanity in terms of equality.

Nestorius’ detractors accused him of detaching Christ’s humanity from His divinity, which would mean that there would be two persons existing in one body. This, they said, would deny the reality of the Incarnation—that God (specifically the Word [Logos] of God) became a man through a miracle of God.

Accusing Nestorius of heresy, Cyril of Alexandria appealed to Pope Celestine I for Nestorius to be excommunicated. Celestine gave Cyril his authority to serve Nestorius with notice to recant within ten days or be excommunicated. Before acting, Cyril convened a synod of Egyptian bishops which also condemned Nestorius. Cyril then sent to Nestorius a letter known as “The Third Epistle of Saint Cyril to Nestorius.” In it Cyril cited the most famous article of Alexandrian Orthodoxy, “The Twelve Anathemas of Saint Cyril,” stating, “Anyone who dares to deny the Holy Virgin the title *Theotokos* is Anathema!”

Despite appeals from others such as John of Antioch, Nestorius refused to compromise his position. Instead he convinced Emperor Theodosius II to call a general council through which Nestorius hoped to vindicate himself and have Cyril convicted of heresy. On Pentecost (June 7) 431, the Sacra called for by Theodosius met at Ephesus, involving the metropolitan bishops. In spite of Nestorius’s desire to censure Cyril, Theodosius wanted the council to consider only the Christological controversy. The result was the council passing five canons condemning Nestorius (and Caelestius) and their followers as heretics, conferring excommunication on any who did not accept the council’s decree.

Nestorius was not only excommunicated, but exiled through the influence of Theodosius’s sister, the Empress Pacheria.

We are far removed today from this dispute, but we can see that Nestorius misunderstood the nature of Jesus Christ. We have God’s inspired Word which declares that Jesus is the Word of God who existed with God from “the beginning,” and that the Word of God is God (of the same nature and substance as the Father), and that the Word of God became a man (John 1:1-14). So we can see how The First Council of Ephesus was

correct in censoring Nestorius. Yet Nestorius was correct in challenging the idea that Mary should be called “the Mother of God,” because Mary was nothing more than a human girl. God has no mother. Nestorius was correct in saying she should be called “the Mother of Christ” or “The Mother of the Messiah” because she gave birth to His body (not to His soul or spirit), which housed the divine nature in His spirit. The council’s insistence on calling Mary “the Mother of God” was an overreaction to Nestorius’s errors.

Anti-Christ uses such issues to sow discord among the brethren. The dispute over Nestorius resulted in many eastern churches separating from Rome around 424.

As individuals we are subject to the Lord Himself, not to man except insofar as elders within the local, autonomous assemblies are charged with preserving and defending the truth of God’s Word and overseeing the purity of the assembly as regards to unrepentant sin. One may still be in the assembly even if one does not understand as well the truth that the elders hold, but he may be required not to spread his ideas to the assembly at large. It is hoped that sufficient exposure to the truth through humble submission will result in the error being purged from his thinking by the Holy Spirit. But when a hierarchical system backed by the power of the government imposes its beliefs upon all people under the penalty of excommunication and/or corporal punishment, then not only truth may be solidified within the body of believers, but errors may also be solidified. Error then becomes law and men must then choose sides. Thus, the more men try to impose unity, the more schisms develop. That is the history of Christianity: schism after schism, not all of which have been based on biblical truth.

That is also the history of the Roman Catholic Church’s empirical authority. It imposed many truths, but it also imposed many errors. Truth, however, is the domain of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, not man, leads us into all truth (John 16:13). Hierarchical systems seek to act in the place of the Holy Spirit. And that was the foundation for Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholic “truth” is embodied in one who seeks to act in the place of Jesus Christ Himself—the pope as the “Vicar of Christ.” “Vicar of Christ means “in the place of Christ.”

The greatest schism occurred when the churches of the Eastern Empire separated from the western Roman Church largely as a result of the various church councils.

The Second Council of Ephesus

In AD 449 Emperor Theodosius II convoked The Second Council of Ephesus to further address the disputes surrounding the nature of Jesus Christ. This council was dominated by Theodosius, Dioscorus and supporters of the Monophysite theory of Christ’s nature. Monophysitism originated in the fifth century AD, its chief proponent being a monk named Eutyches who stated that in Jesus Christ the human nature was absorbed into the divine nature (similar to how a cube of sugar dissolves in a cup of water), thus leaving Christ with only one nature—divine. This found disfavor with the Oriental Orthodox churches that professed miaphysitism (in Jesus Christ divinity and humanity are united in one nature without separation).

Presiding over the council, Dioscorus ignored the Roman legates and refused Flavian and six bishops to sit as judges. Dioscorus's domination of the proceedings resulted in many bishops who opposed him being deposed, including Flavius.

For this reason, this council came to be labeled *Latrocinium* ("Robber Synod") by the Roman Catholic Church, which convened The First Council of Chalcedon to deal with the errors.

The First Council of Chalcedon

After being snubbed by Dioscorus at The Second Council of Ephesus, the Roman prelates, through Pope Leo, demanded the convocation of a new council, but Emperor Theodosius II declined to accommodate them. This led to growing dissension and threatened to leave the decrees from Ephesus II in force. After Theodosius's death, his successor Marcian convened the Council of Chalcedon (a city in Bithynia in Asia Minor) in 451 to annul The Second Council of Ephesus. With greater representation from the western churches, The Council of Chalcedon condemned the decrees of Ephesus II and reaffirmed the doctrine of the Incarnation. Dioscorus was condemned as a heretic by a sitting minority of the delegates (most refused to attend his trial), and all of his decrees were nullified. Marcian in turn exiled Dioscorus.

Much dissension and anger were displayed as bishops took different sides, but Pope Leo's dissertation on the Incarnation was finally approved by a majority present. The outcome was The Confession of Chalcedon which states:

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach people to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person (*prosopon*) and one Subsistence (*hypostasis*), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

Prior to The Council of Chalcedon, the Constantinople See had no ecclesiastical prominence. But after Constantine moved the seat of the Roman Empire to Constantinople from Rome, its proximity to the bishop of Constantinople caused the church to elevate the See of Constantinople to equal standing. The

Council of Chalcedon's 28th canon granted equal privileges to Constantinople on the basis of that city being the "New Rome." The council "apportioned equal prerogatives to the most holy See of new Rome" because "the city which is honored by the imperial power and senate and enjoying privileges equaling older imperial Rome should also be elevated to her level in ecclesiastical affairs and take second place after her." In 453 Pope Leo confirmed all the council's canons, but with a formal protest of canon 28 because he didn't want anyone else to enjoy the same power he enjoyed. Eventually, to honor the older See of Rome the council took the formal step of placing the See of Constantinople in a position "second in eminence and power to the Bishop of Rome."

More eastern churches rejected Chalcedon's decrees in favor of Ephesus II and separated themselves. The most significant among them was the Church of Alexandria (today, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria), which laid the groundwork for an even greater schism that would occur five hundred years later solidifying the earlier schisms between east and west.

At the Council of Chalcedon, anti-Christ achieved a great advancement in getting the Roman church to equate ecclesiastical authority with imperial authority, to set the groundwork for the pope to take the place of the Roman emperor as *Pontifex Maximus* and to meld the imperial and ecclesiastical authorities to form the Holy Roman Empire. As the superstitions of Roman pagan/Christianity captured the minds of the religious authorities it would lead to a time of intellectual darkness known as "the Middle Ages" or "the Dark Ages."

Anti-Christ also used this period to create conditions for the greatest schism to arise within Christianity: the separation of the eastern Roman churches from the western Roman churches.

The history of this period is far too complex to relate in this brief article. Our concern is not with all the details, but with the outcome of how anti-Christ has managed to deceive those who claim faith in Jesus Christ, primarily through the dictates of religious authorities whom God did not ordain. This is what comes of men trying to define the Godhead, which is beyond man's ability to define outside of what Scripture reveals, and then impose their definition upon everyone else. If Scripture doesn't give us sufficient evidence of God's nature to define the Godhead in human terms and labels then we must be content to allow God to be God. And our brethren who love Jesus but do not have perfect understanding must be allowed to have their relationship with Him. He will judge; we must not.

If there is to be any separation it must be on the basis of rejection of God's clear teaching in His Word. I emphasize "rejection" as opposed to misunderstanding.

Human labels may mean one thing to one person and quite a different thing to another person. This is why Paul tells us not to consider what men say above what is written (1 Cor. 4:6).

The power play of the Roman Catholic Church to impose its will upon all who name Christ Jesus as their savior has for centuries been the motivation behind its church councils. And these caused serious schisms that remain today.



The decline of the Roman Empire created great upheaval throughout the known world. Historians offer various reasons for the eventual decline, but the consensus seems to be that there is no single cause. Rather, there occurred many contributing factors spanning centuries, from the initial invasions by barbarians in the third century to the deposing of the last Western Roman Emperor, Romulus Augustus, by the Germanic mercenary Odoacer in A.D. 476.

When historians speak of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire they are referring specifically to the Western Roman Empire. The Eastern Roman Empire continued for another thousand years until conquered by the Ottomans. The reason for the focus on the Western Roman Empire isn't so much because the Empire's influence remained strong as long as it lasted, but because it gave way to what would become in later centuries the Holy Roman Empire—a melding of a restored Western Roman Empire under German rule with the emerging power of the Roman Catholic Church.

The western region of the Roman Empire had already in the fourth century suffered the loss of its influence when Constantine moved the empire's seat of power from Rome to Byzantium in Greece, and renamed the latter Constantinople. The Eastern Roman Empire's seat of power was initially in Nicomedia, Turkey, but also moved to Constantinople.

With the decay of the Western Roman Empire which was fragmented into several smaller kingdoms, the Eastern Roman or Byzantine Empire flourished, becoming one of the most powerful forces in Europe despite numerous setbacks through military conflicts.

With the collapse of the Western Roman Empire came the end of what historians call Classical Antiquity—a long period of cultural progress achieved through a hybrid Greek-Roman civilization known as the Greco-Roman world which began in the latter part of the 8th century B.C. Thus began a cultural

decline into what is commonly called “The Middle Ages,” AKA “The Dark Ages.”

Early on during the Middle Ages, in the 6th century the Germanic barbarian invaders formed numerous kingdoms throughout the former Western Roman Empire, entrenching their pagan elements into the nominally Christian (albeit paganized “Christian”) environs. These Germanic kingdoms competed among themselves for the land, with the eventual dominance by the Franks who attained a sizeable portion of the disputed territories within what would become modern France and Germany.

The Eastern Roman Empire continued to expand under Justinian who overthrew the Vandals in North Africa. Justinian sought to regain Italy as well, with a plan to reestablish control over the territories of the defunct Western Roman Empire. With his death, most of what he had accomplished was lost.

The 6th Century

The 6th century saw monasticism grow in response to the secularization of the Roman church. In 529, Benedict of Nursia established the Benedictine Order of monks at Monte Cassino. His “Rule” for monks became the most influential among most monastics over the centuries.

Although anti-Christ was well-served by monasticism because of its ascetic traditions and removal from society, several monastic orders involved themselves in the copying and translating of the Scriptures. These were strictly for the hierarchical system which for centuries withheld them from the common people. But were it not for these copyists and translators the Scriptures might well have remained obscure and rare even today. As it turns out, the avariciousness of the Roman Catholic Church was used by God to preserve His Word in a way that could not have been accomplished by the rightful, autonomous assemblies scattered throughout the known world.

At the same time, the churches began to develop a pattern of intercession which interposed a hierarchy of saints to whom Christians began to pray in seeking favors from God. This hierarchy continues to the present day among Roman Catholics and many Orthodox churches.

At the top of the hierarchy is the Trinity with Christ as the most favorable because of His human as well as divine natures and His experiences in the flesh. Following Christ is Mary, believed to be a “perpetual virgin,” who, as a woman, is believed to be more sensitive and receptive to the needs of believers. Following upon Christ and Mary are various saints, many of whom are considered “patron saints” to whom prayers for specific petitions might be made. The root of this hierarchy of intercession is found in Roman pagan tradition that had numerous gods to whom the ancient Romans prayed for specific needs.

In this way, anti-Christ interposed dead men and women between the believer and the Father, contrary to Jesus’ words in John 16:23-26:

“And in that day you will ask nothing of Me. Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name; ask, and you shall receive, so that your joy may be full.

“I have said these things to you in allegories, but the time comes when I will no longer speak to you in allegories, but I will speak to you plainly concerning the Father. In that day you shall ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will ask the Father for you, because the Father Himself loves you because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.

In addition to looking to alleged “saints” for intercession, there developed among Christians the idea that touching or at least looking upon relics of the faith was somehow important. Close proximity to things holy would result in pilgrimages being made to sites where Christ or some perceived saint was believed to have walked.

This has effectively hindered greatly the relationship between believers and the Father, which relationship Jesus came to establish as essential to sanctification and obedience to His will.

In place of that personal relationship with the Father, the Roman Catholic Church turned to fleshly attempts to impose what it thought to be the will of God upon society. In 529, Emperor Justinian issued his Code of Civil Laws which reflected Christian moral values, and upon which our modern jurisprudence is based. This was the basis for the biblical ethic upon which Western Civilization flourished for the past fifteen hundred years.

While we in the West can appreciate the blessings that have come upon us as a result of that ethic’s influence, we must not make the mistake of thinking that a moral society in itself is glorifying to God, or that it can be imposed upon unregenerate (or even regenerate) people without resorting to ungodly means. This was proven throughout the Dark Ages as Roman

Catholicism sought to force conversion to Christianity through coercion and pressure, including torture. Such persecution is a major reason why the Middle Ages are also called the Dark Ages.

In 530, the first pope of Germanic ancestry, Boniface II, came to power as the church and state became more intermingled. As church buildings became larger and more lavish, Justinian built Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, which he dedicated to Christ as the “Holy Wisdom.”

The purity and simplicity of faith in Jesus Christ had long been discarded under the burgeoning papal-imperial coalition. Anti-Christ had succeeded in largely relegating Christianity to a system of legalisms and worldly-wise commerce. He also influenced the church hierarchy in its attempts to make converts from among the barbarians in Europe. The Roman Catholic Church began to accept much pagan tradition and spirituality as a means to placate its new converts. Sorcery, pagan religious holidays and traditions, and other pagan practices began to be melded into a hybrid Christian-pagan Christianity beyond that which was born in Rome.

Toward the end of the century, Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540-604) formulated the Roman Catholic Mass into much of what it is today.

On April 26, 570, there was born to a family of the Quraysh tribe in Mecca a man whose presence would greatly impact both the east and west. Born Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Abd al-Muttlib ibn Hashim, he would come to be known simply as Muhammad. Orphaned at an early age, Muhammad was brought up by his uncle Abu Talib, and became a merchant. He married at the age of 25 but became discontented with his life. According to Islamic tradition, at the age of 40 Muhammad retreated to a cave near Mecca during the month of Ramadan where he allegedly received his first revelation from God. Three years later he began preaching these revelations, proclaiming that “God is One,” and that the only way to God is complete surrender (*islam*) to him. He also proclaimed himself a prophet in the same manner of Moses and Jesus.

The 7th Century

The 7th century was largely dominated by the rise of Islam in the east, beginning with Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina where he found acceptance as a “community activist,” for lack of a better term.

Because his proclamations were initially met with hostility by his fellow Meccans who maintained religious devotion to numerous pagan gods, Muhammad left Mecca with a small band of followers and moved to the city of Medina. There he rose to prominence and united the tribes under the Constitution of Medina which formulated an agreement to end the bitter fighting between two clans within Medina, the Aws and Khazraj. Drawing up certain rights and responsibilities for his followers (who came to be called “Muslims”) and other pagan communities of Medina, including Christians and Jews, he brought the community into unity.

Over a period of some eight years Muhammad developed a following that grew to number around 10,000. With them he embarked upon a course of conquest by raiding caravans,

murdering innocents, including women and children, and imposing Islam upon those he conquered. As Christians and Jews increasingly refused to accept Islam, Muhammad changed his original tone of benevolence toward them into a hateful pogrom to either eliminate or enslave any Jew or Christian with whom he came in contact.

Muhammad instituted the lunar-based Islamic calendar which governs Islamic countries. Some Islamic countries use the Islamic calendar for religious purposes but the Gregorian calendar for civil purposes in order to keep pace with the rest of the world's commerce and political interaction. The first year of the Islamic calendar traces to the year Muhammad allegedly made his supernatural journey from Mecca to Medina (A.D. 622), known as the Hijra. Every year since then has been designated by Islam as either H for Hijra or A.H. for the Latin *anno Hegirae* (in the year of the Hijra). Thus, Muslims typically call their calendar the Hijri calendar.¹

Interestingly, there is no history of Muhammad's existence prior to the emergence of the Qur'an which alleges to have been written by Muhammad. The earliest biography of Muhammad is Ibn Ishaq's *Life of God's Messenger* written ca. 767 (150 A.H.). The original no longer exists, but has been referred to by other Muslim writers, allegedly quoted verbatim at great length by Ibn Hisham and Al-Tabari. Another early source is the history of Muhammad's campaigns by al-Waqidi, but it, too, was written almost two hundred years after Muhammad was said to have died (A.D. 632).

Did Muhammad actually exist? Or was he the figment of a religious zealot's imagination? Until proven otherwise, we will assume that he did live, but that no history contemporary to his life exists. The alleged histories of his life relate some fantastic supernatural events which clearly never occurred. (I have a book that was given to me, which alleges that Muhammad never really existed, but I've not had time to read it as yet. Still, the idea that he may in reality be a fictional character is intriguing.)

In the 630s Arab Muslims wrested from Byzantium control the latter's southern provinces including Egypt and Syria. Throughout the rest of the 7th century, Islam under the Umayyad caliphs would besiege Byzantium, twice threatening to capture its capital Constantinople. By 640—the year of Muhammad's death—the Arabs had taken control of Mesopotamia and Islam's military expansion grew rapidly as the Umayyads, based in Egypt, conquered the remnant of the Persian Empire. The expanding Muslim empire soon engulfed Armenia, Cyprus and Iran and

began expeditions into North Africa where it would ultimately gain total control from Egypt to Mauritania.

Islam's attention turned toward Jerusalem in the first year A.H. (A.D. 622) when Muslims were instructed to face in the direction of the city when prostrating themselves in prayer. This is the year Muslim tradition says Muhammad made his night journey and ascension to Heaven. This alleged night journey became a vital doctrinal basis for much of Islam's beliefs and practices.² Over a year later the direction to face was changed to Mecca.

In 637 the Arab Rashidun Caliphs defeated the Byzantines at the Battle of Yarmouk and took control of Palestine, including Jerusalem, driving the Jews out of the city. The Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab allowed the Jews back into Jerusalem and signed a treaty promising to protect the Christians and their holy places. In 688 construction on the Dome of the Rock, the second most sacred shrine in Islam, was begun under the Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik. It was built on the site where Muslim tradition says Muhammad ascended into heaven during his Night Journey, and where Jews believe Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac. It was completed in 691 and has been refurbished several times since then.

The Dome of the Rock fits perfectly the prophecy in Daniel which speaks of a coming king who will conquer Jerusalem:

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he will exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper until the indignation is accomplished, for that which is determined shall be done.”

Neither shall he regard the god [*elohiym*: “gods”] of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god, for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate he will honor the god of forces, and he will honor a god whom his fathers did not know with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things.

“He will do this in the most strongholds with a strange god whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory. And he shall cause them to rule over many, and will divide the land for gain.

“And at the time of the end the king of the south [Egypt] will push at him, and the king of the north [Syria] shall come against him like a whirlwind—with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships—and he will enter into the countries, and will overflow and pass over.

¹ I believe Muhammad is the primary representative of the last-days “prince” or “king” among spiritual principalities whose final representative will be the coming anti-Christ according to Daniel 7. When Daniel speaks of princes and kings rising in the future he is not speaking merely of the men involved, but of spiritual entities that rule over the affairs of men. This final prince will “speak great words against the most High and will wear out the saints of the most High, and will think to change times and laws, and they will be given into his hand until a time, and times, and the dividing of time” (three-and-one-half years).

Under the prince of the final world power, Muhammad and Islam have sought to change the calendar and to impose Islamic law throughout the Holy Land, and have largely succeeded. His followers have built his tabernacle (the Dome of the Rock) on the holy mountain (Zion) between the Great Sea (the Mediterranean) and the inland sea (the Dead Sea) (Dan 11:45).

This is another reason to believe the last-days anti-Christ will be a Muslim who will negotiate a confederacy with the West under the papacy to share Jerusalem and drive the Jews into the wilderness for three-and-one-half years (Rv 12:14).

² The first part of the story—the **Isra** myth—begins with Muhammad praying in the Kaaba in Mecca. He claimed to have been visited by the archangel Jibril (Gabriel) who brought to him a steed named Buraq, the traditional heavenly steed of the prophets. Muhammad rides Buraq to the Masjid Al Aqsa—the “Farthest Mosque,” believed by some Muslims to be the Al-Aqsa Mosque (where today sits the Dome of the Rock) in Jerusalem. There Muhammad leads other prophets, including Adam, Moses and Jesus in prayer. In the second part of the journey—the **Mi'raj** (Arabic for “ladder”), Buraq takes him to the heavens, where he tours the seven circles and speaks with the earlier prophets such as Abraham, Moses, John the Baptist and Jesus. Muhammad is then taken to Sidrat al-Muntaha—a holy tree in the seventh heaven that Gabriel is not allowed to pass. According to Islamic tradition, God instructs Muhammad that his followers (Muslims) must pray fifty times per day. Moses tells Muhammad that it is very difficult for the people and urges Muhammad to ask God to reduce the number to which God agrees to set at five times per day.

“He will also enter into the glorious land, and many countries will be overthrown, but these will escape out of his hand: Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon [present-day Jordan]. He will stretch forth his hand also upon the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt, and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps.

“But news out of the east and out of the north will trouble him. Therefore he will go forth with great fury to destroy, and to utterly slay many. And he will plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain [Zion]. Yet he shall come to his end, and no one shall help him.” (Da 11:36-45)

The “king” is the spiritual principality of this empire, embodied in the religion of Islam. The Ottoman Empire at one time advanced as far as France, and had a strong foothold in Spain until driven out. It was an empire characterized by great accomplishments in art, architecture, science and mathematics (primarily by using the genius of the captured nations). Islam’s holy sites are decorated with great splendor and wealth.

Today the Ottoman Empire has ceased to exist officially, but its Islamic influences remain. Jerusalem was taken by the Ottomans and remained in Muslim possession until the six-day war of 1967 when the modern state of Israel took control of the city. Today, one of Islam’s most holy sites—the “tabernacle” called the Dome of the Rock—sits upon the ancient temple mount (Zion), which is between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. Caliph Abd al-Malik did indeed “plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain.”

It is also believed that the Dome of the Rock sits directly over the ruins of the ancient Jewish temple, and specifically over the site of the Holy of Holies. Some dispute this, but there is no solid evidence for either position. It would seem, however, that the Lord purposely allowed this to happen in order to prevent the Jews from building a temple because there is no acceptable sacrifice for sin after Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice. He alone will build the next temple during the Millennium.

Over the centuries, anti-Christ’s most formidable weapon against true believers in Christ, as well as Jews, would combine the Roman Catholic Church in the West, and Islam in the East and in North Africa.

The 8th Century

Within one hundred years Islam would become a mighty empire in its own right, threatening conquest of Western Europe after having conquered the Middle East, North Africa, Southern Italy, and making inroads as far west as Spain. Except for the Catholic Church and its political and military strength, including the not-so-Holy Crusaders, Islam today would be in control of much of Western Europe. But its time for world dominance had not yet come, and the Lord used one ungodly world power against the other to keep it in check for the time being.

The quelling of the Muslim advance is attributable in large part to the famous Battle of Tours (Poitiers) in 732, in which the leader of the Franks, Charles Martel, defeated a large army of Moors led by ‘Abdul Rahman Al Ghafiqi, the governor of Cordoba, Spain. That epic battle established a balance of power between Western Europe, Islam and the Byzantine Empire. Christianity was preserved as the dominant religion in both Western and Eastern Europe.

The battle also laid the foundation for the Carolingian Empire in the early 9th century and established Frankish domination over Western Europe for the next one hundred years. Thus, anti-Christ’s design to stamp out even the corrupted version of faith in Christ was thwarted. And as imperfect as Christianity had become, there remained faithful brethren who survived both the corrupting of the faith and anti-Christ’s attempt to destroy it utterly.

The prince of Rome (represented by the pope) would not make way for the prince of Arabia (represented by Muhammad). For the remainder of time the two would co-exist as world powers which I believe will one day in the future unite into an uneasy alliance to form the domain of the anti-Christ.

There also arose in the late 8th century, conflict between east and west Europe when the Bulgarians waged campaigns against the Byzantines, ultimately overcoming Constantine VI’s forces at the Battle of Marcellae, forcing him to pay tribute to the Khans who ruled Bulgaria.

In the east, motivated by the prohibition of “graven images” in the Tanach, there arose a movement in Byzantium to destroy all religious icons in the churches. Byzantine Iconoclasm banned religious images, and instituted widespread destruction of images as well as persecution of those who venerated them. The “First Iconoclasm” lasted for 57 years from 730 to 787, then abated for a time until iconoclasm was revived in the “Second Iconoclasm” between 814 and 842.

A number of reasons for the rise of iconoclasm in Byzantium include the influence of Islamic culture which forbids the use of images. Iconoclasm also reflected social and class distinctions wherein the poorer non-Greek citizens of the eastern provinces of the Byzantine Empire who faced constant raids by Muslims saw the advantage in destroying their icons. The wealthier Greeks within the Balkan and Italian provinces, as well as in Constantinople, strongly opposed iconoclasm.

In the west the papacy maintained hierarchical dominance over the churches in both the east and the west, but had no political power until Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne, king of the Franks, as Emperor of the Romans in A.D. 800 to begin the Carolingian dynasty, and to close out the century. Thus the Western Roman Empire was revived, though not to its former glory, to last for another thousand years.

The 9th Century

In 805 there began more conflicts between Islam and the Byzantines with successes and defeats on both sides, but with no total conquest for either.

The coronation of Charlemagne as the first Holy Roman emperor began the Carolingian empire named after him. He

died of pleurisy on January 28, 814, at age 71. He was embalmed and buried sitting upright on a gold-and-ivory throne, holding a gold scepter, shield and sword. His son Lothair would succeed him as Holy Roman Emperor as Louis I (the Pious), and would continue the Carolingian dynasty which would last until the death of Charles the Fat in 888.

Louis I divided the realm among his three sons from his first marriage: Lothair was named co-emperor and king of Italy; Pepin was made king of Aquitaine; Louis the German was made king of Bavaria. These were the precursors of modern Italy, France and Germany, and the struggle for power among Louis and his sons is filled with treachery and intrigue that laid the groundwork for centuries of antagonism among those three nations. The final division of the empire came with the Treaty of Verdun in 843. Lothair's kingdom would be further divided among his sons upon his death in 855.

In 823, Pope Paschal I began the papal tradition of handing the imperial sword to succeeding emperors of the Holy Roman Empire with the coronation of Louis I's son Lothair as co-emperor. This practice symbolized the temporal power granted by the Church to the state as the guardian of virtue and protectorate of the Church.

During his reign, Pope Paschal I instituted numerous reforms upon the Church and secured independence of the Roman see and the pope's sovereignty over Church states.

In 867, there began a schism within the Roman Church with an encyclical against Pope Nicholas I from Photius, the patriarch of Constantinople. The schism would grow to finally result in a split between east and west in 1054, which split remains today.

The 10th Century

Things continue much as before with anti-Christ fomenting wars among nations and schisms in the Roman Church, thus keeping true faith in Jesus Christ on a continual path of persecution from various factions at odds with one another: Islam; the Roman Catholic Church; barbarian invaders.

In 904, Pope Christophorus was deposed and strangled to death on orders from a cleric who succeeded him with the support of Alberic I of Spoleto. The cleric was consecrated on January 29 as Sergius III, who also had Christophorus's predecessor Leo V assassinated. Sergius III is rumored to have fathered a son by Marozia, the teenaged daughter of the papal dictator Theophylactus. This can be only a "rumor" because priestly celibacy had been imposed upon the church's clergy since the fourth century.

So much for the Roman Church's claim that the popes are chosen by the Holy Spirit as successors to Peter, the alleged first "pope" of the Roman Catholic Church.

Islam continued its incursion into the West and solidified its hold on Jerusalem.

The 11th Century

Although the Islamic rulers were at times benevolent, and at times harsh, Christians and Jews managed to survive in Palestine. But as time wore on the Roman Church began to show interest in taking back control of Jerusalem, partly because of the rising persecution of Christians pilgriming to the church's holy sites.

In 1009, the church's interest increased when the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah ordered the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, deemed holy to Catholics because it was constructed on the site where the church believed Christ was buried and rose again. Because the Muslims realized that to antagonize Christians was seriously hampering its trade with pilgrims, the church was rebuilt, and the persecution of pilgrims abated, eventually to stop. But the church had already begun to react to the violence against Christians and was garnering support for Crusades that would spread across the Christian world.

The groundwork for the Crusades had been laid earlier in the Middle Ages when in 711 the Muslim commander Tariq ibn Ziyad began his invasion of Gaul. Turkish Muslim attacks further weakened the Byzantine Empire. As Islam continued to spread throughout the Holy Roman Empire the Catholic Church became convinced it had to do something to stop its advance.

In 1063, Pope Alexander II blessed Iberian Christians in their wars against the Muslims, authorizing the use of a papal standard. He also granted indulgences to those killed in battle. In 1074, Byzantine Emperor Michael VII requested aid from Pope Gregory VII. Eventually Pope Gregory VII's successor Pope Urban II blessed Christian armies fighting to reclaim the lands lost to the Muslim invaders.

Crusaders were less soldiers of the empire than soldiers for the church. This was due in part to the Investiture Controversy which pitted the papacy against the nobles of the Holy Roman Empire for authority in granting appointments to ecclesiastical offices. This conflict originated around 1075 between Pope Gregory VII and Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV. In 1075, Pope Gregory VII issued a series of canons in which he asserted that secular law resides solely under the pope's authority because the Roman Catholic Church, being founded by God, is the sole universal power. Henry IV rebelled against Gregory's dictum by withdrawing imperial support of Gregory and calling for the election of a new pope. Gregory reacted by excommunicating Henry and deposing him as German king.

Eventually the pope won because of the German princes and aristocracy who had been in rebellion since 1075. Needing to muster strength against the rebellion, Henry IV recanted and apologized in person to the pope. The intrigue that followed involved several kings and popes, with the eventual succumbing of imperial power to the papacy which held sway over the populous of the empire through fear and spiritual sanctions.

Anti-Christ succeeded in placing secular power under the papacy which would last until the Reformation. The power of the sword in the hands of the pope would be used to terrorize both non-believers and those alleged by the papacy to be "heretics."



When historians speak of the Dark Ages they generally mean the period within the Middle Ages known as the Early Middle Ages (AKA the Low Middle Ages)—a time in Western Europe when intellectual pursuits waned in the face of superstition. A malaise settled over Western Europe that hindered progress in science, art and other humanistic pursuits. Science was viewed with suspicion by the Roman Catholic Church which misinterpreted Scripture in a manner that exacerbated ignorance of the natural world. Illiteracy, starvation and disease were rampant. But dramatic changes were on the way.

The eleventh century saw the Dark Ages begin to give way to a new interest in intellectualism. It was the beginning of the High Middle Ages, a time of small steps toward renaissance which formed the basis for the yet future European Renaissance. This was a time which saw intellectual advancement in various areas of industry, trade, science and technology in Western Europe as a result of changing political, social and economic philosophy. The twelfth century saw a dramatic shift in philosophical Christianity as new technological discoveries led to the development of grandiose architectural achievements, particularly in the construction of churches and cathedrals.

As the Roman Catholic Church continued to solidify its political power over European culture, its authority became more centralized within European cities as impressive edifices of worship elicited the awe and admiration of the masses. Grand cathedrals housed ecclesiastical power centers under the bishops, all of whom were subject to the Roman Pontiff. No longer did the image of the humble servant of God characterize the bishops. As anti-Christ worked to increase the power of Romanism throughout Western Europe, the office of bishop was transformed even more into one of authoritarianism over local politics as well as over the spiritual welfare of the people.

Although as early as the eighth century, Christian armies had been raised to stem the tide of the Muslim invasions into

Western Europe, the company of soldiers that would come to be called “Crusaders” was not established until the year 1071 when the Seljuk Turks defeated the Byzantine army and cut off Christian access to Jerusalem, destroying many sites sacred to Roman Catholicism.

In the eleventh century, Pope Gregory VII (c. 1015/1028-1085) struggled with the idea of waging a “holy war” contrary to the Lord’s commands to love one’s enemies. Eventually he decided that “justified violence” was acceptable in defense of Christians who were being persecuted in the Holy Land. Gregory VII was an admirer of Augustine of Hippo whose writing, *The City of God*, justified the use of force in the service of Christ. *The City of God* has been used over the centuries to the present time by Christians who believe it is “the Church’s” responsibility to conquer the nations for Christ even by force if necessary.

In 1095, fearing that all Asia Minor would be conquered by Islam, the Byzantine emperor, Alexios I Komnenos called upon Pope Urban II to come to the rescue of Constantinople and to recover Jerusalem from the Seljuk Turks. The pope responded by calling throughout Western Europe for Roman Catholic military units to drive out the Muslim invaders.

Urban II called the Council of Clermont at which he defined the concept of the crusades and called for the princes throughout Europe to wage a holy war in the Holy Land. He granted plenary indulgences to the hundreds of thousands of Crusaders that heeded his call to battle. (The indulgences were somewhat ambiguous in that it was never made clear if it was necessary to die in the battle to recover Jerusalem in order to receive them.)¹

¹ An indulgence is the partial or full (plenary) remission of temporal punishment which the Catholic Church believes must be endured in a place of temporary suffering called Purgatory. Plenary indulgences are granted by the Catholic Church in specific cases that it believes warrants full remission of such punishment so that, should the penitent die in the state of grace imposed through the indulgence, he will immediately be ushered into Heaven without having to suffer in Purgatory.

Urban II's call to arms was not entirely based on the spiritual benefits promised to those who would follow that call. He based much of his speech at Clermont on appeals to avenge fellow Christians under the Muslim invaders and on non-spiritual motives promising material rewards in the way of land, wealth, power and influence. His appeal included his assessment that the Turks could be easily defeated. It was upon this rhetoric that those in the council elicited chants of "*Deus vult!*" ("God wills it!"), which became the rallying cry of the Crusades.

Anti-Christ's plans for the Crusades exceeded those even of the pope. The furor unleashed by Urban II's impassioned appeal to arms was not limited to Muslim invaders only, but expressed itself in the killing of Jews and the persecution of eastern Orthodox Christians.

The Crusades succeeded in aiding the planting of the Roman Catholic form of Christianity throughout Europe by the end of the eleventh century. Although that form of Christianity had many faults (and still does), it did establish the biblical ethic upon which European society based its laws and culture. Anti-Christ gained some victories in the process, but he also lost ground in the hearts of individuals whose faith, although greatly stunted, allowed for the growth of Christianity.

During this time the thirteenth-century Italian Dominican priest and philosopher, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), among others, rediscovered the works of Aristotle which led to the development of scholasticism patterned after the ancient Greek schools of philosophy. Thus the Roman Catholic Church was impelled further into integrating Scripture with human wisdom, particularly the Hellenization of Christianity.

By the end of the thirteenth century the fervor of the Crusades began to wane as succeeding popes conjured justification of political and territorial power grabs throughout Western Europe.

The fourteenth century is generally regarded as the Late Middle Ages—a time when the medieval world began to transition into the modern world. It was a century that saw incredible change wrought by exploration, revolt, wars, plagues and further progress in science and technology.

Localized famines occurred in France and England during the early fourteenth century, but the Late Middle Ages saw the worst of these when there occurred the Great Famine, the first of a number of calamities to strike Europe. The Great Famine decimated populations west-to-east from France to Russia, and north-to-south from Scotland to Italy. From 1315 to 1322 the Great Famine caused millions of deaths, bringing to an end the prosperity Europe enjoyed during the previous three centuries. Prolonged heavy periods of rain throughout Europe caused widespread crop failures. There was little food for livestock as well as people. Food prices doubled within a few months, and it wasn't long before peasants couldn't afford the basic staples to sustain life, including bread, let alone more expensive foods. The excessively wet weather continued throughout 1316 and into the summer of 1317. When it finally abated, the European population had lost nearly all resources to sustain itself. Children were abandoned and there were many incidents of cannibalism.

The Catholic Church suffered the displeasure of a populous that had begun to lose faith in the institution. No amount of prayers, no number of masses or appeals to God by the pope, were able to stem the prolonged suffering. Corruption within the church was to blame in many minds. The Great Famine brought to a halt a period of unprecedented growth in the European population that started during the mid-eleventh century.

Criminal activity increased significantly during the Great Famine as people took any means possible to feed themselves, leading to a breakdown in the culture. Chivalry, a trademark of the earlier medieval period, was abandoned, warfare became more brutal and death claimed even the lives of nobles who had previously been treated with deference.

The notable Hundred Years War began in the fourteenth century and ended in the fifteenth century (1337-1453), fought by Edward III, king of England, for ascension to the French throne following the end of the Capetian Dynasty in France.

During this time a peasant girl who believed she received divine guidance through visions led the French army to important victories against the English. She was captured by the Burgundians who turned her over to the British for a ransom. She was put on trial by Pierre Cauchon, a pro-British bishop of Beauvais, for charges of "insubordination and heterodoxy." She was nineteen years old when she was burned at the stake for heresy.

Anti-Christ gained many victories through the protracted wars between allegedly "Christian" nations against each other. As the Hundred Years War dragged on, Europe suffered more terrible calamities which man would classify as "acts of God."

The Hundred Years War ended with the French triumphant, and at its end the English were embroiled in a dynastic struggle which pitted the House of Lancaster against the House of York for the throne. The Wars of the Roses were fought between 1455 and 1485, further decimating the population of England.

Weakened by the starvation experienced during the Great Famine, and the early stages of the Hundred Years War, Europeans were ripe for another calamity that would decimate the population even further—an invisible invader known as the Black Death.

The Black Death—commonly believed to be bubonic plague—struck Europe in October, 1347, and spread rapidly throughout all of Europe and into Scandinavia and Russia by 1350.

Where the Black Death started is open to speculation, but it is generally believed to have started somewhere in Asia, possibly in China. From there it spread to Italy, then to the rest of Europe through fleas that lived on plague-infected rats that came to Europe through international trade on ships. The plague presented in other ways known as pneumonic and septicemic forms. Pneumonic plague could be spread with a sneeze or other means of carrying germs through mucous and saliva; septicemic plague spread through contact with open sores.

The estimated number of Europeans alone who died from the Black Death is 20 million—about one-third of the population. Some cities lost as many as 40% to 60% of their populations.

Through the Black Death, anti-Christ succeeded in decimating almost half of the European Christian population. Yet it must be conceded that this could not have happened were it not for God's consent.

Superstition played a large part in people's beliefs regarding the cause of the Black Death. The most common belief was that it was an omen from God—punishment for the sins of the people. Some accused the Jews of poisoning the wells, leading to terrible persecution that even the Roman Catholic Church found difficult to stop. Scientific attempts to explain the plague failed miserably simply because there were no scientific instruments to help identify the microscopic culprits. After diligent study by the University of Paris, the Paris Consilium attributed the plague to earthquakes and astrological influences.

In spite of the horrific dangers presented by the Black Death, it is recorded that violence and debauchery increased greatly. While a large number feared the plague, they evidently didn't fear God.

Anti-Christ gained a significant victory in the further establishment of the Roman Catholic Church which, although losing a large number of adherents, realized monetary gain through bequests upon their deaths. The large number of indulgences meted out for prayers and masses for the dead and other priestly services also added greatly to the coffers. Yet in spite of these anti-Christ practices of selling indulgences, the groundwork was laid for the coming Protestant Reformation.

The Catholic clergy were unable to effectively minister to those affected by the Black Death, but were quick to charge money for their services, thus resulting in resentment. One man who saw the futility and the evil in charging money for those services was a Roman Catholic priest named Martin Luther, but he would not come onto the scene until the early 16th century.

In the wake of the Black Death unstable economic conditions led to the restriction of wages in an attempt to stem the tide of rising costs for goods and services, particularly those demanded by skilled laborers. In England the king issued the Statute of Laborers (1351) in which the wages of the common people were set at pre-plague levels. This led in the spring of 1381 to the Peasants Revolt which threatened the feudal system under which the English economy operated. Although technically considered free men, peasants were bound by law to work the land on which they lived and were subject in every respect to the nobles who owned that land. They could not leave the land under the threat of imprisonment. In essence, they were slaves to the nobles regardless of being called freemen. In the face of this adversity many nobles flaunted their wealth and made conditions worse for their subjects. The church, wishing to appease its wealthy benefactors, encouraged the peasants to keep their place.

In the meantime, greater animosity was developing between the papacy and the monarchs of England, France, Castile and Aragon. As the church lost the confidence of the common people due to its inability to stem the destruction from the Great Famine and the Black Death, the monarchs became bolder in asserting their secular authority. Philip IV of France challenged the papacy's authority over priests accused of criminal acts. The

church had traditionally claimed the right to discipline its clergy in civil and criminal matters. Philip also challenged the church's claim to tax exemption based on the idea that the church enjoyed the use of secular services and the country's infrastructure of roads, bridges and harbors.

Boniface issued two papal bulls in which he asserted the church's superiority over secular governments, and forbade Catholics to pay taxes to any government unless ordered to do so by the pope.

In response, Philip convinced the French bishops and archbishops to side with him. Boniface threatened to depose Philip who, in turn, had his chief prosecutor, William de Nogaret, to bring against Boniface charges of ethical, moral and legal crimes. He had Boniface arrested and thrown into prison. This act sparked outrage among the people who, in spite of much discontent, still considered the papacy a revered office. To ward off rebellion, Philip released Boniface who died shortly afterward.

The church suffered much loss of face during these trying times, which were the beginning of the end for papal power over secular governments.

In the 1370s, John Wycliffe began writing treatises in which he challenged the power of the papacy. This caused respect toward the church to decline even further, particularly among the common people.²

Although most of Europe declined culturally during the fourteenth century, Italy became the major catalyst for the coming European Renaissance that would arise at the end of the Middle Ages.³ A trend toward humanism and away from the sacred began to be reflected in Italy's art under the masterful talents of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo whose realism exceeded anything prior.

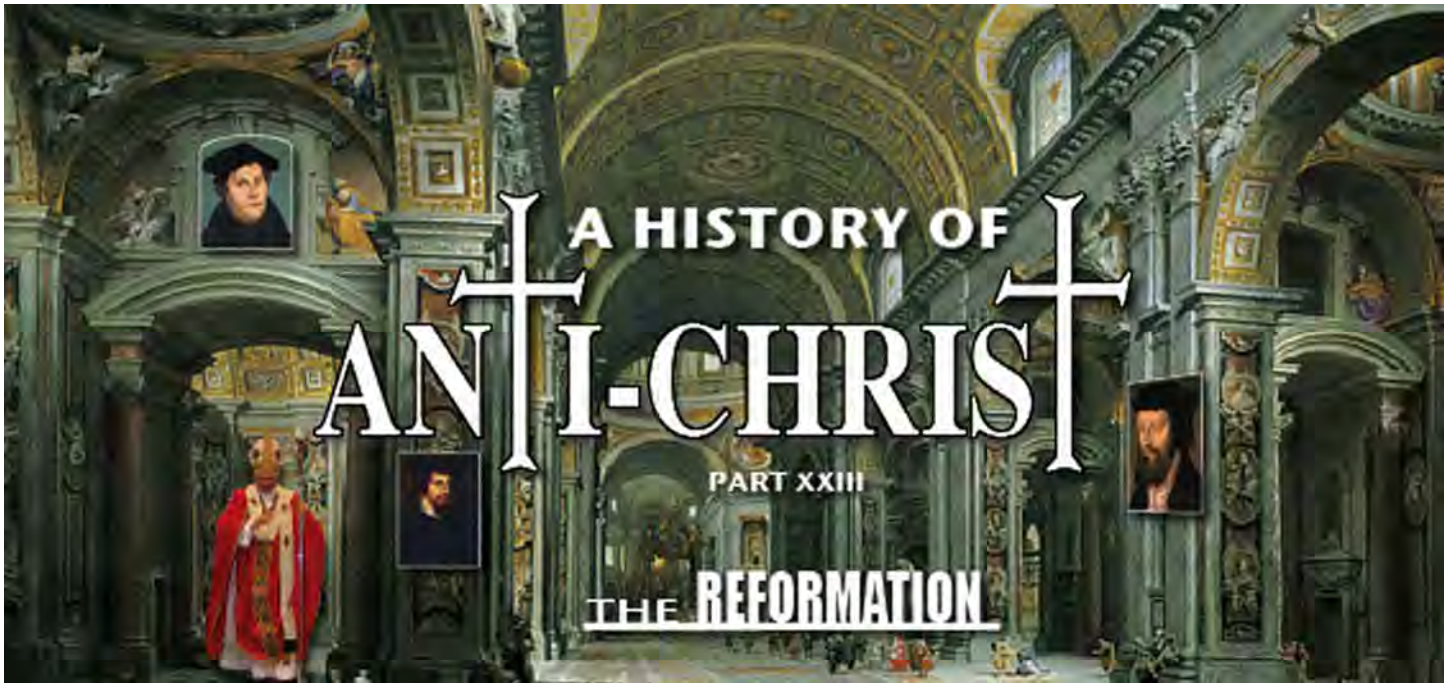
The fifteenth century saw the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, while the Moors were driven from Spain, seemingly for good. The Jews were also expelled.

In 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail for the East Indies, hoping to find a shorter trade route for Spain by sailing west.

The end to the Middle Ages would occur during the sixteenth century which saw the most significant movement to impact Christianity up until that time.

² There is a dichotomy evident in that biblically the Roman Catholic Church was correct in urging the peasants to keep their place rather than revolt against their masters. But the church failed terribly by not instructing the nobles to treat their serfs with respect and dignity, and to make sure that they did not lack any basic needs for food, shelter or clothing, and to go beyond that to help them maintain a quality of life that would sustain health and well-being. Although Scripture condemns all forms of rebellion, it also affirms the need for the stronger to bear with the weaker. We might not expect that in a non-Christian society, but Europe was decidedly Christian, at least nominally, and the church had the obligation to instruct in righteousness for all.

³ Historian Charles H. Haskins wrote extensively about this pre-Renaissance period. He says about the 12th century in Europe that it "was in many respects an age of fresh and vigorous life. The epoch of the Crusades, of the rise of towns, and of the earliest bureaucratic states of the West, it saw the culmination of Romanesque art and the beginnings of Gothic; the emergence of the vernacular literatures; the revival of the Latin classics and of Latin poetry and Roman law; the recovery of Greek science, with its Arabic additions, and of much of Greek philosophy; and the origin of the first European universities. The twelfth century left its signature on higher education, on the scholastic philosophy, on European systems of law, on architecture and sculpture, on the liturgical drama, on Latin and vernacular poetry.



FOR MANY CENTURIES Roman Catholicism remained the dominant expression of the Christian faith, largely due to its ability to impose its will on the far reaches of the old Roman Empire through military might and spiritual intimidation. That intimidation took the form of threats of eternal damnation for anyone who questioned the teachings and practices of the papacy. The Roman Catholic priesthood, which developed along the lines of regional governance to assure compliance with papal authority, solidified itself as the spiritual hierarchy over virtually every aspect of life. Emperors and kings were bound to Romanism lest their subjects revolt out of loyalty to their church. Fear more than love was the motivation for most obedience.

Yet from the beginning, there were courageous individuals who sought to bring the light of God's love and freedom to those spiritually bound to Romanism. They were hounded, persecuted and martyred for daring to oppose the ungodly and unscriptural teachings of the papacy.

England

John Wycliffe

Although individuals opposed the might of the papacy from the beginning, the first real organized attempt to bring a semblance of reformation to the church is credited to John Wycliffe, a 14th-century theologian and lay preacher at Oxford in England. Wycliffe was opposed to the idea of a clergy and preached in favor of biblically-based reforms and against the possessiveness of the church. He also advocated for the translation of Scripture into the common languages of the people, and by 1382 was able to publish his own translation taken directly from the Latin Vulgate into his native English.

Under the protection of John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster, Wycliffe published his *Summa Theologica*, in which he asserted that the church should give up its properties and allow secular authorities to rule in secular affairs. His other great work, *De*

civili dominio, further called for the renunciation of temporal power by the Church.

Wycliffe was among the first to express belief in predestination—the “invisible church of the elect” predestined to salvation—as opposed to the visible Catholic Church. Wycliffe's teachings became popular among the uneducated, and there developed among them the derogatorily-named Lollard movement. (“Lollard” implied one was lazy and/or uneducated.)

In spite of other scriptural shortcomings, Wycliffe aroused the ire of the anti-Christ spirit behind Romanism. When in 1381 Wycliffe formulated his doctrine of the Lord's Supper contrary to the Eucharistic doctrine of the Church, the English hierarchy was moved to act against him. Wycliffe's declarations were pronounced heretical. Unwilling to recant, he appealed to the king. With the aid of the newly created printing press Wycliffe was able to publish his declarations and have them spread among the English masses, many of whom received them in earnest.

Wycliffe proposed 24 reformations for the Church, 10 of which addressed the doctrine of transubstantiation, 14 of which addressed church order and institutions.

When the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 broke out, anti-Christ used the papacy to place the blame on Wycliffe. William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury and an old foe of Wycliffe, called an ecclesiastical assembly of notables at London to censure him. During the assembly on May 21 an earthquake shook not only the city but the confidence of the attendees who took it as a sign from God that they should disband. But Courtenay convinced them that the quake was a sign from God that they should proceed to purify the earth from false doctrine. Called the “Earthquake Synod,” it resulted in 10 of Wycliffe's 24 propositions being called “heretical,” and the remaining 14 “erroneous.”

Again anti-Christ used intimidation to dissuade Wycliffe's followers from continuing with him. It was forbidden under

threat of prosecution for anyone to hold to Wycliffe's positions, or to promote them in sermons or academic dissertations. Although the English Commons rejected the ban, the king decreed the arrest of those who disobeyed. On November 17, 1382, Wycliffe was summoned to appear before a synod at Oxford. Because he still held favor with the court and Parliament he was allowed to keep his living and was not excommunicated from the Roman Church.

On Holy Innocents' Day, December 28, 1384, he suffered a stroke while at Mass. He died on December 31.

Under duress from further attempts at reformation in later years, the Roman Catholic Council of Constance declared Wycliffe a heretic. The council decreed that his books be burned, and his remains exhumed and burned. His ashes were cast into the River Swift which flows through the Lutterworth in Leicestershire, England, where he had died.

The anger and hatred of the anti-Christ spirit is strong, and was exhibited through the Roman Catholic Church's hatred for Wycliffe so that even 30 years after his death it had him burned posthumously as a heretic.

Jan Hus

The next prominent attempt at reformation was made by Jan Hus (Eng., John Huss), a Czech priest/philosopher who, like Wycliffe, challenged the Church's doctrines on transubstantiation, clergy, order and other issues. Hus's teachings had a strong influence in Europe, and formed the basis for the Protestant movement of the sixteenth century.

Hus fell victim to the anti-Christ spirit of the Council of Constance held from 1414 to 1418. Hus was summoned to Constance under the impression that he would be able to state his ideas. Instead, he was condemned and subsequently burned at the stake on July 6, 1415.

Dissension within the Roman Catholic Church was quelled for a time as the anti-Christ spirit worked to further impose the unscriptural teachings and practices of Rome upon virtually all of Christendom.

Germany

Martin Luther

Over one hundred years later, on October 31, 1517, a seemingly innocuous event took place that would light the fires of religious revolution and plunge Europe into centuries-long warfare. A German Augustinian monk, priest and theologian, Martin Luther, posted on the door of the cathedral in Wittenberg, Germany, *The Ninety-Five Theses* which he deigned to bring to the attention of the bishop and clergy there. It was customary among theologians to post such theses for discussion of religious matters, so Luther did not think he was doing anything particularly radical. However, his *95 Theses* attacked issues near and dear to the heart of the papacy, including clerical abuses, and particularly the selling of indulgences.

Exactly when the Roman Catholic Church began selling indulgences is uncertain, but the practice became an important part of the anti-Christ's methods of inducing servitude and fear among the Catholic faithful.

An indulgence is a Roman Catholic practice of granting full or partial remission of temporal punishment for sins already forgiven

through the Roman Catholic rite of confession. Prior to indulgences the Church imposed severe penalties for sins confessed to, and absolved through the blessings of, a priest. The penalties were said to take up the lack of Christ's sacrifice to fully atone for sins. It was necessary, according to Catholic teaching, that penitents submit themselves to additional punishment meted out through the Church. Such punishments might take the form of flagellation, either at the hand of another, or at one's own hand, making one's way on one's knees to Catholic churches and/or shrines, or other forms of self-immolation. In some areas even today such punishments are still engaged in by devout penitents.

Penitents were told that by purchasing indulgences for sums of money, they could avoid not only such temporal punishments on earth, but the alleged punishments to come in the afterlife. With enough paid, full or "plenary" indulgences could be granted which would keep one from suffering in Purgatory before being allowed into the presence of God. In some cases, indulgences could be paid for the dead by their loved ones in order to have them released from Purgatory earlier than would otherwise be required by God.

Luther's *95 Theses* posited that the selling of indulgences was contrary to the intention of the confession and penance (to which he still adhered), and that such indulgences were ineffectual.

One means of procuring indulgences in Wittenberg was to venerate relics—artifacts attached to the lives of Roman Catholic saints. Frederick III of Saxony had displayed at the Wittenberg Cathedral a vast collection of some 5,000 relics. As Pope Leo X began a fund-raising campaign to renovate St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, Johann Tetzel, a Dominican priest, began to sell indulgences throughout the German provinces. Albrecht, the Archbishop of Mainz, Germany, had purchased his church rank and was heavily in debt for having done so. He agreed to allow Tetzel to sell indulgences in his territory provided he received a portion for himself.

Although Frederick III and George, Duke of Saxony had forbidden the sale of indulgences in their respective lands, Luther's parishioners traveled outside those lands to purchase their indulgences. When they came to confession to Luther they insisted that they didn't have to repent of their sins because they had already paid good money for them. Luther became outraged that the Church was charging people for what was theirs by right as a free gift paid for through the blood of Christ. This formed part of Luther's reasoning for salvation by grace rather than by works.

It was never the Luther's intent to create a schism or to withdraw from the Roman Catholic Church, but rather to bring reformation to the Church through scholarly debate on scriptural matters. Thus he posted his *95 Theses* on the Wittenberg Cathedral door with that purpose in mind.

He also sent hand-written copies to his superior, the bishop of Brandenburg, and to Albrecht of Mainz who was responsible for the sale of indulgences. Within two weeks copies of the *95 Theses* were spread throughout Germany, and within two months they found their way throughout all of Europe. As the Lord would have it, Johannes Gutenberg's invention of mechanical moving type had come on the scene in Mainz, Germa-

ny, around 1439, and had been perfected sufficiently to allow for Luther's 95 Theses to be mass produced as one of the first religious controversies aided by the printing press.

Anti-Christ would not stand for this. On June 15, 1520, Pope Leo X issued *Exsurge Domine* ("Arise, O Lord"), a papal bull (edict) rebutting Luther's 95 Theses, and threatening Luther with excommunication unless he recanted within 60 days, not only the 95 Theses, but other statements made in various writings.

Luther not only refused to recant, but burned a copy of the papal bull at Wittenberg on December 10, 1520. This sealed his excommunication.

Anti-Christ deigned to move beyond excommunication to execution. On April 18, 1521 Luther answered a summons to appear before the Diet of Worms—a general assembly of the estates of the Holy Roman Empire. Holy Roman Emperor Charles V presided over the assembly at Worms, in the Rhineland, Germany. Johann Eck, assistant to the Archbishop of Trier, prosecuted Luther. Eck laid out copies of Luther's writings and asked if the books were his, and if he stood by what was written in them. Luther attested to the truth that they were his writings, but asked for one day to consider an answer as to whether or not he stood by them. After prayer and consultation with friends, Luther gave this answer:

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.

After five days of deliberations Charles V presented the Edict of Worms on May 25, 1521, declaring Luther an outlaw and banning his writings. The decree went out: "We want him to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic." This was effectively a death sentence on Luther. The edict also made it a crime to protect Luther and allowed anyone to kill him without legal consequence.

According to plans, Luther was to disappear on his way back to Wittenberg. On the way he was apprehended by soldiers loyal to Prince Frederick III who had been Luther's protector during his trial. The men wore masks in order to appear to be highwaymen. Frederick had Luther escorted to the Wartburg Castle at Eisenach where he remained under the prince's protection. There he translated the New Testament from Greek into German and wrote numerous doctrinal theses. He also engaged in polemics against the pope and Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz. He broadened his discourse to include other practices essential to the Church other than indulgences and pilgrimages. These included condemnation as idolatry the concept of the Mass as a sacrifice, rejection of compulsory confession, and the taking of religious vows as an illegitimate and vain attempt to gain salvation through works.

Reaction to Luther's writings went beyond Luther's intent, resulting in violence against Catholic clergy and the destruction of icons. Alarmed by the violence attributed to his admonitions

against papal rule, Luther returned to Wittenberg. He attributed the violence to the Devil, and appealed to the peaceful intent of the Gospel. Said Luther:

Do you know what the Devil thinks when he sees men use violence to propagate the gospel? He sits with folded arms behind the fire of hell, and says with malignant looks and frightful grin: "Ah, how wise these madmen are to play my game! Let them go on; I shall reap the benefit. I delight in it." But when he sees the Word running and contending alone on the battlefield, then he shudders and shakes for fear.

His words were received with joy, and the violence was quelled. Luther proceeded to continue his battle against the Roman Church, but set out a moderate policy for reformation that eschewed the violence of religious zealots intent on using the fledgling Reformation to instill social unrest.

On June 13, 1525, Luther married Katharina von Bora, one of 12 nuns he helped escape from the Nimbschen Cistercian convent two years earlier, thus establishing the right of clergy to marry in his new-found departure from the Church. Eventually Luther found himself, for better or for worse, the leader in the move toward a new kind of church which, although departing from Romanism on many important issues, retained many other questionable beliefs and practices.

Luther's split from the Roman Catholic Church was arguably the most significant development within the growing Protestant Reformation. Other Reformers outside of Germany were having their voices heard and received not only by the common people, but by magistrates, kings and princes, many of whom were eager to find ways to break the papal yoke from off their domains.

As much light and truth that Luther brought to the Church and to the Reformation, he held to a sin that was easily exploited by anti-Christ. Luther's attitude toward Jews was as anti-Christ as his theology was biblical—mostly strong, partly weak.

Luther believed unconverted Jews to be blasphemers and liars because of their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. He advocated kindness toward Jews because Jesus was born as a Jew, but only as a means of converting them to Christ. His prolific writings on the Jews included *Von den Juden und Ihren Lugen* (*On the Jews and Their Lies*), in which he posited that the Jews were no longer God's chosen people, but were people of the Devil. He advocated the seizing of Jews' money and property, the burning of synagogues and Jewish prayer books, the destruction of their homes, and forbidding rabbis from preaching. He called the Jews "poisonous envenomed worms."

Luther's polemic against Jews would form the basis for the mid-twentieth-century Holocaust as Adolf Hitler appealed to the Germans' Lutheran background as justification for his persecution of the Jews.

Switzerland

Huldrych Zwingli

In Switzerland, Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) posited a simple yet important consideration for his attempts at reformation within the Catholic Church: whatever is in the Bible is

truth; whatever is not in the Bible is not truth. By this he meant spiritual truth; he did not deny the reality of empirical fact.

Educated at the University of Vienna and the University of Basel, Zwingli became adept at poetry, philosophy, astronomy, physics and music, as well as the ancient classics. His tutelage under well-known humanists of his day led Zwingli to begin questioning his Roman Catholic beliefs. Yet even as anti-Christ sought to draw him away from Christ through the humanistic influences in his life, those influences surprisingly led him toward reformation thinking in the long run.

Zwingli was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1506, but he began studying the teachings of Erasmus, which turned him toward the Reformation. Moving to Einsiedeln in 1515, Zwingli witnessed first-hand many of the evils of Romanism, including the selling of indulgences. Several years before Luther began teaching against this practice, Zwingli was condemning it. He was also distressed at the militaristic nature of Romanism which he saw contributing to the moral decay and death of Swiss youth. Yet Zwingli remained in the Church even while preaching against the evils of the papacy. Like Luther, it was not Zwingli's intention to create a schism, but rather to reform the Church from within.

It wasn't until the plague struck Zurich in 1520 and Zwingli was infected, that Zwingli's dedication to the Lord was fully realized. Recovering from the plague, Zwingli realized that he had been spared for a reason, and his teachings on the necessity for strict obedience to the Scriptures intensified.

Among Zwingli's challenges to the Church were the requirements for celibacy among the priests, infant baptism, and required fasting, particularly throughout the season of Lent.

At the time, Switzerland was not a unified nation, but consisted of thirteen states (cantons) as well as affiliated states and lordships. The independence of the states contributed to division over the Reformation and its several confessions. It was in this climate that Zwingli attempted to spread his ideas. Encouraged by other Swiss clergymen, he was emboldened to publish his first major statement of faith, *Apolgeticus Archeteles* ("The First and Last Word"), in which he defended himself against charges of heresy and stirring unrest, and denied the right of any ecclesiastical hierarchy to judge him in church matters because of the Church's corrupted condition.

Eventually the cantons of Switzerland were so inundated with Zwingli's concepts of the Reformation that resolutions to the disputes were sought.

There was especially unrest within the city of Zurich, where the Swiss Diet sought to prohibit Zwingli's teachings. The city council decided to seek a solution by inviting the clergy of the city and outlying regions to a meeting where the disputes could be aired. The First Disputation took place on January 3, 1523. The bishop of Zurich sent a delegation led by his vicar general, Johannes Fabri. Zwingli presented his theses in the *Schlussreden* (Sixty-seven Articles). But Fabri was instructed not to discuss theology before laymen; he was to appeal only to the need for ecclesiastical authority. The city council decided in favor of Zwingli being allowed to continue his preaching, and that all other preachers teach only from the Scriptures.

This was a blow to anti-Christ's ambitions to snuff out the Reformation in Switzerland. After his defeat there, anti-Christ spurred the Church to further disputation against Zwingli's scriptural mandate.

This led to the Second Disputation in October, 1523. In September of that year, Leo Jud, Zwingli's friend, and pastor of St. Peterskirche, called for the removal of religious icons from the churches, including statues of saints. The Zurich city council decided to work out the disputation that resulted from Jud's actions. In addition to the issue of icons for veneration, the concept of the Mass as a sacrificial rite was included in the debate. Facing the canon Konrad Hofmann, Zwingli led the disputation on the part of the Reformation. Others on his side were demanding a faster move toward reformation, and called for replacing infant baptism with adult baptism, which call was, sadly, opposed by Zwingli.

Arguments arose as to whether the city council for ecclesiastical government had the authority to make such decisions. The council decided for a compromise offered by Konrad Schmid, a priest from Aargau and follower of Zwingli, who suggested that pastors continue to preach Reformation ideas even under threat of punishment from the Church, believing that eventually the people would come to accept those ideas. It was particularly the dispute over icons that Schmid addressed, thus showing support for Zwingli while quelling the iconoclasts who were destroying images and causing outrage among the people. Schmid argued that the people would eventually come to voluntarily have the images removed, which did come to pass as the Reformation eventually took over.

In 1525 another dispute grew between Zwingli and the emerging Anabaptist movement under Conrad Grebel, which argued against civil authority and for governance by the faithful. On February 2, 1542, the Anabaptists' first adult baptisms were performed by Conrad Grebel, George Blaurock and Felix Manz at the home of Manz's mother.

Zwingli won out with the city council, and it was decreed that anyone who refused to have their children baptized must leave Zurich. It was also decreed that adults who had previously been baptized should not be rebaptized. Those who disobeyed were arrested and fined.

The dispute over baptism did not die out, and ultimately, in March, 1526, the council issued a mandate that no one shall rebaptize another under penalty of death. Although Zwingli had nothing to do with the mandate—at least technically—he did not disapprove of it. Felix Manz was the first victim of anti-Christ under the Zurich council for continuing to practice adult baptism.

On April 8, 1524, five cantons, Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden and Zug, formed an alliance loyal to the Catholic Church and acted to withstand the Reformation under Zwingli's leadership. The alliance took their disputes to the Swiss Diet which ruled in its favor, banning Zwingli's writings. The thirteen-member Confederation was divided 9 to 4 against Zwingli.

The disputations throughout Switzerland resulted in more war and bloodshed as Christians fought against Christians for their causes for or against the Reformation. On October 9,

1531, the Five States loyal to the papacy declared war on Zurich. Outnumbered two-to-one, the Zurich army, of which Zwingli was a part, encountered the superior forces of the Five States near Kappel on October 11. In less than an hour the Zurich army was defeated and Zwingli was numbered among the fatalities. His successor, Heinrich Bullinger recounted Zwingli's death when he was found by his enemies wounded but alive:

“They turned him round, and asked him to confess. He repeatedly shook his head, by way of denial. 'Die, then, stiff-necked heretic!' cried Captain Vokinger of Unterwalden, giving him his death-blow.”

Zwingli's body was quartered and burned, his ashes scattered to the winds.

It seems as if Satan possesses a perverse desire to destroy the bodies of the saints in any way he can. If he cannot destroy a saint's body in life he'll try to destroy it in death. This may not apply to all saints, but perhaps especially to those whose lives are dedicated wholly to the work of the Lord. Witness how Satan sought the body of Moses and contended with the archangel Michael for it. To what purpose other than to defile it in some manner? Considering the anti-Christ nature of the Roman Catholic Church, particularly in its contentions against true believers in Christ, it is understandable how it would seek to destroy the bodies of those who opposed it.

John Calvin

Born Jehan Cauvin, John Calvin was educated as a humanist lawyer who found dissatisfaction with the Roman Catholic Church. With the Reformation spreading, violent reactions among the Catholic French impelled Calvin to flee to Switzerland in 1530. As he immersed himself in the teachings of the Reformation he came to prominence when, in 1536, he published the first edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He was approached by William Farel to help the cause of the Reformation in Geneva. Both were expelled when the Geneva city council rejected their ideas.

Calvin went to Strasbourg to pastor a church composed of French refugees. In time he returned to Geneva where he implemented his ideas on church government and liturgy. Although opposed by several powerful Catholic families, he was able to establish roots in the city. As more refugees from Catholic countries flooded Geneva the Roman Catholic Church's influence waned. A new city council was elected, and Calvin's opponents were pushed aside.

Soon, the tide turned, and the persecuted became the persecutor. Calvin was a stern enforcer of his reforms in Geneva, and his influence resulted in the deaths of several detractors. Although he never personally pronounced sentence on those who opposed him, he did consent to their deaths.

The most famous detractor was another Reformer, Michael Servetus, who, as a Spanish physician and Protestant theologian, denied the doctrine of the Trinity and opposed infant baptism. Servetus and Calvin exchanged many letters, engaging in disputes over these and other teachings. Servetus made a fatal error when he sent to Calvin a copy of Calvin's *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* annotated with arguments against what Serve-

tus considered errors. This enraged Calvin, but Servetus went into hiding in Vienne, in southeastern France. When the Catholic authorities in France learned of his whereabouts Servetus was arrested. He managed to escape from prison and determined to make his way to Italy. On his way there, he went through Geneva where he was recognized and subsequently arrested. Calvin's secretary, Nicholas de la Fontaine, submitted to the court a list of accusations against Servetus. Servetus was given the choice to be tried either in Vienne or Geneva. Begging to stay in Geneva, Servetus wrongly assumed that he had a better chance of survival with the Reformers than with the Catholic Church. The judgment went against Servetus and he was sentenced to burning at the stake—the same sentence he had received in Vienne. Calvin requested that he be beheaded rather than burned (an attempt at mercy), but he was refused. On October 27, 1553, Servetus was burned alive atop a pyre of his own books.

Upon Servetus' death, Calvin was acclaimed as a defender of Christianity, and his authority in Geneva became nearly absolute.

For some time, Luther and Calvin enjoyed mutual respect, but conflict arose between Luther and Zwingli over the nature of the Eucharist. Calvin's position coincided with Zwingli's and a schism developed between the Reformed churches under Calvin's and Zwingli's leadership, and the Lutheran churches which were beginning to spread from Germany to the rest of Europe.

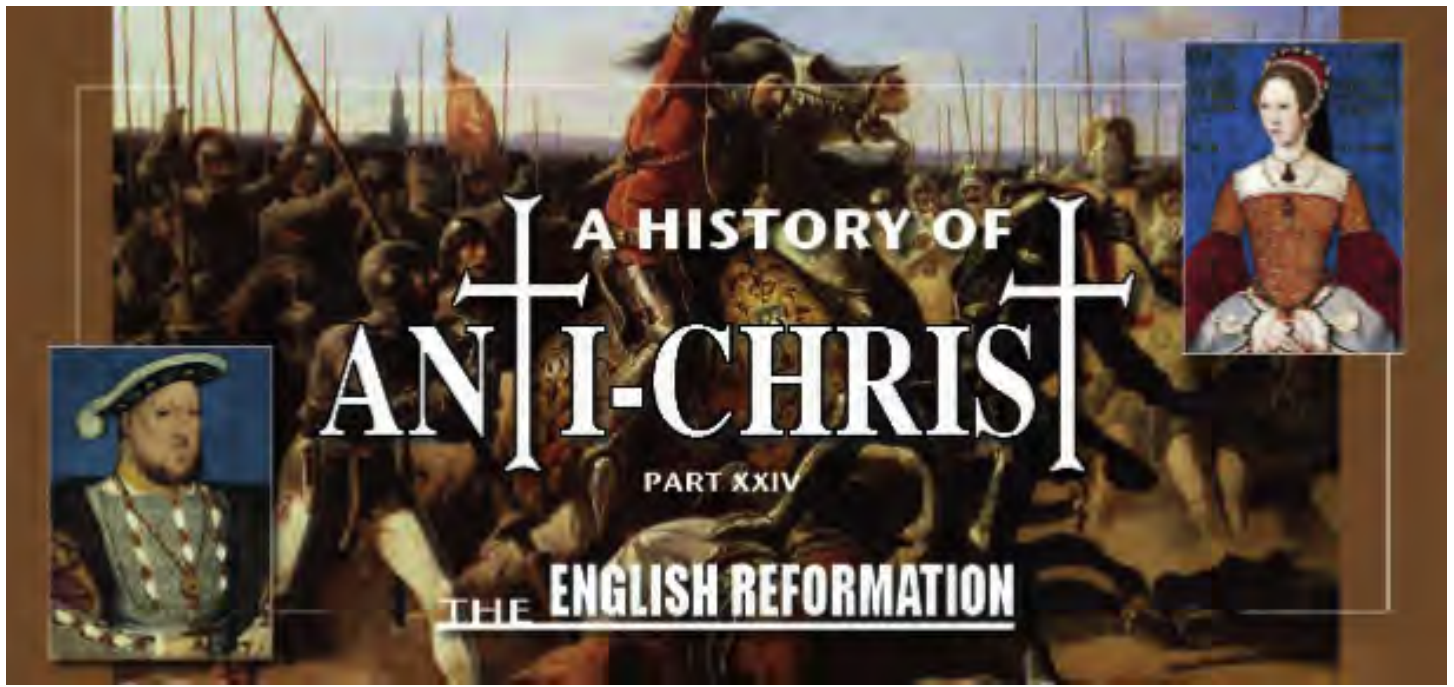
Calvin sought for Christian unity among the Reformers, but nothing came of his appeals.

Calvin's passion was for his Reformation to spread to his native France. His church funded literature and ministers, both of which were sent to France. France's Henry II proclaimed the Edict of Chateaubriand in 1551, which called for severe persecution of Protestants. When the Edict of Chateaubriand failed to quell the Protestant uprising in France, a second decree, the Edict of Compiègne (1557) applied the death penalty to all convictions for heresy.

Calvin expanded his *Institutes* from 21 chapters to 80, which included extensions of his previous material. He died on May 27, 1564 at the age of 54. He was buried in an unmarked grave in the Cimetière des Rois (The Royal Cemetery).

The history of the Reformation demonstrates that, while the Lord infused much light on biblical truth through that movement, anti-Christ also managed to use it to his advantage, pitting Christians against Christians, not only Protestants against Catholics, but Protestants against Protestants and against other non-Catholics.

There is nothing more fierce than religious zealotry, even in the name of Christ. Many of the leading Reformers were as much anti-Christ in their treatment of those who challenged their authority as were the popes. The Reformers were, after all, theologians within Roman Catholicism, and learned their harsh methods of propagating even the truths they saw in God's Word. And just as the papacy was anti-Semitic, so, too, were many of the Reformers.



In our previous installment of this series we addressed the Reformation under the leadership of John Wycliffe and Jan Hus in England, Martin Luther in Germany, and Huldrych Zwingli in Scandinavia, particularly Switzerland. These were the primary movers and shakers within the early years of the Reformation. Although they held tremendous sway among the European populace, major conflicts remained between their adherents and Roman Catholics, and even between the various Protestant sects. One of the most significant conflicts arose in England where the Church of England, at the time of Wycliffe and the Lollard Movement, remained loyal to the papacy. King Henry VIII remained a devout Catholic, resulting in the suppression of Wycliffe's influence. Wycliffe himself died a Roman Catholic even while attempting to bring reformation to the Catholic Church.

One of Satan's tactics is to foment spiritual error in different camps within Christianity, then pit those camps against one another. Thus, many Christians found themselves fighting vigorously, even militarily, to preserve one error against another error. Such is the case with how the Church of England came to split from the papacy under Henry the VIII.

Despite his devout adherence to Romanism, even to the point of authoring a book critical of Martin Luther, Henry found himself at odds with his church when he sought an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Catherine had borne only one surviving child, Mary, causing Henry to fear that lack of a male heir would jeopardize his descendants' claim to the throne. He wanted to put away Catherine in order to marry again in the hope of producing a male heir. Pope Julius II denied Henry's request, and that denial was reinforced by Julius' successor Pope Clement VII.

In defiance of the pope, Henry divorced Catherine. On January 25, 1533, he married Anne Boleyn, the Marchioness of Pembroke and daughter of Thomas Boleyn, 1st Earl of Wiltshire. As a result, Pope Clement VII pronounced the sentence of excommunication against Henry VIII and Thomas Cranmer,

the Archbishop of Canterbury who at first opposed Henry's marriage to Anne, but later approved it.

On September 7, 1533, Anne gave birth to her first child, Elizabeth, which disappointed Henry. After Anne suffered three miscarriages and was still unable to produce a male heir for Henry, he began to court Jane Seymour, the great-great-granddaughter of King Edward III of England.

In 1534, Henry VIII was granted by the English Parliament the first Act of Supremacy, declaring the King of England "the only supreme head on earth of the Church in England."

In that same year, the Parliament of England also passed the Treasons Act which condemned to death under the charge of treason anyone who protested the Act of Supremacy.

With the Act of Supremacy came the formal split from Roman Catholicism. Under Thomas Cromwell, the chief minister to Henry VIII from 1532 to 1540, and a strong advocate of the English Reformation, the Dissolution of the Monasteries went into effect, disbanding Roman Catholic monasteries, priories, convents and friaries in England, Wales and Ireland. In all, 825 Roman Catholic religious communities were dissolved. Large amounts of land and property owned by the Roman Catholic Church was confiscated by the Crown and ultimately passed to the nobility and the gentry, creating a strong force in favor of the English Reformation.

Under Henry VIII the English Reformation came into full bloom. But unlike the Reformations in other European nations, the English Reformation retained much of the formal religious trappings of Roman Catholicism.

Additionally, in March, 1534, Parliament passed the First Succession Act which disavowed Princess Mary, daughter of Henry by Catherine as illegitimate, and therefore unqualified to succeed to the throne. This was done in the hope that the yet unborn child of Henry with Anne Boleyn would be a son. To Henry's disappointment Anne bore a daughter who would be Elizabeth. The First Succession Act required all subjects to swear an oath to recognize it and the king's supremacy over

religious matters. Anyone who refused to take the oath was also subject to execution under the charge of treason.

Sir Thomas More, an English lawyer, philosopher and Renaissance humanist, who was also a counselor to Henry VIII, and served as Lord Chancellor for a season, believed that “no temporal man may be the head of the spirituality.” More was a strong opponent of the Protestant Reformation, so when the Act of Supremacy was passed, he openly refused to accept Henry VIII as the supreme head of the Church of England, and opposed separation from the Roman Catholic Church. He was subsequently convicted of treason and was beheaded on July 6, 1535.

Wishing to marry Jane Seymour, Henry had Anne investigated for treason in 1536. On May 2 of that year Anne was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. There she was tried and convicted of adultery, incest and witchcraft, all of which are viewed by modern historians as trumped-up charges. On May 19, 1536, Anne was beheaded, leaving Henry ostensibly free to marry Jane, which he did on the thirtieth of that month.

Henry again hoped to have a male heir, this time with Jane. So in June, 1536, Parliament passed the Second Succession Act, declaring Elizabeth illegitimate, like Mary, leaving both ineligible to succeed to the throne.

On October 12, 1537, Jane gave birth to the future King Edward VI, after which she became gravely ill. There are conflicting reports of the cause, but she died on October 24.

Ten years later, on January 28, 1547, Henry VIII died, content that he had a male heir to the throne. However, Edward died on July 6, 1553 at the young age of fifteen, after naming his cousin, Lady Jane Grey as his successor in an attempt to keep the throne from reverting to Roman Catholic control. His choice was disputed on the basis of the Third Succession Act which, under Henry VIII’s reign, restored both Mary and Elizabeth to succession behind the then Prince Edward.

Although Lady Jane Grey was first acknowledged as the Queen on July 9, 1553, with Mary gaining popularity, the Privy Council of England, made up of senior members of both Houses of Parliament, gave their allegiance to Mary, and Parliament declared her the rightful queen in September. Jane was subsequently declared a usurper of the throne.

Thus, under the Third Succession Act, Mary ascended the throne as the first sovereign Queen of England. Lady Jane Grey and her husband, Lord Guildford Dudley, were charged with treason along with two of Dudley’s brothers and Thomas Cranmer who had supported Jane’s succession to the throne. Ultimately, all were found guilty and executed, Jane and Dudley by beheading.

Jane’s execution was delayed by Mary in order to give Jane a chance to be converted to Roman Catholicism. Jane refused to convert, and went to her death a Protestant.

Mary had remained a Catholic, and her accession to the throne of England undid the reforms of Henry and Edward. She lost no time in restoring the Crown’s loyalty to the papacy. Although she initially issued a proclamation stating that she would not compel any of her subjects to embrace Catholicism, she soon had leading English reformers imprisoned, among them John Bradford, John Rogers, Hugh Latimer and Thomas Cranmer. Her first Parliament declared her mother’s marriage to

Henry VIII valid, and overturned Edward VI’s Protestant laws. In her brief five-year reign she waged a brutal pogrom against Protestants, condemning over 280 to burning at the stake, thus earning her the ignominious nickname, “Bloody Mary.”

Hoping to produce an heir that would prevent Elizabeth, her successor under the Act of Succession of 1544, to follow her to the throne, and to keep the Crown under papal rule, Mary wed Spain’s Prince Philip. Their betrothal precipitated a Protestant rebellion led by Thomas Wyatt the younger in January, 1554.

The marriage of convenience, which exhibited no genuine love between the two, produced no heir, although Mary seemed to suffer from two false pregnancies. She died from influenza at age 42 at St. James’s Palace, and was succeeded by Elizabeth.

Separated from each other by royal duties of Spain and England, Philip was not with Mary at her death. He wrote to his sister Joan: “I felt a reasonable regret for her death.”

With Elizabeth’s accession to the throne England began again to separate from papal authority.

Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy of 1559 which re-established the Church of England’s independence. Another decree of Parliament, the Act of Uniformity of 1559 outlined the form of Protestantism for the Church of England and re-established the Book of Common Prayer. The two acts comprised what would be called the Elizabethan Religious Settlement, which dealt with the divisions created between Mary I’s reign and Henry VIII’s and Edward VI’s reigns.

Parliament also created the Reformation Bill that established the form of worship and the doctrines of the Church of England. The bill defined the “Holy Communion” according to Reformed Protestant theology as opposed to the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. While retaining the name “Mass” for the Eucharist within Anglican tradition, the terms most commonly used are “Holy Communion,” “Holy Eucharist,” or “the Lord’s Supper.”

With the coronation of Elizabeth I, England again removed herself from papal domination. In 1563, the Church of England established the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* which defined the church’s doctrines in distinction to those of Roman Catholicism and Calvinism, the latter of which had influenced the majority of Christian churches in continental Europe.

From that time until the present, the Church of England has maintained its independence, although there have been overtures made by some toward returning to “Mother Church.”

Anti-Christ’s influence within the English Reformation is evident in the bloody battles for control, not only between Roman Catholic and Church of England factions during the reign of Henry VIII, and later Elizabeth I, but between the Protestant factions that fought for supremacy within the Church of England and the Crown. In truth, much of the Protestant Reformation was stained with the blood of martyrs on all sides of the religious disputes. So while we recognize God’s hand in opening His Word to better understanding of His grace, Satan successfully manipulated many of the human instruments God used to bring about spiritual enlightenment. This does not negate the truths they discovered and propagated; it merely demonstrates how something godly can be turned into something evil when men succumb to their base nature and

exercise zeal to the extreme. Anti-Christ is well aware of the soulish penchant of man to allow pride to reign in his heart, and begin to think that he is the author and finisher of the faith.

PURITANISM

Soon after the accession of Elizabeth I to the throne of England, a contingent of English Protestants was emboldened to express a particular theology which would become known as Puritanism. These were largely Protestants who had been exiled during Mary's bloody reign. Considered radicals within the Church of England, the Puritans were not allowed any influence within the Church's body politic. Restricted by English laws on religion, the Puritans took to immigrating first to the Netherlands, then to Ireland and Wales, and eventually to New England in North America.

The Puritans rejected the episcopal model for their religious community, and adopted the practice of worshipping on the Sabbath. Their eschatology was millennial, a departure from most of the Protestant traditions that continued to follow their former Roman Catholic amillennial eschatology.

Although initially shunned by the Church of England, the Puritans eventually became a major political force after the First English Civil War (1642-1646).

The name "Puritan" was applied by their detractors as a pejorative because the Puritans did not consider the Church of England's reforms to be sufficiently removed from Roman Catholicism. They demanded more "purity" in teachings and practice than what they observed in Protestantism in general. They also promoted education for the general population in order that they could read the Scriptures for themselves.

The Puritans adopted a form of Reformed theology similar to Calvinism, yet held to a premillennial eschatological position, expecting that Christ would come to establish His millennial reign on the earth, contrary to the amillennialism of Calvinism and Reformed theology in general.

THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

At the same time England was embroiled in its own intrigues over religious and political power, the Roman Catholic Church began to embark on its response to the Protestant Reformation. The Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation, or Catholic Revival, began with the Council of Trent which convened from 1545 to 1563, initiated by Pope Paul III (reigned 1534-1549). Although the original Reformers wished only to bring needed change to the Roman Catholic Church, with no desire to separate from it, they found nothing but resistance from the papacy. Thus they were forced to establish their own sectarian institutions. By the mid-sixteenth century the Catholic Church recognized the legitimacy of many concerns brought to the forefront by the Protestant Reformation, spurring Pope Paul III to commission his cardinals to consider certain institutional reforms. Most of these centered on financial abuses, including the selling of indulgences, and on ferreting out corruption among the priesthood and bishops.

Rejecting outright the doctrinal reforms adopted by Protestantism, the Council of Trent maintained the Roman Catholic sacramental system and religious orders, adhering closely to its Medieval heritage. The Council also reaffirmed the veneration

of Mary and the Catholic saints, as well as relics associated with them, among other things that angered the Reformers.

The most notable changes had to do with bringing the Catholic clergy to more accountability with the intention of healing the divide between the clergy and the laity. Many priests, particularly in rural areas, were poorly educated and lacked theological training. There began a move toward educating the clergy in Latin, Roman Catholic theology and apologetics by incorporating the humanist approach toward art and liturgy. The purpose was to address the need for discipline within the Church while enhancing the administrative qualities of its clergy. This has had the effect of creating even a greater divide between the religious establishment and the laity—one of anti-Christ's primary methods of destroying true faith and the priesthood of all believers.

At the same time, the Council did try to establish some form of reasonable integrity to the institution. Bishops could no longer be appointed for political reasons, and were required to be responsible for their priestly duties. Many were bishops in name only, being absent from their dioceses due to responsibility for their vast land holdings. They were to exercise more power over all aspects of the religious lives of their flocks.

The Catholic Reformation also saw the rise of a new spirituality which would morph into what is commonly called Roman Catholic mysticism. Some of the well-known and influential among the Catholic mystics were Ignatius of Loyola who founded the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Francis de Sales and Philip Neri. Out of Roman Catholic mysticism came spiritual exercises that focus on bringing God into one's presence through meditation and contemplative prayer. Much Roman Catholic mysticism focused then, and does today focus, on devotion to the Virgin Mary. In this way, anti-Christ has used the religious spirit within man to create interlopers to the relationship Jesus established between His disciples and His Father. Mary became the central figure in that deception.

It was to Mary that victory at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 was credited. This battle in the Gulf of Corinth saw the main fleet of the Ottoman Empire defeated by the Holy League, a coalition of Roman Catholic Mediterranean maritime states tasked by Pope Pius V with breaking the Ottoman Turks' control of the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Although we have seen how anti-Christ was instrumental in the birth and growth of Islam, the Ottoman Empire was allowed to go only so far in establishing anti-Christ's power over the nations through Islam. That power is kept in abeyance by God, to be released in the very last days which will see Islam as one of two major religio-political forces that will form the anti-Christ's kingdom. (See our latest book, *The Day of Yahweh*, Sword Publishers, 2013). The Lord used one anti-Christ power (The Holy Roman Empire) to keep Islam from gaining too much control until that time.

We have seen numerous instances where anti-Christ has fomented one evil after another, but has lost absolute control over each of them as they have come into conflict with one another. Satan's house divided will not stand.

The Counter-Reformation was not confined to reformation within the Catholic Church; it was primarily focused on attempts to regain control over the lands that the Reformers had gained. The many political and military campaigns saw more bloodshed, further engorging the appetite of anti-Christ to see Christians killing Christians. Although the Catholic Church saw a modicum of success in these campaigns, the Reformation had taken sufficient hold in enough major European countries to keep them out of the papacy's control. Italy, France, Spain and Portugal, as well as some Baltic countries, were all that remained of the papacy's European domain. Much of Eastern Europe and Asia Minor had long before given allegiance to the various Eastern Orthodox religions. Yet in spite of the terrible wound to the Holy Roman Empire, the Catholic Church today remains by far the largest Christian denomination in the world with some 1.2 billion adherents, surpassed in number only by Islam which boasts over 1.6 billion souls.

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

The Reformation continued into the seventeenth century with a series of religious wars, primarily fought throughout Central Europe and involving most European nations. These wars are encompassed within a single historical reference as The Thirty Years' War, and lasted from 1618 to 1648. Beginning as a religious war between Protestants and Catholics within the Holy Roman Empire, the conflict spread to become one of the most destructive and protracted conflicts among European nation states.

The Thirty Years' War began with a cessation of conflict between German Lutherans and Catholics through the Peace of Augsburg (1555) ratified by Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor. According to the Peace of Augsburg, the rulers of the 224 German states could choose between Lutheranism or Catholicism as the official religion for their particular realms, and could impose their choice upon their subjects. Lutherans were allowed to keep the lands they had seized from the Catholic Church, but the prince-bishops who had converted to Lutheranism were required to surrender their territories to the Holy Roman Empire.

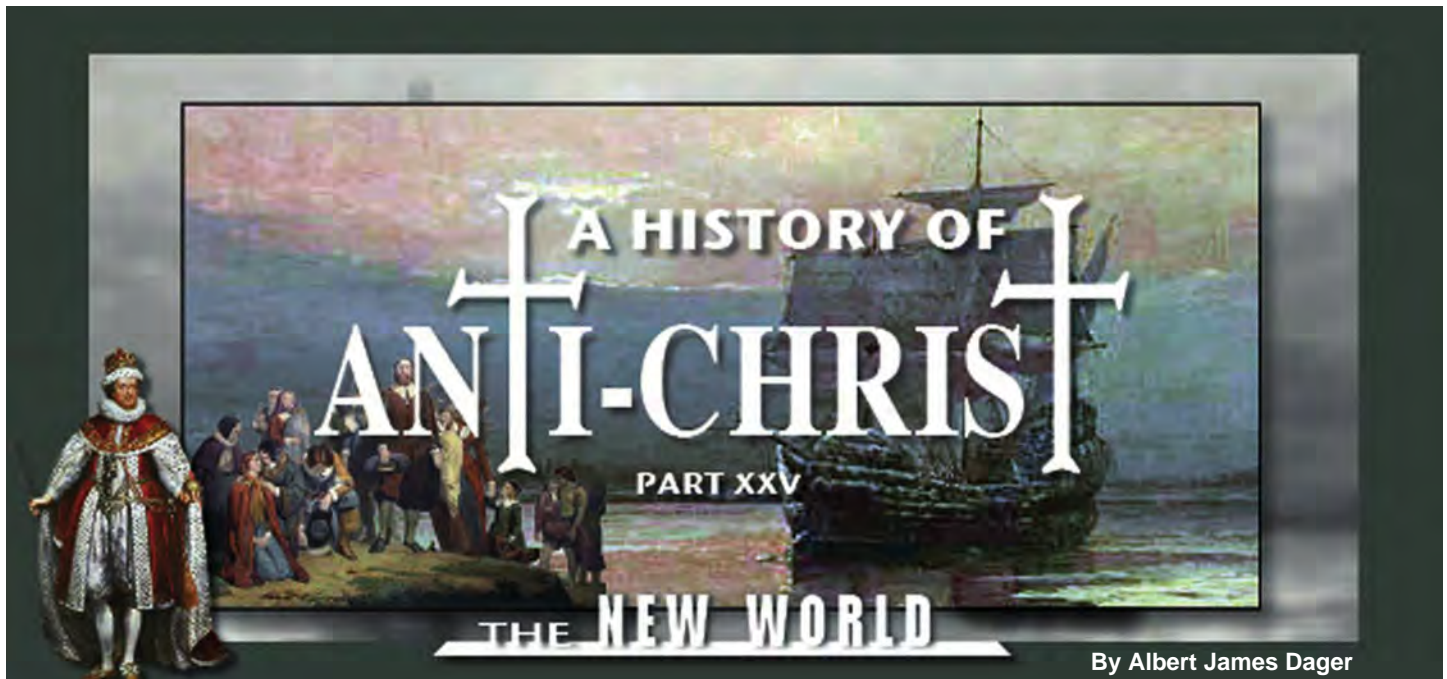
The Peace of Augsburg brought an end to certain hostilities, but it did not resolve major religious differences. Nor did it address the spreading influence of Calvinism in Germany, confining its terms to Lutheranism and Catholicism. But more important, it did not assuage the smoldering undercurrents of the religious conflict among other nations. France, Spain, Sweden, and other portions of the Holy Roman Empire continued to vie for preeminence with Europe.

Thus, although it began as a religious war, the Thirty Years' War morphed into a battle for political power which was really a continuation of the Bourbon-Hapsburg conflict for European dominance. Again, Christians were pressed into bloodshed of one another under earthly rulers whose aims were anything but faithful to the Gospel. Anti-Christ fomented one conflict after another, enflaming all of Europe and soaking its ground with the blood of men professing faith in Jesus Christ. The devastation came not only through weapons of war, but disease and famine which resulted from the wars.

Mercy was cast aside and brutality was the order of the day. Pillaging, rape and wholesale destruction of entire villages and towns reflected the ungodliness of war waged in the name of God.

The Thirty Years' War came to a conclusion through a series of treaties, culminating in the Peace of Munster on May 15, 1648. On October 24 of that year the Treaties of Munster and Osnabrück were signed, marking the official end of the War.

The result of The Thirty Years' War was the further weakening of the Holy Roman Empire, which effectively ended the Reformation period. The European power structure was drastically altered, and the Protestant states were left in peace.



As Protestantism and Catholicism battled for control of Western Europe during the Reformation, anti-Christ found opportunity to spread his religion of conquest in the East through the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. Beginning its conquests in the late thirteenth century, the Ottoman Empire reached its height during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent (reigned 1520-1566). The boundaries of the empire stretched from the southern borders of the Holy Roman Empire in the west to the Caspian Sea in the east, encompassing western Persia (modern Iran). From north to south it stretched from the southern borders of Poland to Egypt, and much of North Africa. Although kept from conquest of the West through the might of the Holy Roman Empire and the rise of Protestant Western Europe, from the time of the Ottomans' greatest reach to the present, the anti-Christ's religion of Islam has continued to dominate the religious and social culture of most of those lands in Asia Minor and northern Africa.

Ottoman expansion into Western Europe ended with the empire's defeat at the Battle of Vienna in September, 1683. Besieged by the Ottoman army for two months, Vienna was defended by the Holy League—the Holy Roman Empire in union with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Venetian Republic.

Historians are divided on the cause for the Ottoman defeat, some suggesting that the Battle of Vienna marked the turning point of the 300-year conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Holy Roman Empire. Others attribute the defeat to the already-decaying strength of the Ottomans. The truth most likely lies in a combination of both factors. The Holy Roman Empire was still a formidable force even after the Protestant Reformation, and the Ottomans' strength had been sapped as the result of constant military campaigns from its inception. In any case, the Lord did not allow the dominance of Islam to spread into the West. And as much as we may condemn the Roman Catholic Church for its aberrant doctrines and practic-

es, had it not been for the Holy Roman Empire, Islam would have certainly overrun most of Western Europe. We can only speculate on what that may have meant to the birth of the United States of America had God not used the Roman Catholic Church to that end. The United States of America never would have existed.

As it is, the seventeenth century saw North America and Canada colonized by Western Europe as explorers and traders settled in the New World. Here, a new battleground for the struggle between anti-Christ and God's people would develop. Western Europe had become entrenched in religious rivalry and confusion. Much of Protestant Europe, having been given the opportunity to free itself from the religious oppression of the papacy, developed its own form of oppression. They made outcasts of believers in Jesus who did not fit within either Roman Catholic or specific Protestant theological parameters according to their centers of power.

The discovery of the New World was largely the result of Western European nations attempting to find alternate routes to the East because of the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453. Unable to easily travel the trade routes previously open to them, and with their merchant ships plundered in the Mediterranean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean by the Barbary pirates serving the Ottoman Empire, the Western European nations were forced to seek other routes to maintain their trade and ensure their wealth. Thus the Age of Discovery, which began in the Middle Ages, was spurred on to greater heights as ships began to head west in search of an alternate route to India and Asia.

The voyages began in earnest after 1492 when Christopher Columbus discovered the Bahamas, which gave no indication of the great continent in the western hemisphere that lay beyond. It did not enter anyone's mind that God was directing their paths for the founding of what would become the greatest nation ever to flourish from the time of Adam to the present.

Although the Viking Leif Ericson is credited as the first European to discover the Americas in the eleventh century, it was not in God's plan that the Vikings would colonize the New World. Largely a pagan people, although Ericson converted to Christianity, the Vikings would have no doubt established something quite different than what came about through the settlement of Pilgrims much later. As it turned out, anti-Christ was largely responsible for that fortuitous outcome. For were it not for anti-Christ's dominance in the East, it is doubtful that any nation in the West would have ventured into the unknown and hazardous expanse of the Atlantic Ocean. And were it not for anti-Christ's influence in Western European Protestantism—particularly in the Church of England's persecution of dissenters, there would have been no impetus for the spread of the faith from Europe to the New World.

The beginning of the persecution that led to the Pilgrims leaving England for the New World is found in the Gunpowder Plot (November 1605) which was instigated by Catholic Guy Fawkes who intended to blow up the English Parliament when



KING JAMES I OF ENGLAND

(WIKICOMMONS)

King James I would be present. Fawkes was found out and subsequently executed, but his actions resulted in the English Parliament enacting the Popish Recusants Act 1605, which forbade Roman Catholics from engaging in law and medicine and from acting in fiduciary manners as guardians or trustees. The act also required an oath of allegiance, and required recusants to be fined £60 or forfeit two-thirds of their land if they did

not receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at least once a year in the Church of England. It was also made high treason to obey the pope rather than the king.

King James I's oversight of the Church of England would result in persecution of certain non-Catholic dissidents as well. Those dissidents, pejoratively known as Pilgrims, had their foundations in the Marian exiles of the sixteenth century, having fled persecution under the Catholic Queen Mary I (aka "Bloody Mary" for her persecution of Protestants).

After Mary's imprisonment and the accession to the throne by Elizabeth I, Puritanism became an activist movement within the Church of England.

Upon Elizabeth's death with no heirs, Mary's son, King James VI of Scotland, took the throne, adding the title of King James I of England. Under James, Puritanism co-existed with the Church of England for a time. But anti-Christ, ever desirous of causing schisms within Christianity, found fertile ground for

persecution among the diverse doctrines of Puritanism and the Church of England. Yet the schism that resulted from Puritan dissension was a necessary element to the continuation of the Reformation process, even though the Reformation was for all intents and purposes ended, having caused sufficient departure of many from Roman Catholicism.

The Puritans believed that the Protestant Reformation had not gone far enough, and that the Church of England was still largely Roman Catholic in many beliefs and practices, particularly sacramentalism. The Puritans' dissatisfaction with the Church of England's ecclesiology led to the Hampton Court Conference in 1604, which brought King James I together with representatives of the Church of England and leading English Puritans. At the conference the Puritans set forth their complaints which were considered by James and his bishops. James managed to broker some agreeable outcomes between the two conflicting elements, primarily in the area of tolerance. The Puritans won a great victory in their insistence that individual believers should be able to learn God's Word without the influence of ecclesiastical intermediaries. This led to James commissioning the Bible in the English language, which would become known as the *Authorised Version*. That is, it was the only version authorized to be read in churches, superseding the Great Bible and the Bishops' Bible. First published in 1611, over time it came to be called *The King James Bible*.

Thus, anti-Christ's attempt to cause a deep schism in the Church of England resulted in one of the greatest benefits God has bestowed upon His people, not only in England but throughout the world. For over 300 years the King James Bible had been the staple for biblical studies until the turn of the 20th century which saw modern translations come into existence.

In spite of that great victory, not long after the conference the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, died, to be succeeded by the anti-Puritan Richard Bancroft who demanded that Puritan ministers adhere to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. This brought even greater dissension between the Puritans and the established church.

The Puritans found themselves in constant conflict with the Church of England on many issues, including personal living. This led to James I, ever seeking compromise, issuing a number of declarations including his "Declaration of Sports" (aka *The Book of Sports*) in which the king sought to resolve a dispute between the Puritans and the gentry in Lancashire. Many of the gentry were Roman Catholics. The Puritans insisted that Sunday, being the alleged "Christian Sabbath" was to be kept as a time to worship God. Frivolous activities, particularly sports, were forbidden among the Puritans and they wanted the king to impose those sanctions on all others under his domain. Seeking a compromise, James determined some sports to be acceptable, while others were forbidden. Allowed were archery, dancing, "leaping, vaulting, or other such harmless recreation," as well as "May-games, Whitsun-ales and Morris-dances, and the setting up of Maypoles." Among prohibited activities were bear- and bull-baiting, and bowling.

James made his declaration universal throughout his kingdom, effectively rebuking the Puritans and others he deemed

“precise persons.” On the other hand, he condemned those who did not first attend church services in their parish, and specified that only those who had first done so were allowed to participate in recreation afterward.

This did not appease the Puritans, and the conflict drew more attention to their differences.

The Puritans taught purity of doctrine and worship, as well as personal purity and piety. By the early part of the seventeenth century the Puritans were considered dissenters from Church of England polity and thus met with persecution. That persecution spurred some Pilgrims to embark on the fateful journey to the New World in order to establish lives free from domination by traditional Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

Although the Pilgrims erred in their adoption of Reformed theology, God used them to establish faith in Christ further westward.

The Puritans’ migration to New England began in support of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, an English settlement situated in the area that would become present-day Salem and Boston. The first attempt to settle New England at Cape Ann was less than successful, but the company’s second attempt resulted in some 20,000 people migrating during the 1630s, many of them Puritans whose spiritual leaders strongly influenced the governance of the colony.

Elected offices were limited to freemen—men who were landholding male Puritan church members. Yet again, anti-Christ found fertile soil to cause schism between Christians, as members of other churches, including Anglicans and Baptists, were not allowed to hold office.

Although Roman Catholics were the first major religious group to colonize the Americas, having come from Spain and Portugal and, later, France, it was the Pilgrims who brought to North America the foundations for personal freedom and self-governance which greatly aided the prosperity of what would become the United States of America. For reasons known only to God, He provided for a nation that would be the most unique and godly (although not perfect, by any means) expression of human government in the history of mankind. As such, however, the nation would become a target of anti-Christ from its inception.

The early immigration did not go well. Death and sickness accompanied the brave settlers, and for a while it looked as if the efforts on the part of those holding to the Protestant biblical ethic to colonize the New World would be thwarted. Had that happened, virtually all of North America would have ended up like Central and South America—Third World, oppressed Roman Catholic countries. There are many reasons we may surmise why the Lord allowed the United States to be birthed,

from establishing it as the means for evangelization throughout the world, to the present-day holding off of the Muslim nations that threaten modern Israel as the precursor to the last-days fulfillment of biblical prophecy. While the rest of the world wallowed in pagan dissipation and misery, bound by the anti-Christ spirit of witchcraft, shamanism and voodoo, Europe muddled through conflicting anti-Christ religious philosophies centered in Christianity. But among those Christian religious philosophies there emanated from the hearts of individual believers the light of the Gospel, which would enlighten the New World with a fresh start at developing a godly society.

It began with the voyage of the Mayflower, and the Plymouth Colony settlement at New Plimoth, a site previously surveyed by Captain John Smith. There the Pilgrims established the first large permanent settlement in New England, basing much of their law

on Old Testament penal sanctions. Although rarely imposed, the sentence of death was placed upon certain egregious crimes such as murder, adultery, sodomy, witchcraft, youthful rebellion against parents, and treason, among others.

In their fledgling state, the original colonies that followed after Plymouth were imperfect but necessary to establish the biblical ethic that would guide the great nation to follow. If there were any nation on

earth that could be classified as a “Christian nation,” it would be the United States of America. Not because all its citizens are or have been Christians, or that God rules over it as a theocracy, but because Christianity in varied forms was the religion of the overwhelming majority of its founders and early settlers.

America’s founders were not all true believers in Jesus, but at worst some were Deists; all believed in Divine Providence based on the God of the Bible, if not *exactly* the God of the Bible. That belief generated within the hearts of the founders a care for personal freedom which, if submitted to the will of God, would result in blessings beyond measure. History, of course, demonstrates that the life of the nation has not always been so devoted to the will of the true God. But there is little difference between a nominally Christian nation and a theocracy. The only true theocracies in history were ancient Israel and Judah, and even they failed to live up to the standards set by God.

Still, the foundation upon which this nation rested for much of its history, at least in its early stages, has been the Bible. That is reflected in the various official documents of the early settlers and later colonialists.

The Mayflower Compact, the first written law for the initial settlers, the Pilgrims, stated:

In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sover-



Mayflower in Plymouth Harbor by William Halsall (1882)

eign Lord, King James, by the Grace of God, of England, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, e&. Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; do by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid; And by Virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the General good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In Witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord, King James of England, France and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini, 1620.

The Plymouth Charter, granted by King James I in 1620, stated that the colony was established “In the hope thereby to advance the enlargement of the Christian religion, to the glory of God Almighty.”

Eleven of the thirteen colonies were established between 1607 (Virginia) and 1681 (Pennsylvania). Delaware and Georgia would follow in 1702 and 1732 respectively. The first colony, Virginia, stated in its charter, “To the glory of His divine Majesty, in propagating of the Christian religion to such people as yet live in ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God.”

The Massachusetts Charter of March 4, 1629, stated in part:

For the directing, ruling, and disposing of all other Matters and Things, whereby our said People may be soe religiously, peaceable, and civilly governed, as their good life and orderlie Conversacon maie wynn and incite the Natives of the Country to the Knowledg and Obedience of the onlie true God and Savior of Mankinde, and the Christian Fayth, which in our royall Intencon, the Adventurers free profession, is the principall Ende of the Plantacion.

The Delaware Charter established the purpose of the colony “To further propagate the Holy Bible.”

The Rhode Island Compact states: “We submit our persons, lives, and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

The original governing body of New Hampshire declared in 1639:

Considering with ourselves the holy will of God and our own necessity, that we should not live without wholesome laws and civil government among us, of which we are altogether destitute, do, in the name of Christ and in the sight of God, combine ourselves together to erect and set up among us such government as shall be, to our best discerning, agreeable to the will of God.

When the thirteen colonies decided to unite as a single nation they drafted the Declaration of Independence which, although not naming Jesus Christ, declared certain truths to be self-evident: “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

No one can say honestly that the “Creator” to whom the Declaration referred is not the God of the Bible; the men who signed it may not all have been true believers in Jesus, but when they spoke of God they had no pagan god, Muslim god, Mormon god or any other false god in mind. Most of them were at least nominal Christians who recognized the superior moral and spir-

itual qualities of religion based on God’s Word. Even the Deists among them knew of no other God than the God of the Bible, as much as they misunderstood His nature.

The biblical ethic of those men formed the basis for a new “nation, under God,” that would become the envy of the world—and the target of anti-Christ.

Anti-Christ has been allowed to control only so much of the world’s population directly through his religion. Yet indirectly he controls the entire world. His spirit permeates the cultures of the pagan-dominated East, and is fast gaining more and more influence over the Christendom of the West.

From the time of the first settlers in the seventeenth century, anti-Christ sought to destroy this bastion of biblical truth. Wars, disease, famine, schism among various Christian denominations were all part of his plan to undo the unique thing that God had wrought among the nations. The next three centuries would see unleashed upon the world the greatest suffering of mankind in general as anti-Christ would use traitors from within and enemies from without to accomplish his ends. The blessings of God would be turned into occasions to remove many hearts from the nation’s First Love.



The Pilgrims Landing by Edward Moran



THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY began with much turmoil in Christendom. Beginning in 1600, the Ottoman Turks attacked Central Europe and occupied large areas there, in the Middle East and in North Africa. Persecution of Christians and Jews throughout the Ottoman Empire (although not in all areas) served anti-Christ's objective to hinder the Gospel and destroy as many of God's people as possible.

It is estimated that the Russian famine of 1601–1603 killed about one-third of the Russian population.

In 1603 the Shogun Era (military dictatorship) began in Japan when Tokugawa Iyeyasu seized power. He began a pogrom against Christian missionaries and drove out European traders, ending the great period of Portuguese trading there. The shogunate lasted until 1868.

In India, upon the death of the fifth Sikh Guru, Arjan Dev, in 1606, Sikhism, which was founded in the early 16th century, began to gain political strength. Sikhism holds a seemingly contradictory concept of a god that is both transcendent apart from, and yet immanent to creation. It also believes in a form of reincarnation similar to karma. Contrary to the belief of some, Sikhism is not the same as Hinduism, although it draws from some aspects of Hinduism and, to a lesser degree, other religions.

The 17th century saw a great surge in witchcraft in Europe, which displaced many Christian influences. This occurred while conflict between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Europe continued to make the Gospel of little effect. As well, there were protracted wars between Christian nation states. The Anglo-Dutch Wars lasted 22 years as the Dutch and English fought for supremacy over trade routes. The Dutch also fought against the French through many land wars from 1672 to 1713. Louis XIV, known as "the Sun King," sought to make France the most powerful country in Europe through numerous military campaigns. The Thirty Years War was a terrible series of wars that started with a religious dispute in Bohemia.

Just as in ancient Israel, when God's chosen were unfaithful, witchcraft proliferated, so, too, in Christian Europe, the more Christian factions warred against one another the easier it was for anti-Christ to goad people into alternate forms of worship. If the Christian God was represented by bloodshed, greed and warfare, why should the formerly pagan people not return to their roots?

The Great Elizabethan Age came to an end in 1603 with the death of Elizabeth I. We have previously discussed the ascension of King James I of England and his commissioning the Church of England to produce his Authorized Version of the Bible, which has been a formidable weapon by true believers against the spiritual forces of darkness. For this, and many other reasons, anti-Christ deigned to keep Christendom on the edge of extinction through continual conflict between warring Christian denominations.

Thus, James's reign would be threatened by Roman Catholics who were unhappy with his treatment of Catholics, even though Catholics retained high offices during his reign. This led to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, also known as the Jesuit Treason.

The object of the plot was to blow up the House of Lords with the hope of assassinating James I, and installing his nine-year-old daughter, Princess Elizabeth, as the Catholic head of state. Led by Robert Catesby, a recusant Catholic (one who refused to swear the Oath of Supremacy or attend Anglican services in England), the Gunpowder Plot was discovered through an anonymous letter sent to William Parker, 4th Baron Monteagle. During a search of the House of Lords, one of the conspirators, Guy Fawkes, was found guarding 36 barrels of gunpowder—enough to totally annihilate the English Parliament. Eight of the conspirators, including Fawkes, were convicted and sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered.

Although Fawkes is most often identified with the Gunpowder Plot, it was Catesby who was the architect of the rebellion.

It appears as if the Jesuits were associated with the plot because a particular Jesuit priest, Henry Garnet, allegedly knew of the plot, possibly through hearing the confession of one of the conspirators. Because he was bound by oath to the confidentiality of the confessional he could not divulge the plot to the authorities. He was convicted of treason and executed.

As a side note, confidentiality of the confessional would not have prevented Garnet from divulging the plot, as long as he did not name the person from whom he learned of it. And he certainly could have informed the authorities anonymously. By remaining silent he was complicit in the conspiracy.

Roman Catholicism gained much prestige with the completion of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome in 1612. It remains the cathedral of the Roman bishop—the pope—and is the largest Christian church in the world. Anti-Christ's use of Roman Catholicism to destroy the ability of individuals to possess the Bible would continue as the political and religious power of the papacy fought against the Protestant Reformation through every means and opportunity available.

The 17th century saw many innovations in science, technology, literature, art and other human endeavors. In 1605 Cervantes wrote *Don Quixote*, the first proper novel; in 1607 forks were introduced as eating utensils in Italy; 1608 saw the invention of the first telescope by Dutchman Hans Lippershey; in 1623 William Shakespeare's plays were published in book form for the first time under the title, *First Folios*. The brilliant Italian astronomer and physicist, Galileo Galilei gains prominence for many inventions and discoveries, including the fact that Copernicus was correct that the earth revolves around the sun, thus igniting the pope's animosity for challenging the ancient superstition that the earth is the center of the universe.

Until the 17th century, much of the most important world history, and certainly the warfare between Christ and the anti-Christ, was confined to the Middle East as the center of God's plan for earth, and the Christianized Western Europe. As exploration of the New World began to increase, spreading Christianity to theretofore unknown parts of the world, the battleground increased substantially. Now the forces of darkness would be spread far and wide with more intensity than ever.

THE NEW WORLD

With the discovery of the New World, there came an increase in mankind's travels to find riches and new opportunities for a better life, particularly by Europeans. At first, the nations were content to send out explorers to garner the natural resources and riches of the relatively untouched land. But the New World would prove to be too small for the nations that sought to expand their boundaries through colonization. The prospect of wealth and freedom created ideal conditions for the anti-Christ to use the inherent pride and greediness of men to goad the Christian nations of Europe into warfare over the territories.

In 1607, the first permanent English colony in North America, Virginia, was established by the Virginia Company of London as "James Fort." Under the leadership of Captain John Smith, Jamestown survived harsh conditions and attacks by the Powhatan nation.

Smith was the first to call the region New England, and trained the settlers how to farm and work to sustain the colony, thus enabling it to survive. Paraphrasing the biblical admonition of Paul to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 3:10), he proclaimed, "He who does not work, shall not eat."



Captain John Smith

Jamestown served as the capital from 1616 to 1699. Eleven more of the final thirteen colonies would be founded during the 17th century: Massachusetts (1620); New Hampshire (1623); Maryland (1632); Connecticut (1635); Rhode Island (1636); Delaware (1638); North Carolina (1653); South Carolina (1663); New Jersey (1664); New York (1664); Pennsylvania (1682). The thirteenth colony, Georgia, would not be founded until 1732.

Pertinent to this study, the First Charter of Virginia (granted by James I of England) stated:

We, greatly commending, and graciously accepting of, their Desires for the Furtherance of so noble a Work, which may, by the Providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the Glory of his Divine Majesty, in propagating of Christian Religion to such People, as yet live in Darkness and miserable Ignorance of the true Knowledge and Worship of God, and may in time bring the Infidels and Savages, living in those parts, to human Civility, and to a settled and quiet Government: DO, by these our Letters Patents, graciously accept of, and agree to, their humble and well-intended Desires...

The second charter (May 23, 1609) iterated in different words these same sentiments, but added that no Roman Catholic should enter the colony unless they express allegiance to the Oath of Supremacy.

The third charter (March 12, 1611) affirmed the same but in less stringent words, omitting mention of Roman Catholicism.

The colony of Massachusetts received a similar charter from King James I, expressing the desire that the colony, in addition

to its purposes of commerce, would be a source of conversion to “the Indians Natives of the Country to the knowledge and obedience of the onely true God and Saviour of Mankinde and the Christian Faith which his royall Majestie our Royall Grandfather king Charles the first in his said Letters Patents declared was his Royall Intentions...”

Charles also granted a charter for the entire Province of Carolina, but in 1691, dissent over the governance of the province led to a split between the northern and southern districts. South Carolina was never chartered independently, although North Carolina was later granted a charter by Charles II.

James I's successor, Charles I, further administered his father's intentions that the colonies act as missionary outposts for the spread of the Christian faith by stating so in the charters he granted to Maryland.

Charles found himself embroiled in warfare against the armies of the English and Scottish parliaments during the English Civil War. Defeated in 1645, he was handed over to the English Parliament by his Scottish captors. Refusing to accept Parliament's demand for a constitutional monarchy, Charles was imprisoned. After escaping and being recaptured he was sent in exile to the Isle of Wight. He was eventually tried, convicted and executed for high treason under the army's general Oliver Cromwell in January, 1649.

The Interregnum in England ended when Charles's son, Charles II, took the throne of England upon the start of the Restoration of the Monarchy. Charles II continued in his father's and grandfather's footsteps regarding the colonies, granting new charters that contained much the same provisions as before.

Although a number of the colonies had been founded years earlier, their charters came much later under Charles II. These were Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

Only the colonies of New York, New Hampshire and New Jersey were never directly chartered by the English monarchy, and so no such references to the lordship of Jesus Christ, the Christian faith, or the desire for the conversion of the natives to Christianity is mentioned in any of their constitutions or other legal papers.

Territories in other parts of the Americas granted to loyal subjects by the kings of Spain, France and Portugal often carried references to these same desires, but directed toward the Roman Catholic Church and the papacy.

Even so, anti-Christ has worked over the centuries to divest the United States of America of any knowledge or understand-

ing of the faith (although often misplaced) that was intended to guide the governance of the New World nations. So, too, anti-Christ has managed to substitute other religions for the allegiance of Americans. It is no little thing to realize that, whereas the intent of the early colonists was to convert the American Indians to the Christian faith, today American Indian religion is gaining popularity among former Christians.

The native populations living in the Americas during the time of colonization were still very primitive in their technologies, although they did manage in some areas to build large civilizations by ancient standards.

Central and South America

The major civilizations of the New World were principally the Maya, the Aztecs and the Incas of Central and South America.

The Maya civilization began around 2000 BC and reached its peak during the Classic period (c. AD 250 to 900) when it occupied most of Mesoamerica, from today's central Mexico to northern Costa Rica. It continued until the arrival of the Spanish.

Around AD 1100 the Incas recognized their first king, Sinchi Roca. The Inca kingdom continued until it was transformed into an empire sometime in the early 13th century. At its peak, the Incan Empire stretched along the western coast of South America, encompassing present-day Peru, Bolivia, most of Ecuador, and northern Chili. With the arrival of the Spanish the destruction of the Incan Empire began, culminating in a final victory over the last ruler, Túpac Amaru, in 1572.

The Aztec Empire was a newer civilization that ruled the area in and around the Valley of Mexico, a highlands plateau in central Mexico. The empire grew out of a triple alliance that developed after protracted 15th-century warfare over the territory among competing kings. Although the Aztecs did not expand their territory beyond the valley, the population grew to over 1 million people by 1520. The empire met its demise when the Spanish conquered all of Mexico during the 16th century.

Although with the Spanish Conquistadores came missionaries determined to convert the native peoples of the Americas to Christ, many of the conversions were accomplished through force and persecution. And the conversions were not to Christ as much as to Roman Catholicism. At the time the Pilgrims from England were establishing the Reformed faith among the natives in the New England colonies, the Papacy's emissaries were establishing Roman Catholicism among the natives of western North America all the way to the southernmost tip of



Charles I of England



Charles II of England

South America. If any gospel was going to sway the natives from their animist religions, anti-Christ was going to make sure that as many as possible would be shuttled into one form of false Christianity or another.

By the 17th century the southern areas of the Americas became a mishmash of Roman Catholic/pagan culture and religion. In truth, the Roman Catholic missionaries allowed the natives to engage in their satanic rituals as long as they were practiced under the watchful eye of a Catholic priest. Even today, there can be found in Mexico and many Central and South American churches, pagan rituals alongside the Catholic Mass.

Also, in the process of “converting” the natives, unspeakable atrocities were committed against the native populations. However, it must be pointed out that the overall material welfare of those native populations was greatly enhanced due to the superior industrial and technological achievements that grew in Western Europe. That does not justify the often-imposed slavery and servitude that the natives suffered, but the truth is that they suffered those same things under their rulers and other conquering native tribes. What the Spanish accomplished, at least, was the elimination of human sacrifices and unsanitary religious practices. But beyond that, anti-Christ religions in one form or another have dominated.

North America

As the Spanish were enslaving the native populations of Central and South America, there began a period in North America that would leave a black mark on the history of an otherwise admirable civilization, superior to any that had ever existed anywhere in the world prior, or that would most likely ever exist again.

Slavery in North America began in 1619 when the first boatload of African slaves arrived in the colony of Jamestown, Virginia, to bolster the labor force for various crops, most notably tobacco. Prior to the introduction of African slaves, wealthy European settlers relied on indentured servants, mostly poorer Europeans. There were many problems with indentured servants, including a high mortality rate. Also, many left for better positions after they had become skilled workers. Add to this the fact that the English economy had improved over time, resulting in fewer willing to suffer the perils of travel to the New World.

The conditions were ripe for anti-Christ to institute an evil that would, to this day, threaten the stability of the one nation throughout history that would become the wealthiest and yet godliest, apart from Israel under David and Solomon. With the arrival of a Dutch ship carrying the first African slaves, human greed overrode the faith to which the Christian settlers claimed allegiance. There grew a lucrative business of importing and selling slaves throughout the American colonies.

Although history teachers and the media focus their attention on slavery in the south of what would become the United States of America, less than 7% of the twelve million slaves imported from Africa were sent to work in British North America. The vast majority of slaves were imported to sugar colonies in the Caribbean. Originally colonized by Spain, the Spaniards enslaved the native populations to work the sugar cane fields, and supplemented that labor with slaves imported from Africa. Later, after the decline of the Spanish Empire, the British would take over the lucrative sugar trade and import even more slaves from Africa. Over one-third of all African slaves were sent to Brazil, which had been colonized by the Portuguese, and by 1800 the slave trade yielded 88 percent of Brazil’s revenue.¹

Most of the slave owners in North America would have identified with one or another Christian denomination, both Catholic and Protestant, but one little-mentioned fact about the slave trade is that the majority of slave traders in Africa were Muslims who contracted with African tribal kings to buy their strongest subjects and sell them in the Americas.

Even so, that Christians would join with them in the evils of slavery demonstrates how far from the faith anti-Christ was able to move them through greed. It may have been argued that it wasn’t greed as much as necessity to maintain one’s business that required the importation of slaves. That may fly in the presence of unregenerate men, but God will ultimately judge slavery for the evil it is.



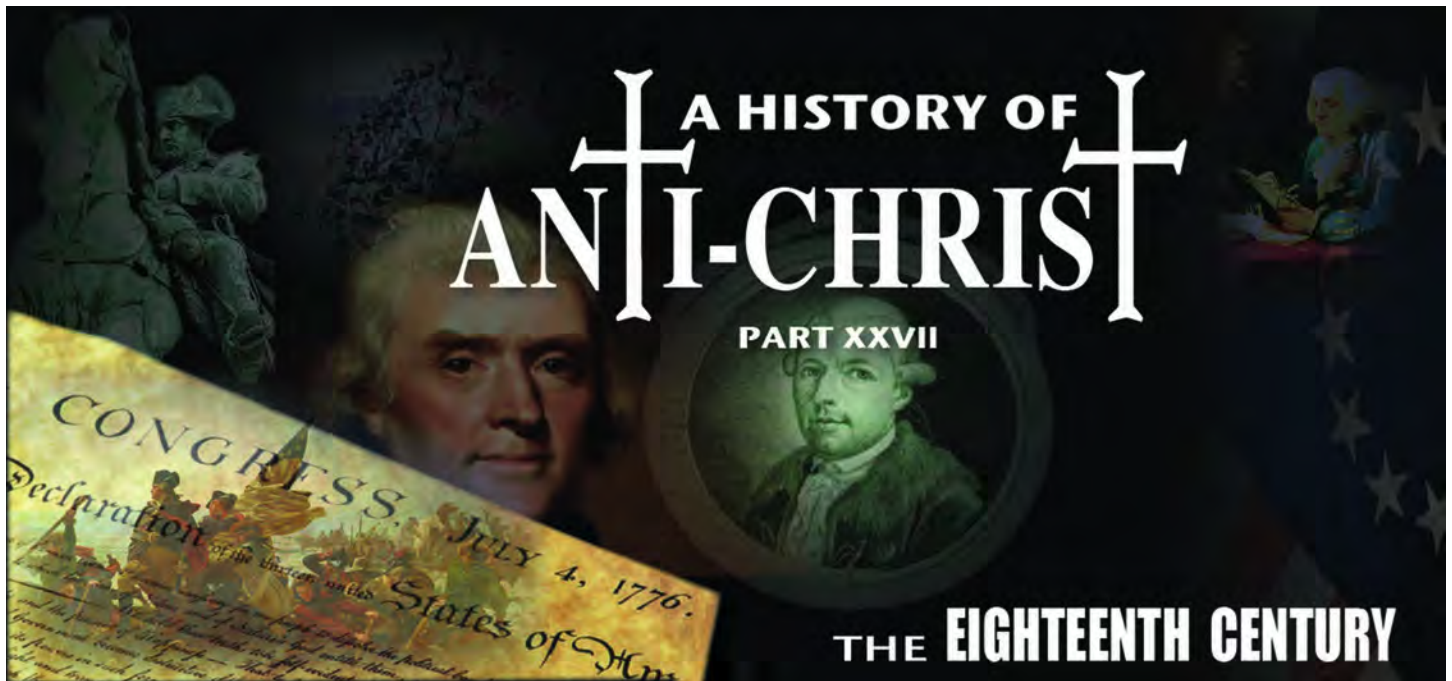
A slave market in sub-Saharan Africa

Some point to God’s provision for slavery in the Bible to justify the kind of slavery that was engaged in throughout the New World. And it is true that slavery as an institution is not prohibited in Scripture. An Israelite could purchase slaves with certain provisions; he could also acquire slaves through the conquest of Israel’s enemies, and for repaying of debt. But in all instances slaves were to be treated with kindness and even had the opportunity to become members of their master’s family under certain conditions.

Slavery in the Americas was often brutal, certainly lacking any aspect of love toward one’s fellow man. Some slaves were treated with kindness, particularly those indentured to small landowners. The large plantations were the most harsh and destructive toward not only the bodies, but the minds and morale of their slaves.

In any case, this great evil of slavery gave justification for anti-Christ to attack the new nation that would come into existence in the next century. Today the United States of America is paying for having engaged in such brutal slavery, and for myriad other sins that may have been stifled early on due to the moral climate that existed then, but has always been in the sinful hearts of men.

¹ *The Encyclopedia of World History: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Chronologically Arranged*, Peter N. Stearns, Gen. Editor (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001), p. 394.



MOST PEOPLE DON'T think of it, but the 18th century in many ways spelled the beginning of the very last days. Humanism and the exaltation of the human spirit took great strides as “The Age of Reason,” or “The Enlightenment” continued into the middle of the century, affecting human philosophy to the present day. During the hundred years from 1650 to 1750, philosophers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Thomas Paine and Montesquieu argued for reason and individualism to replace tradition and, particularly, faith in God, placing the emphasis on science as the answer to man’s problems.

This gave rise to man’s advancement in technology and science which began to take quantum leaps with the start of the industrial revolution around 1760. Hand production started giving way to mechanical production, water power became more efficient, and coal took the place of wood for heating and generating an increase in steam power. Man began to throw off the shackles of drudgery and for those who had the means to take the initiative there was great wealth to be had.

One of the benefactors as well as beneficiaries of the emerging prosperity was Freemasonry. Although organized lodges of Freemasonry were formed during the Middle Ages, the most important transition from that time to the present occurred with the formation of the first Grand Lodge in London in 1717. Although the foundation of Freemasonry is based on integrity and good will toward men, as well as recognition of a divine origin for creation, its philosophical underpinnings are humanistic. To be a Freemason one must believe in some god, but not necessarily the God of the Bible. Thus there are Jewish, Muslim and other non-Christian Masonic lodges which display the “holy books” of the particular religions to which they are dedicated. Most, however, would be considered “Christian.”

Anti-Christ has used Freemasonry to oppose the truth of Scripture, albeit without understanding by most Freemasons. Roman Catholicism took a strong stance against Freemasonry after the London Grand Lodge was instituted. In his papal bull,

In eminenti apostolates specula, issued on April 28, 1738, Pope Clement XII banned Catholics from becoming Freemasons. Clement warned that Freemasonry was open to men of any religion or sect, and that they were sworn to secrecy. The Bull voiced concern of the danger that Freemasons “do not hold by either civil or canonical sanctions.” Regarding the secrecy of Freemasonry, it stated, “if they were not doing evil they would not have so great a hatred of the light.”

Secrecy outside the Vatican’s purview was held in great suspicion at the time, and still is. As late as 1983, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (present pope emeritus Benedict XVI) confirmed in his office of Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, that Catholics are still prohibited from joining Masonic organizations:

Therefore the Church’s negative judgment in regard to Masonic association(s) remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden. The faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion. It is not within the competence of local ecclesiastical authorities to give a judgment on the nature of Masonic associations which would imply a derogation from what has been decided above...”

Some may wonder how Roman Catholicism can oppose Freemasonry when Roman Catholicism itself operates in many unscriptural ways. But it is not unusual for ungodly institutions to oppose one another. Satan’s kingdom is woefully fractured with a plethora of ungodly institutions that oppose one another.

Some historians speculate (for good reason) that the real reason for the papacy’s opposition to Freemasonry was more political. According to one Roman Catholic Freemason, Alec Mellor of the Grande Lodge Nationale Francaise:

As you know, the Old Pretender [James III of England] had finally found a refuge in Rome. He was under the protection of the Pope, and he represented the last card for the re-establishment of Catholicism in England. There was a war of double-agents between certain lodges composed of Jacobites and others of Hanoverian membership. The Old Pretender decided to put an end to this by closing the Jacobite lodge in Rome and, finally, to enter into the first condemnation. This leads us to understand why the motive was hidden. If the Holy See had discovered the hidden motive it would have been a terrible political blunder. The real reason was the politics of the day and the cause of the Stuarts.¹

The truth most probably lies between the two: 1) Roman Catholicism's suspicion of anything non-Catholic and secret; 2) the papacy's desire to strengthen Catholic influence in England and elsewhere that Protestantism posed a threat.

For those who single out Roman Catholicism as an ungodly institution, it may be said that at least that religious establishment does publicly oppose many anti-Christ movements such as Freemasonry, while many Protestant and other non-Catholic institutions welcome Freemasons and even anti-Christ religionists into their folds. This merely demonstrates that the Lord did not institute an institution; He called out from among the world (including the institutions) an elect group of people whose faith rests entirely on His person and not on any particular religious establishment.

And in spite of the Catholic Church's ban on Freemasonry, and although there have been periods of intense antagonism between Freemasonry and Roman Catholicism, there have also been Freemasons working within Roman Catholicism, many within the hierarchy of the church.

Space does not allow for a full treatise on Freemasonry or a list of Catholic Freemasons. A little research on the part of the reader will yield that information. But it is proper to say that in spite of its high moral values which both originated in biblical ethics and influenced the founders of the United States of America, Freemasonry's universalist philosophy is contrary to God's Word. Its influence in world affairs continues to advance its anti-Christ enterprises through the exaltation of the human spirit, which resonates today as never before.

There developed two distinct yet closely related factions within Freemasonry—the rationalist Enlightenment-inspired members and those members who leaned toward mysticism and the occult.

Freemasonry was greatly influenced by the Enlightenment in all its disciplines. Even the music of the Freemason Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, considered revolutionary in its day, was inspired by the rationalist elements of the Enlightenment.

On February 6, 1748 was born one Johann Adam Weishaupt who, at the age of seven began his formal education at a Jesuit school. After his father's death, young Weishaupt came under the influence of his uncle, Johann Adam Freiherr

¹ Mellor, "The Roman Catholic Freemason Past, Present and Future," *The Royal Arch Mason* - Spring 1972.

von Ickstatt, a law professor at the University of Ingolstadt, and an adherent of the Enlightenment. Weishaupt came to be familiarly called by his middle name Adam. At the age of 20 he graduated from the University of Ingolstadt with a doctorate of law, later becoming a professor of law and, in 1772 a professor of canon law. Prior to Weishaupt, professorship of canon law was exclusive to the Jesuit order. But in 1773, Pope Clement XIV began his suppression of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) due to that order's meddling in the political affairs of several European states.²

On May 1, 1776, Adam Weishaupt founded a network of spies and counter-spies for the purpose of influencing the political affairs of Europe. That network began with an initial membership of five men, freethinkers whose philosophy was that nothing should be accepted as truth without recourse to knowledge and reason.

Weishaupt's Order of the Illuminati was formed to oppose what he considered superstition, prejudice and religious influence over public life, as well as abuses of state power. One platform for the Illuminati was gender equality and support for women's education.

The Order attained branches in most European countries and within ten years is said to have reached a membership of 2,000. But in March, 1785, Duke of Bavaria Karl Theodor, a proponent of Enlightened Absolutism (a form of democratic monarchy influenced by the Enlightenment) banned all secret societies including the Illuminati. By then the Illuminati had already been contending with internal conflict over succession to leadership. Weishaupt fled Bavaria, and the Illuminati's documents and internal correspondences were seized and made public by the government in 1787.

Today there exist a number of organizations that claim to be descended from Weishaupt's original Order of the Illuminati, and use the word "Illuminati" in their titles. But there is no empirical evidence that Weishaupt's Order of the Illuminati survived after Weishaupt, or even for the remainder of his life. But that doesn't stop some conspiracy theorists like Texe Marrs, Mark Dice, David Icke and others from insisting that Weishaupt's Illuminati continue to work behind the scenes to manipulate today's governments with nefarious plans for world domination and the enslavement of all mankind.

That isn't to say that there is no satanic element of behind-the-scenes conspirators working for a one-world government and the ultimate branding of humanity as their servants. All the evidence suggests that such a conspiracy does exist; there are too many "coincidences" to say otherwise. And it cannot be denied that today's "Illuminati" hold to and promote globalization. But there is no evidence of a direct link to Weishaupt. Rather, the

² In his papal brief, *Dominus ac Redemptor*, Clement expressed concern that the Jesuits were acting contrary to the nature of Jesus Christ as "Prince of Peace," and encouraged institutions to remove those who impede peace, specifically the Society of Jesus. The pope's sanctions against the Jesuits was received primarily in the Roman Catholic countries of France, Spain, Portugal, Poland and the Philippines. Some non-Catholic countries did not acquiesce to the sanctions, at least not immediately. In Russia the Jesuits were supported by Empress Catherine, so the order was not dissolved until 1820 when the Russian Orthodox Church persuaded Tsar Alexander I to exile the Jesuits.

ideals of the Enlightenment are what drive organizations today to work for globalization. And not all intentions are evil; no doubt there are many within those organizations that believe they are working for the betterment of mankind's state of being.

Originating in 17th-century Europe, the Enlightenment traveled the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas, and early in the 18th century became entrenched in the minds of many of the founders of the United States, most notably Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson. The Enlightenment played a significant role in the American Revolution through its political ideals, and had great influence on the American Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights.

Although the Enlightenment glorified man and rejected what it considered the superstition of religion, it could not divorce itself from the influences of Christianity which had become an apostate form of true faith in Christ. The philosophers of the Enlightenment could not entirely escape the biblical ethic which guided the high ideals of charity and good will among those who attempted to form a more just society. God's Word had by that time so permeated the thinking of Western Europeans through the Reformation, that humanistic philosophy melded with God's influences. Thus we find many appeals to "Providence," "God," "Divinity," "the Almighty," and other terms for the God of the Bible in the founding documents of this nation. When those men (a number of whom were deists, Masons and nominal Christians) spoke of "God" they did not have in mind any other god than the God of the Bible. They were not thinking of Allah, Krishna, or some nebulous figure.

And despite the shortcomings of its founders, and the greater shortcomings of its citizens over time, God has continued to bless the United States of America above all other nations until recently. Even so, it cannot be denied that the anti-Christ spirit has worked ceaselessly and incessantly to eradicate all vestiges of that biblical ethic from public discourse.

The greatest events of the 18th century over which the anti-Christ spirit exerted great influence were the conflicts between nations and the continuing dissolution of man's separation from man that persisted due to the sovereign nation states' self-interest.

A timeline of significant events in which the anti-Christ spirit had great influence follows:

1701-1713: The war of Spanish Succession results when many important European nations go to war to decide who would succeed to the throne after King Charles II of Spain dies. The first war of the 18th century that would pit Christians against Christians.

1715 & 1745: In the Jacobite Rebellions Scots rebel against the rule of George I of England, and support the exiled descendants of James II, James Stuart and his son, Charles Edward ("Bonnie Prince Charlie"). The Scots are defeated by British troops, and many are executed for treason. Another cause for Christians to shed the blood of other Christians over worldly conflicts.

1716: Christianity was banned in China by Emperor Ch'ien Lung;

1739: The Persian Conquests continue when Sunni Moslem Nadir Shah conquers western India and the Punjab, and captures Delhi, bringing Islam to bear.

1755: The Seven Years' War begins when Britain joins Prussia to battle France and Austria over control of North American and Indian colonies. The Peace of Paris gives Britain control of Canada and many Caribbean Islands. Yet another war among Christians.

1767: The Boston Massacre takes place when British soldiers kill five American protestors among a large group of Americans unhappy over high taxes without representation. More Christians killing Christians.

1770s: The slave trade reaches its pinnacle as hundreds of thousands of Black Africans per year are brought to the Americas.

1775: Americans declare war against Britain in a bid for independence. The war would last until 1783 as Christians rebel against God-ordained authority and kill one another for political reasons. Yet it cannot be denied that God used this rebellion for His own purposes in establishing a new nation that would become the greatest exporter of the Gospel in history. But it was birthed with the blood of Christians shed by other Christians.

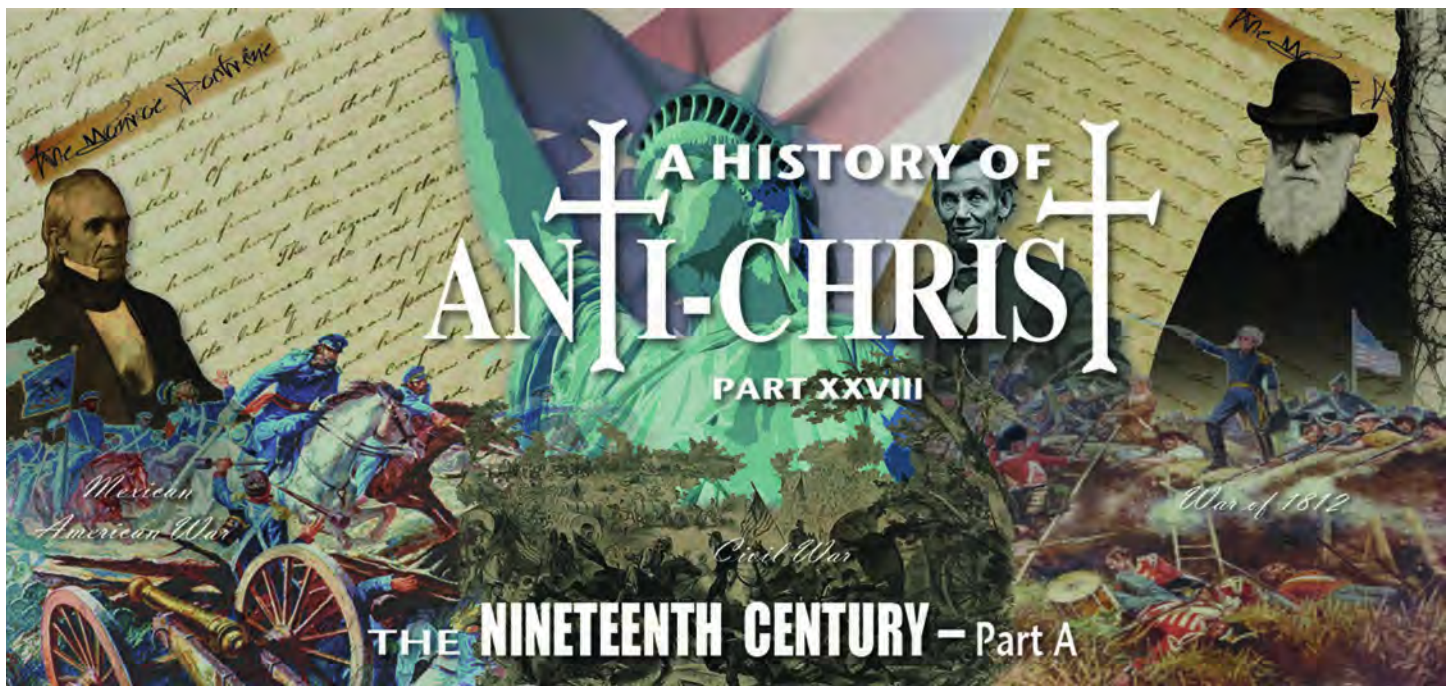
1789: The French Revolution begins when angry citizens of Paris revolt against high taxes and the extravagant lifestyle of Louis XVI. Louis tries to escape, but he and his queen, Marie Antoinette are tried and executed by beheading. The Revolution gives rise to one of the greatest European conquerors, Napoleon Bonaparte, a brilliant young French general who leads the French army to conquer much of Italy in 1796, and Egypt in 1798. Still more Christians killing Christians.

1798: Irish patriot Wolfe Tone rebels against English rule with the aid of France. The rebellion is thwarted, and Wolfe commits suicide while in prison awaiting execution. Yet another occasion for Christians to war against Christians.

It will be argued that these wars were fought between those who were Christians in name only. But that would be too simplistic a reason for these great conflicts. More likely the conflicts involved many nominal Christians who persuaded many true believers in Christ to follow their fleshly instincts. They forgot (as many Christians today forget) that our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12).

This does not mean we war against human rulers in high places; otherwise we would not be told that we do not war against flesh and blood, which such rulers are. Our warfare is spiritual through prayer, godly living, adherence to the Word of God for our personal lives, and earnestly contending for the faith. We do not have a mandate to fight wars or engage in conflict against men regardless how ungodly they may be. We must resist the influence of the world, and even misguided brethren in Christ who wish to enlist our aid to "Change the world for Christ."

Anti-Christ is the winner in any scenario in which Christians bear arms against others, except possibly in the case of self-defense or defense of the innocent. And even then, we must be careful not to be overtaken by hatred or a sense of justified vengeance. Some true believers would even say that under no circumstance may a believer in Jesus use force, even to protect himself or another innocent. Let each be persuaded in his own heart; I will not judge in such circumstances.



THE NINETEENTH CENTURY brought tremendous changes not only in man's science and technology, particularly in the West, but in beliefs. By the end of the eighteenth century the Enlightenment began to give way to a new era of Romanticism, an intellectual movement that started in Germany around 1770 and impacted art and literature. Although the effects of the Enlightenment remained, producing greater accomplishments in science and industry, Romanticism's ideas found fertile ground among those dissatisfied with the pragmatism of science and technology. Reacting against the Industrial Revolution, artists and literary figures appealed to the emotions, particularly as they could be turned against the social and political norms of the aristocratic era.

Romanticism's effect on theology was especially significant, reflecting the influence of anti-Christ. Led by German theologians such as Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl, Christianity in particular took on a radical departure from the reasoned faith of the true believer in Jesus.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (November 21, 1768 - February 12, 1834) was a German theologian, philosopher and biblical scholar influential in the development of Higher Criticism which formed the basis for liberal theology—a method of hermeneutics that rejects tenets of biblical truth having to do with God's intervention in His creation. Because of his great influence on Christian thought, he is called the "Father of Modern Liberal Theology."

Albrecht Ritschl, (March 25, 1822 - March 20, 1889), another German theologian, rejected the doctrines of original sin, the miraculous birth of Christ, the Trinity, and the Incarnation. He was heavily influenced by Immanuel Kant, and attempted to apply the tenets of Kantian philosophy to Protestant Christianity. It is said that this was typical of an era that had little feeling for the mystery of religion and no dread of a divine judgment.

Both of these men's influence on Protestant theology has been enormous, and is felt even to this day as Higher Criticism

has permeated even elements of evangelical Christianity with subjective, feelings-oriented religion.

Anti-Christ knows full well that the vast majority of people act more on emotion than on reason—particularly on a reasoned faith. The subjectivity of religious thinking has opened the doors for Satan to incorporate the dialectic process to challenge the absolute truths of God's Word. Pitting subjective religious lies against the absolutes of Scripture, he influences men to "dialogue" with those whose beliefs are in opposition to those absolutes, seeking to reach synthesis—a "meeting of the minds" that seems to bring at least an "agreement to disagree" while hindering any effective proclamation of the truth. This is why today we have evangelical Christian leaders dialoging with Roman Catholic theologians, Mormon leaders and even Muslim imams to reach a harmonized agreement not to convert anyone, but merely to embrace the similarities between the religions. Thus, they can pray together, even though it is to different false gods.

Amid the changing philosophical landscape, nations continued on the path to warfare, each century becoming bloodier than the previous one. Warfare between Christian states accelerated, as did conflict between the Muslim Ottoman Empire and Western and Eastern Europe. In 1800, the Acts of Union annexed Ireland into the British Empire, creating the Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The Union with Ireland Act 1800 was enacted by the Parliament of Great Britain on July 2, 1800, and was followed by the Act of Union (Ireland) 1800, passed by the Parliament of Ireland on August 1, 1800, resulting in the Union coming into effect on January 1, 1801. These Acts have bound the two countries together for better and for worse, and much bloodshed has resulted as militant elements in Catholic Northern Ireland have struggled for independence from Protestant England from the early part of the 20th century till today.

1804 saw the uprising of Serbs against the rule of the Ottomans, which brought about the modern state of Serbia.

The revolt was prompted by the massacre of many Serbian noblemen by the Dahias, a Janissary junta that ruled Serbia at the time. The Janissaries—an elite military force of Christians conscripted from a young age into service for the Ottoman Empire—executed the nobles out of fear that the Serbs would support a rival sultan who opposed their increasing power in his province. The Serb revolt was among the first stirrings against the Ottoman Empire that found success.

Eventually, the Ottoman Empire would succumb to greater challenges by Western powers, as we'll see in our next installment.

Anti-Christ's power over the slave trade suffered greatly when slavery was abolished in the West, beginning with the British Empire. The earliest accounts of anti-slavery efforts trace to around 1783 when the Quaker movement petitioned the British Parliament to end the slave trade. The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was established in London in May, 1787, which produced literature and art to bring to the general populace a greater awareness of the evil. In 1805, a Bill calling for the abolition of the slave trade in British territories passed both Houses of Parliament. By 1807, some 40 parliamentary seats were held by anti-slave-trade proponents led by William Wilberforce. But slavery continued to flourish in other countries, most notably the United States of America.

Anti-Christ has no problem goading Christian nations to war against one another. As the implements of warfare grew increasingly sophisticated, large naval arsenals became the staple of nations determined to control the seas in the interest of commerce. From 1803 to 1806, the War of the Third Coalition resulted in France under Napoleon defeating an alliance comprised of Austria, Russia, and some allied nations.

During that war, Britain was also under constant threat from France. On October 21, 1805, the Royal Navy engaged a combined naval force of France and Spain at the Battle of Trafalgar. Under the command of Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson, 27 British ships decisively defeated 33 French and Spanish ships led by French Admiral Pierre-Charles Villeneuve. Although Nelson was mortally wounded in the battle, the victory gave Britain absolute mastery over the seas. This allowed Britain to greatly expand her influence throughout the world. This led to yet another opportunity for anti-Christ to create warfare between Christian nations as Britain attempted to restrict U.S. trade, resulting in the War of 1812.

The United States suffered several defeats as it struggled against a combined force of British, Canadian and American Indian forces. In August, 1814, Washington, D.C. was captured, and the nation's capital was burned. Yet American forces successfully resisted British invasions of New York, Baltimore and New Orleans. The United States was able to survive what it called its "Second War of Independence."

Desirous of maintaining that independence, and in response to continued European attempts to colonize land and influence states in North and South America, the United States adopted the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. The Doctrine deemed such interference on the part of European nations toward any state in the Americas acts of aggression which would be met with military intervention.

The Doctrine was first proposed by President James Monroe during his seventh annual State of the Union Address to Congress. It remains one of the longest-standing tenets of U.S. foreign policy.

The U.S. Government's expansionist goals led to more bloodshed under the presidency of James K. Polk who believed in the doctrine of America's "Manifest Destiny." Manifest Destiny posited that the United States was destined by God to spread the virtues of the American people and their institutions westward to encompass the entire continent. Although Manifest Destiny never gained universal support either among the American people or politicians, its ultimate goal was realized piecemeal.

The origin of its first theme, "the virtue of the American people and their institutions" can be traced to America's puritan heritage and John Winthrop's sermon titled, "City upon a Hill," in which he proposed that America would be a shining example to the Old World.

Regardless of the virtues or failings of the United States of America, it cannot be denied that God has used it in such a way that Manifest Destiny would seem to be His plan. Even so, anti-Christ has found ways throughout history to thwart the good intentions of men, and create evil in their place.

The Mexican-American War (1846-1848) was one evil consequence of Manifest Destiny. After Texas gained independence from Mexico in 1836, the United States initially declined to incorporate it into the union, largely because northern political interests did not want to add a new slave state. Hoping to retake Texas, the Mexican government was at the time conducting border raids and threatening war should the United States annex Mexico. With the election of Polk in 1844, his belief in Manifest Destiny drove him to campaign for the annexation of Texas, with further designs to bring the Oregon Territory, California, New Mexico, and the entire southwestern portion of the continent into the Union.

At first, Polk offered to buy the lands from Mexico, but when his offer was rejected he instigated a fight by moving U.S. troops into a disputed zone between the Rio Grande and Nueces River—an area recognized by both the U.S. and Mexico as part of the Mexican state of Coahuila. This prompted an attack by Mexican cavalry against a contingency of U.S. troops under the command of General Zachary Taylor on April 25, 1846. The attack spurred Polk to petition Congress to declare war against Mexico, which it did on May 13 of the same year. The Mexican forces were no match against the superior armed strength of the U.S. army, and Mexico surrendered under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This established the Rio Grande as the U.S.-Mexican border, and Mexico recognized the U.S. annexation of Texas. Mexico also agreed to sell California and the territory that would become the states of New Mexico and Arizona as well as the rest of its territory north of the Rio Grande for \$15 million plus the assumption of certain damages claims.

Again, anti-Christ had fomented warfare between "Christian" nations—the largely Protestant United States, and Roman Catholic Mexico, under the pretense that it was God's will for the spread of a "New Earth" in the regions of the North American continent.

We recognize that God indeed is the one who establishes all power on earth. But as believers in Jesus Christ, we must not embroil ourselves in the conflicts fomented by anti-Christ, whom God uses to bring about His plans.

In spite of Polk's ambitious plans to bring about a "New Earth" on the North American continent, anti-Christ was stirring up conflict among the inhabitants of the nation. With the election of the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, and amid fears that he would push for the abolition of slavery in the United States (he stated in his campaign that "Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free"), several southern states seceded from the Union. South Carolina was the first to secede, on December 20, 1860. Within two months, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas followed. On February 9, 1861, the secessionist states formed The Confederate States of America with Jefferson Davies as president.

After Lincoln was sworn into office (March 4, 1861), he kept the U.S. garrison stationed at Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina. Although several U.S. forts had been attacked prior, the U.S. government did not at first initiate retaliation. But when the Confederates under General Pierre Beauregard opened fire on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, the War of Secession (commonly misnamed "the Civil War"), began. This war remains the most devastating ever fought on U.S. soil, and its casualties of dead and wounded Americans—both military and civilian—are still unmatched by those of all military conflicts in the nation's history (including World Wars I and II) combined (750,000 - 698,500). In numbers of American military deaths, the American Civil War ranks second only to World War II. But consider that the population of the United States (including the Confederate states) at the beginning of the Civil War was merely 31,443,000 compared to 133,402,000 at the beginning of World War II.

Truly, the American Civil War was anti-Christ's greatest achievement in union with the angel of death against any "Christian" nation.

And his onslaught continued throughout the 19th century with constant warfare in "Christian" Europe: 1864 - Prussia and Austria invaded Denmark; 1866 - Austro-Prussian War began; 1870 - Franco-Prussian War started; 1898 - Spanish-American War.

Anti-Christ has many fronts on which he fights his battles. One of his greatest goals is to discredit faith in Jesus Christ and erect barriers to those who might otherwise be won to true faith. The fomenting of atrocities by alleged Christians against heathens has been one of his most effective means to achieve that purpose. The manner in which the government of this "Christian" nation acted against aboriginal people has caused many to reject "the white man's God." Broken treaties that promised land and benefits to American Indians have been a blot on the record of American domestic policy. The Indian Removal Act of 1830, enacted into law by President Andrew Jackson, was supposed to grant unsettled lands west of the Mississippi River to Indians in exchange for their lands within existing state borders. Although the move west by Indian tribes was deemed "voluntary," in fact they were forced from their lands under

pressure by European settlers placed on Congress and the president. During the removal, some 4,000 Cherokee died on a forced march, which came to be known as the "Trail of Tears."

Major tribes such as the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole were most affected, although the Seminole resisted. This resulted in the Second Seminole War of 1835, during which Chief Osceola was taken prisoner while under a flag of truce.

During the campaigns conducted by the U.S. Government against the Indian nations, atrocities were committed on both sides. Scalping, decapitation, the killing of innocent women and children were part and parcel of both. In the end, though, it is always faith in Jesus that suffers because so many who go by His name fall victim to their own avarice.

In 1837, Queen Victoria assumed the British throne, and would have the longest reign of any British monarch in history, from June 20, 1837, until her death on January 22, 1901. Victoria was known for her strict moral standards, and for her desire to reign over the kingdom's foreign territories with benevolence, employing military action only when necessary to maintain control. She felt that others might not be as benevolent were the Crown to cede control to any others.

In 1886, France, an ally of the United Colonies during the Revolutionary War, presented the United States with the Statue of Liberty. A revered icon of American independence, pride and resolve to remain a free and independent state (that's all gone), the Statue of Liberty, made in the style of ancient Greek and Roman art, was actually inspired by the Roman goddess *Libertas* (Latin for "Liberty"). The U.S. National Parks Service states that the Roman robe on the Statue of Liberty is the main feature that invokes *Libertas* and the symbol of Liberty for which she stood. In Roman religion, *Libertas* was the female personification of liberty and personal freedom. Although there is no official statement from the National Parks Service, or reliable historical sources, the spikes on Liberty's head are similar to those depicted on the sun gods Apollo (Roman) and Helios (Greek). The statue's original name was "Liberty Enlightening the World." Hence the torch in her right hand.

Although the United States of America is thought of by many Christians as a "Christian nation," anti-Christ has seen to it that there would be many pagan and occult symbols associated with it, and with many of the states, counties and cities. It should be clear to any born-again believer in Jesus that the nation is as much a part of Satan's world system as any other nation. The difference, by God's grace, is that the influence of His Word has until fairly recently held sway in the hearts of many of its citizens. But that, too, is fast fading as the last days' apostasy continues to gain ground.

Science and technology brought the invention of photography with the first daguerrotype by French artist Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre in 1839. Like all of man's technology, photography would be used for the benefit of men and anti-Christ far more than for the glory of God. Whereas prior to photography, pornography took great pains to produce through art and sculpture, now it would be a matter of pushing a button. History gives ample evidence of the proliferation of obscene images has captured a major segment of the photography business.

Photography led to motion pictures, video tape, and digital video discs, all of which have been used profusely for propaganda and pornography. But the noble use of these inventions have bestowed much pleasure and even work for the Lord.

The 19th-century inventions of the telephone, the phonograph (both by Alexander Graham Bell) and automobiles have had mixed results, some very good, some very bad. Certainly automobiles, even with the many benefits they provide, have contributed to the early deaths of millions of people since their invention.

Phonographs led to tape, to compact discs, and currently to streaming music and other audio content via the Internet. Today's "music" is more of a curse than a benefit, and much of it is obscene. Yet how wonderful it is to listen to good music that glorifies God.

In addition to the telephone, another invention that has helped anti-Christ bring the world closer in his design to recreate Babel on a global scale is the telegraph. Although a crude telegraph system was invented in Bavaria by Samuel Soemmering in 1809, and in 1828 in the U.S. by Harrison Dyar, it is Samuel Morse who is credited with the first truly practical telegraph using an electromagnet. Morse, a professor of arts and design at New York University, demonstrated that electronic signals could be transmitted by wire using pulses of current to deflect an electromagnet which moved a marker to produce written codes on a strip of paper. Thus was invented Morse Code. On May 24, 1844, Samuel Morse officially opened the first completed line of telegraph wires which stretched between Baltimore and Washington, D.C., some 40 miles, with the words, "What hath God wrought?"

In truth, it was man who wrought the invention by unlocking the secrets of nature created by God. Yet, even as anti-Christ takes advantage of man's moral failings to use such inventions for his own purposes, we must acknowledge that none of this could happen except God permit it. His permission serves to prove the prophecies of His Word:

"But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end. Many shall run back and forth, and knowledge shall be increased." (Daniel 12:4)

Within 23 years (1867), the first trans-Atlantic cable would be laid, linking Europe and the United States in an even further stretch to achieve the new Babel.

Even as these inventions appealed to the sin nature of mankind, some noble achievements were made in the area of science, particularly in the field of medicine. Louis Pasteur, a French chemist and microbiologist, achieved many successful advances against numerous diseases because of his understanding of germs. The discovery of x-rays in 1895 has also contributed to the cure of diseases, as did Marie Currie's discovery of radium.

In the field of art, realism—the painting and sculpture of natural elements as created by God—gave way to human imagination. Impressionist art began to take on appeal with the works of Monet, Renoir, Pissarro and Sisley, who, in 1873, organized the *Société Anonyme Coopérative des Artistes Peintres Sculpteurs, Graveurs* ("Cooperative and Anonymous Association of Paint-

ers, Sculptors, and Engravers"). Although impressionism maintained a loose connection with realism, the trend away from pure realism that it began eventually led to abstract art, cubism and even "art" painted by animals, which may command obscene prices from spiritually-challenged but wealthy patrons of today's art scene. Anti-Christ hates anything that glorifies God, and desires to twist reality into forms identifiable with devilish influences.

And speaking of devilish influences, a number of people who would become prominent anti-Christ's in their own right were born during the 19th century, most notably, Charles Darwin (1809); Oscar Wilde (1854); Sigmund Freud (1856); Mohandas Gandhi (1869) and Jack the Ripper (?). On July 1, 1804, French novelist Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin was born. Using the pseudonym George Sand, Dupin authored many novels that expressed her feminist, socialist and other unconventional views that appealed to the fallen nature of men and women. A notorious adulteress who preferred men's clothing to that of women, her writings began a revolution in contemporary thinking that have burgeoned over the past century into today's feminist movement, which has wormed its way into a vast majority of churches throughout the world. Anti-Christ's design to blend the genders and confuse the male-female natures created by God has found fertile ground in man's imagination, greatly aided by Dupin.

In a different type of fiction, Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* was published in 1859, in which his theory of the evolution of man from lower species took the scientific world by storm. This was followed by the publishing of his *Descent of Man* in 1871. It isn't necessary to elaborate on the infamous theory of evolution that has turned even many professed Christians away from the biblical account of the creation of man by God. This theory remains one of the benchmarks of anti-Christ's achievements over the past 6,000 years of man's history.

On the social front, many of today's Christmas traditions began in the 19th century, including the invention of Santa Claus, Christmas trees, Santa's eight reindeer, each with a distinctive name (not including Rudolph). Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* was published in 1843, and has never been out of print.

Although the origins of Valentine's Day remain shrouded in history (sometime in the Middle Ages romantic partners were chosen on "Saint Valentine's" Day because it was believed that birds began mating on that day, it wasn't until the 19th century that the commercialization of that day developed with the tradition of Valentine's Day cards. Popular in Europe, the Valentine's Day card industry began in America with a student at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts, Esther A. Howland. Students at Mount Holyoke often secretly exchanged poems scrawled on sheets of paper. After her graduation, Howland received an ornate card from an English business associate of her father, a stationer. Having considerable artistic talent and business acumen, Howland had the idea of producing professional cards and selling them in her father's store. From there, the industry grew in the United States to what it is today.



AS TIME WINDS down, we see an increase in anti-Christ’s attempts to destroy the Gospel and to bring mankind into greater subjection to pain and suffering, as well as the substitution of false religions and philosophies that promise, but cannot deliver, relief from that pain and suffering. Yet in the midst of anti-Christ’s onslaught against humanity and God’s Word, some glimmers of truth have managed to peek through the darkness. This isn’t as bleak as it may seem. We must remember that God is working His plan of redemption in the midst of that darkness, even as this world remains for the time being under Satan’s dominion. As we look at various aspects of humanity’s sojourn on this planet, we will understand how anti-Christ’s hand has been a guiding factor.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The 19th century brought into vivid focus biblical prophecy concerning the end of this age according to Daniel’s vision:

But you, O Daniel, close up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. (Daniel 12:4)

Man’s international and intercontinental travel to and fro increased in earnest during the 19th century with the invention of steam locomotion on both land and sea. His knowledge was greatly increased as evidenced by the virtual explosion of advances in science and technology which would lead to even more incredible advances during the 20th century. Many of these advances have been beneficial, but not all have been pure science.

The most ungodly product of “science falsely called” appeared with the publication in 1859 of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* which became the foundation for the theory of the evolution of man from lower life forms. Today, evolution is presented matter-of-factly by virtually all institutions of learning, from pre-school to university, as well as in the mass media, despite the fact that it is an unproven theory. It has been one of anti-Christ’s greatest weapons against the truth of God’s Word.

WARFARE

We saw in previous installments how warfare in particular has been used by anti-Christ to bring men into subjection to the dark forces under his command. Christian nations (or more properly, nations whose populations have largely declared themselves Christians) have engaged in bloody conflicts contrary to the commands of our Lord. Even the United States of America was born out of rebellion, although we give God the glory for the wonderful, most benevolent society ever developed by mankind, primarily because of the biblical ethic upon which the founding fathers based their concept of government.

The 19th century also brought into vivid focus the Lord’s prophecy concerning the time prior to His coming again:

And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of this age?”

And Jesus answered and said to them, “Be careful that no man deceives you, for many will come in My name, saying that I am Christ, and shall deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for all these things must come to pass.

“But the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. (Matthew 24:3-8)

The 19th century not only saw many wars and rumors of wars, but much of what took place during that century set the stage for even greater wars to come in the 20th century.

In our previous installment we saw how the War of Secession (misnamed “the Civil War”) was fought between Christians over human issues, resulting in the greatest number of casualties among American military forces than in all the nation’s wars combined. The 19th century was the bloodiest in the

history of mankind up to its time. Perhaps the greatest battles were those that resulted in the diminishing of the Ottoman Empire, which would also set the stage for future wars to come.

In 1853, Tsar Nicholas I of Russia went to war against the Ottoman Turks in defense of Orthodox Christians in Turkey and in Jerusalem (which was occupied by the Ottoman Empire at that time). But this gave rise to fears in Britain and France, which saw the Tsar's campaign as part of a greater Russian expansion of power which threatened those and other Western European nations' economic interests worldwide. When, using exploding artillery shells for the first time, the Russian navy destroyed a Turkish fleet at a Turkish port on the Black Sea, the British reacted with a declaration of war in 1854. Queen Victoria wrote of "the great sinfulness" of Russia in bringing about what would become the Crimean War (1854-1856), fought between major European powers for control of territories held by the declining Ottoman Empire.

The Crimean War ended in 1856 with the Paris Peace Treaty which obligated the Ottoman Empire to grant to Christians equal rights with Muslims. The Edict of Gülhane, issued by the Ottoman Empire, gave a semblance of equality to Christians, abolishing the *jizya* (tax levied against certain non-Muslim males), and allowing them to serve in the Ottoman army. But in many areas, particularly having to do with legal matters, Muslims enjoyed immunity for offenses against Christians, and Christians could not testify against Muslims in court. Christians were generally subjugated in other ways as well.

But the Tsar's conflict with the Ottomans had already been active since 1839 when the Russians sought influence in Afghanistan, hoping for a "trustworthy ally" on India's western border. Fearing Russian expansion into India via Afghanistan, the British sent a force of 12,000 British and Indian troops, with a contingent that included families, prostitutes, and sellers of opium, rum and tobacco for the troops.

If this seems shocking, it's only because of sanitized historical accounts in the West that have championed the "Christian" virtues of Europe. We must not be so naïve to think that anti-Christ has not largely had his way with "Christian" nations. Corruption of those nations' military is easily realized, as anyone who has been in the military would attest.

1877-1878 saw the Russo-Turkish War between the Ottoman Empire and the Eastern Orthodox coalition led by the Russian Empire. Russia was victorious in seizing a number of provinces in the Caucasus, giving Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria and Montenegro formal independence from the Ottomans.

In 1878, European powers of the United Kingdom, Austria-Hungary, France, Germany and Italy gathered in Berlin with Russia and the Ottomans to settle the outcome of the Russo-Turkish War. The Habsburg monarchy in Vienna was given Bosnia and Herzegovina. Vienna's army, carrying symbols of Roman Catholicism crushed Orthodox Serb resistance.

In 1889, a baby was born in the small town of Braunau am Inn, Austria-Hungary. This infant, Adolph Hitler, would grow to become one of the greatest anti-Christ in history.

More warfare between "Christian" nations would erupt in 1895 when Jose Marti and some fellow exiles to Cuba started

another war for independence from Spain. Although Marti is killed and his guerrilla fighters are outnumbered five to one by Spain's forces, they prevail, attaining limited autonomy. During the war, the battleship U.S.S. Maine embarked on a visit to Havana to protect U.S. interests in Cuba. On February 15, 1898, she exploded without warning, with the loss of one-third of her crew. Although the cause has never been determined, popular opinion at the time was that Spain was responsible, thus leading to the Spanish American War one year later. And again, "Christian" nations went to war.

RELIGION

Much also happened on the religious front, which was also guided by anti-Christ. Elements of the Spanish Inquisition did not die easily, even after the 1820 Revolution that saw King Ferdinand VII deposed for a time. With his return in 1826, the Inquisition was revived to some degree. Anti-Christ's hatred of Jews and Christians was again inflamed with the burning at the stake of a Jew, as well as a Quaker schoolmaster who replaced the Catholic "Hail Mary" with another prayer, "Praise be to God," in his classroom. That is said to have been the last of the executions under the Inquisition.

In 1830, Joseph Smith, Jr., of New York, organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which came to be called Mormonism. It isn't necessary to go into all the ungodly doctrines of this institution. Suffice it to say that history has proven it one of the most deceptive opponents of the true Gospel, giving anti-Christ considerable leverage for the minds of people everywhere.

Anti-Christ doesn't always manifest an opposition to Christianity; he also uses Christianity to discredit itself with hare-brained schemes that on the surface seem to be for the "good" of people. In 1844, in Australia, the "Protection of Children Act" allowed Christian missionaries to kidnap aboriginal children in order to "civilize" them—a policy that lasted for almost 80 years, until the 1960s.

Anti-Christ also knows how to corrupt what begins as a faithful service to God. In 1844, George Williams, a merchant in cloth founded the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in London. His purpose was to provide a better option to taverns and brothels for "the improving of the spiritual condition of young men engaged in the drapery, embroidery, and other trades," who were flocking to the major cities in response to labor demands that increased with the Industrial Revolution. Within the short span of seven years, YMCAs had sprung up in the United Kingdom, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United States. 1855 saw the beginning of the World Alliance of YMCAs, whose motto, taken from the Bible, was, "That they may be one."

Merely ten years later, the Fourth World Conference of YMCAs, held in Germany, stressed the developing of the whole individual in body, mind and spirit. This concept came to be known as "muscular Christianity"—a Victorian era movement that stressed an energetic Christian evangelism combined with vigorous masculinity. English author Thomas Hughes used the term "muscular Christianity" in his novel, *Tom Brown at Oxford*,

with the statement that it is “a good thing to have strong and well-exercised bodies.”

Wrote Hughes, “The least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that a man’s body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men.”

As noble an ideal as it was that resulted in the founding of the YMCA, history again has shown that man’s attempts to institutionalize faith in Christ inevitably succumb to the onslaught of anti-Christ. As such institutions grow they find the need for administrative talent increases. Their leaders then tend to look outside the faith, or at least outside the pure expression of the faith, toward more carnally-minded, administratively talented people to run the organization. Today the YMCA is Christian in name only. In fact, it isn’t even that; it has dropped the formal name and has adopted merely “The Y” as its preferred name. Sadly, it even succumbed to the reputation of being a haven of homosexuality through the popular song, Y.M.C.A., by the Village People in 1978.

The YMCA initially threatened to sue the band over trademark infringement, as well as concerns over the homosexual-themed lyrics. But when the organization experienced a surge in membership as a result of the popularity of the song, it dropped the lawsuit. Again, anti-Christ had won the battle (but not the war, eventually), because a “Christian” organization valued monetary success over the purity of the faith.

In 1850, a Chinese Christian in China came to believe he was the son of God commanded to save the world. Starting a socialist movement for sharing wealth and land distribution, as well as the Ten Commandments, he stressed chaste living, an end to foot-binding for women, and opposition to opium. He fomented what would become known as the Taiping Rebellion, which intended to divest the country of “Manchu demons” and other belief systems. This is another way in which anti-Christ uses good intentions and “religious” works to deceive.

In 1854 Pope Pius IX, with a huge majority of Catholic bishops, issued the papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (Latin for “Ineffable God”), in which he defined *ex cathedra* (from “Peter’s throne”) the dogma of Mary’s Immaculate Conception, which states:

We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore should firmly and constantly be believed by all the faithful.

A dogma declared *ex cathedra* is imposed upon Catholics as essential to their faith, and can never be repealed, ostensibly having come directly through inspiration by the Holy Spirit. This dogma of Mary’s Immaculate Conception would be one of anti-Christ’s greatest deceptions, leading millions of Roman Catholics to transfer their primary veneration of Yahweh God

and His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to a human agency. Thus, the practice of Mariology became further entrenched among unbiblical Roman Catholic beliefs and practices.

In 1872, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Charles Taze Russell started the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, which would become better known as the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Just as with Mormonism, history has proven this institution one of the most deceptive opponents of the true Gospel, giving anti-Christ even more leverage for the minds of people everywhere.

Anti-Christ’s peculiar hatred of the Jews was again inflamed when, in 1882, Russian Tsar Alexander III, proclaiming that the Jews killed Christ, instituted pogroms against Jews that spread across the Russian Empire, expelling them from Moscow, and causing many Jews to flee from Russia altogether.

In 1899 China, a group of terrorists known as Boxers took up the nationalistic chant, “Protect the country and destroy the foreigner.” Their Buddhist religious zeal coupled with fear of Christians and support from the government resulted in attacks and the killing of Christian missionaries and Chinese converts to Christianity. In 1900, the U.S., Japan, and European nations acted to put down what the West called the Boxer Rebellion. But in the process, they indiscriminately attacked innocent Chinese as well.

On December 23, 1873, having suffered under her first husband’s drunkenness until he passed away, Carrie Amelia Nation organized the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union in Hillsboro, Ohio. Within two years the WCTU became an international organization. The objective of the WCTU was a “sober and pure world” through the promotion of abstinence, purity and evangelical Christianity. The WCTU expanded its agenda to include prostitution, labor, public health, sanitation and international peace, as well as women’s suffrage. The WCTU’s original method was to gather outside saloons to pray and harass the customers. By 1900, Nation decided that violence was the better means of dealing with “demon liquor.” Believing she had a divine leading to promote temperance by destroying bars and taverns, she began a campaign of violence, smashing the liquor inventories. At first she used rocks, but graduated to a hatchet after her second husband jokingly suggested that she do so.

Carrie Nation presents an example of how anti-Christ can motivate Christians to engage in political action, including violence, for “good” causes. Nation failed to realize that liquor itself is not the problem; the problem is the sin nature that causes people to abuse liquor, much as they abuse anything that can be used for good. The Lord has not called His people to destroy the property of those we find repulsive. The only thing that can truly deliver a person from drunkenness is surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. Human efforts such as Alcoholics Anonymous offer some relief for unbelievers, but without Christ, they merely produce “clean” sinners.

Satan’s greatest victories come through the efforts of Christians (deluded or merely nominal) who believe they are superior to other members of the human race. This has been the case wherever a particular ethnicity has dominated. In the “Christian” West, and particularly in the United States of America, the ugly monster of race war has been conducted by whites against non-whites. After the abolition of slavery in America,

conflict between white settlers migrating westward and the American Indians resulted in great injustices.

On May 28, 1830, the American Congress passed, and President Andrew Jackson signed, the Indian Removal Act, which forced eastern tribes from their homes and lands, and banished them to areas west of the Mississippi River. The five tribes most affected were considered the most civilized by European settlers during the colonial period. These were the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole tribes. Yet Jackson's motivation was not evil; he honestly believed that relocation was the best means to ensure the survival of these tribes in view of the growing immigration of European settlers that threatened their existence. Already many tribes, particularly in the north, had been driven to extinction, and the Indian Removal Act was intended to prevent that for the tribes in the south. Still, the results were at times inhumane. American Indians that chose to stay and assimilate into American culture were made citizens of the United States. The rest were forced off their farms and out of their homes to relocate to Indian territories. The first tribe to be removed was the Choctaw in 1831. The Seminole fought two wars to remain, but were ultimately removed, with the exception of a small number that withdrew to the Florida Everglades, never to be defeated. The arduous trek of the Choctaw in particular resulted in what became known as the "Trail of Tears" during which an unclear number (from 2,500 to 6,000) perished.

The Sioux Wars that raged from 1851 to 1890 resulted in another great American Indian tribe's eventual subjugation. The Sioux Wars began not long after the signing of the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851, which was to ensure safe passage of white settlers along the Oregon Trail. The first conflict began over a misunderstanding involving a cow that escaped from a Mormon party in 1854. The cow wandered into a Sioux camp, and was seen there by a Mormon search party that assumed it had been stolen. Rather than approach the Sioux whom they feared, they reported the "theft" to the army at Ft. Laramie. When an army contingent tried to arrest a suspected Sioux who claimed innocence, the man resisted. Cannons were fired on the Indian camp, killing the Sioux's Chief Conquering Bear, the spokesman for his tribe. The Sioux launched a counter-attack that wiped out the entire detachment of army troops. This resulted in retaliation by General William S. Harney whose 600 troops attacked a Sioux village at Blue Water, killing 85, and taking 70 women and children captive.

Other disputes arose between Sioux tribes and white settlers, resulting in bloodshed. The U.S. army was constantly called upon to protect the settlers, regardless of which side was primarily in the wrong of any particular dispute.

When, in 1875, prospectors discovered gold in the Black Hills of South Dakota, major fighting broke out between the Sioux, led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, and federal troops led by General William T. Sherman. The Sioux gained major victories, but were ultimately subdued. During these wars, one of the most famous (or infamous) military campaigns resulted in disaster for a small troop of 200 men under the command of Col. George A. Custer at a site called the Little Big Horn.

As a result of Custer's defeat, outraged Americans demanded retribution, which caused the U.S. to redraw Indian reservation boundaries.

The Sioux Wars ended in 1890 with the disastrous end of what was to be a peaceful meeting between Colonel James Forsyth and Chief Big Foot. An accidental discharge of a rifle resulted in the army firing artillery into the Sioux camp, killing men, women and children trying to flee. One hundred-fifty people, including Big Foot, were killed. The Sioux would not survive as a viable tribe, losing their land and their way of life.

Many treaties were broken by the U.S. government, resulting in the Crow and Blackfoot Indians being ejected from their reservations, the Ute Indians in Colorado having their properties confiscated and opened to settlement, and whites invading Nez Perce territory that had been promised to the peaceful Nez Perce Indians. The U.S. Army defeated the Nez Perce to give their lands to the settlers.

Is it any wonder that the "white man's God" has been largely rejected by American Indians? At best, anti-Christ has seen to it that American Indian spirituality blends native religious practices into its "Christianity."

COMMUNISM

Satan's most audacious anti-Christ movement would be birthed in the 19th century. On June 2, 1847, in London, dozens of working class rebels, mostly from Germany, held a meeting at which they changed the name of their organization from "The League of the Just" to "The Communist League." They also changed their motto from "All Men Are Brothers" to "Working Men of All Countries, Unite!"

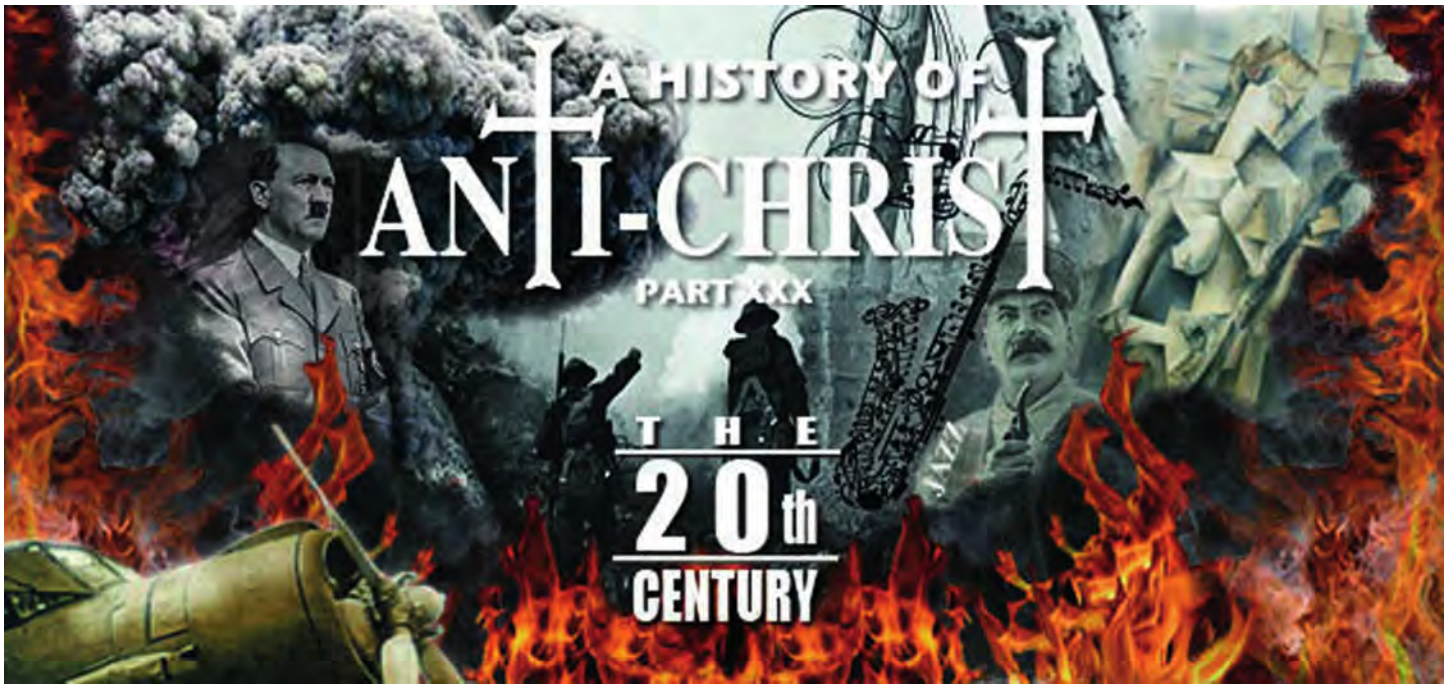
Following recent economic downturns in Europe, on February 21, 1848, Karl Marx collaborated with Friedrich Engels to write a theory of political development that promotes the idea of class struggle. Siding with the "proletariat" against the "capitalists," Marx theorized that capitalism will eventually decline and be overthrown. His little book was titled, *The Communist Manifesto*.

After Marx's death in 1883, Engels continued to promote Marxism, writing an introduction to Marx's *The Class Struggles in France*. Marx's writings would set the course for Bolshevism in Russia and International Communism's advance in the 20th century.

ZIONISM

The first wave of Zionist immigration into Palestine began in 1881. In 1897, Theodor Herzl, a Jewish journalist from Hungary disturbed by the anti-Semitism connected with the Dreyfus Affair, wanted to start a program to resettle Jews in Palestine. That year, Herzl convened the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, which inaugurated the Zionist Organization (ZO). The ZO would become the World Zionist Organization (WZO) in 1900. The goal of promoting Jewish immigration to Palestine would experience little progress until the Holocaust under the Third Reich of Adolph Hitler's Nazi Germany would create worldwide sympathy for the millions of displaced Jews.

Closing out the 19th century for this series, in 1900 the world's population was roughly 1.7 billion, up from about 1 billion in 1800.



THE 20TH CENTURY may be classified as the next to final chapter in mankind's return to Babel. It began with each nation clinging to its nationalist pride and ended with the birth and maturation of globalization. This has been anti-Christ's design from the time that God scattered the people from building the Tower of Babel:

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and they lived there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly."

And they had brick for stone, and they had slime for mortar. And they said, "Come, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach to the heavens, and let us make us a name lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

And YHWH came down to see the city and the tower that the children of men built. And YHWH said, "Look, the people are united, and they all have one language, and this they begin to do. And now nothing that they have imagined to do will be restrained from them. Come, let us go down, and there confound their language so that they may not understand one another's speech."

So YHWH scattered them abroad from there upon the face of all the earth, and they stopped building the city.

Therefore the name of it is called Babel, because YHWH confounded the language of all the earth there. And from there YHWH scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:1-9)

Mankind's ability to imagine and create, imparted to us by the only true God, YHWH, when He breathed into Adam the breath of life, allows us to achieve astounding works according to our imaginations. The problem is that because of man's sin nature, man's imagination, unless submitted to God's Holy

Spirit, is evil (Genesis 6:5; 8:21), and it works against the will of God. Look up every instance of the word "imagination" in Scripture, and it's not a pretty picture.

We are not to be led by our imaginations, but by the Spirit of God. This is true of all things we do, including the "creative" aspects of our service to Him. Men pride themselves on their imagination to create; this is true of many Christians as well. We see this in how so many Christians imitate the world in their worship of the Lord, incorporating dissonant sounds meant to pass as music, in pageants and rituals designed to move God, in art and architecture meant to inspire awe, and in many other ways.

Given enough time, nothing man imagines would be restrained from him. Anti-Christ is well aware of this god-like quality, and he has worked for some 6,000 years to bring all of mankind into the unity necessary for mankind to achieve total rebellion against God. The 20th century demonstrates how far man has come in his quest for godhood, rising from the dust of the earth to set foot on the moon in a scant 69 years from the beginning of the century.

Amazing, yet carnal, accomplishments were achieved in communications that shrank the world even more than had happened in all the centuries previous. To name a few: Guglielmo Marconi, in 1901, made the first trans-Atlantic radio transmission using the Morse Code letter "S"—three short dots or "dits." By 1920, the first radio broadcasts in the United States would lay the foundation for communication into every home that desired and could afford radio sets and, later, television sets.

In 1903 the Wright Brothers made the first powered flight at Kittyhawk, North Carolina, setting the stage for man's rapid transit around the world via airplane. It also set the stage for aerial warfare, something that greatly pleases anti-Christ. The science of aerodynamics led from the first rickety air frames of bi-planes to rocketry and jet propulsion, which would greatly increase man's reach not only around the world, but into space.

Perhaps the greatest advances in communications would come toward the end of the century. These include personal computers that are used for social networking, surfing the Internet, and writing in general. But again, these are used far more for the enhancement of man's ego than for God's glory. The single largest genre of use for the Internet is pornography, even in the "Christian" United States, much to the delight of anti-Christ.

Add to these means of communications the proliferation of personal cell phones, language-translation software, and many other electronic marvels too numerous to mention, and we see how Babel has been erected slowly but methodically by the anti-Christ. Truly, the 20th century was the Age of Invention and a time for the burgeoning of man's imagination. The evidence is overwhelming that we are fast approaching the end of this age according to the prophet Daniel:

"And at that time Michael shall stand up—the great prince who stands for the children of your people—and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone who shall be found written in the book.

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

"And those who are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.

"But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end. Many shall run back and forth, and knowledge shall be increased." (Daniel 12:1-4)

Man's knowledge has increased exponentially in the past two centuries, and never as much as in the 20th century and these early years of the 21st century. Mankind traverses the globe (back and forth) for business, pleasure and mischief, with hundreds of thousands of people—approaching one million—in the air and on the seas at any given moment. This was never possible before the 20th century with the many material wonders that were developed during that time.

It isn't that these material wonders are evil in themselves; they certainly are not. The problem is how they are used. It may be said with certainty that the vast majority of man's inventions are consumed upon man's own lusts for power, money, illicit sex and personal aggrandizement. The amount used for God's glory is miniscule, and much that is claimed to be for His glory is really used to satisfy man's religious spirit.

Along with these material achievements, man took giant strides in the development of so-called science, alluded to by the apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy:

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and opposition from science falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith. (1 Timothy 6:20-21)

The so-called science of which Paul wrote is not merely the concept of evolution, particularly of man, but man's philosophy that addresses "behavioral science"—psychology in particular. Man's desire to heal the psyche in order to bring mankind into the unreachable state of godhood is reflected in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy. And there are almost as many theories of psychology as there are psychologists, all of which are diametrically opposed to the Word of God.

In 1900, Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist, published his first thesis on psychoanalysis—a term he coined in 1896 in *Zur Aetiologie der Hysterie* (*The Study of the Causes of Hysteria*), where he developed his theory of repressed memories. That thesis on psychoanalysis, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, emphasized the role of the unconscious mind in determining one's psychological state. In her analysis of Freud's work, Kendra Cherry, a "psychology expert" writing for *About Education*, states:

The book [*The Interpretation of Dreams*] outlines Freud's belief that dreams are highly symbolic, containing both overt meanings (manifest content) as well as underlying, unconscious thoughts (latent content). Dreams, he suggested, are our unconscious wishes in disguise. Despite Freud's tendency to over-generalize, his lack of scientific evidence, his overemphasis on sex, and his frequently chauvinistic viewpoints, this seminal work remains important in the history of psychology. *The Interpretation of Dreams* marked the beginning of psychoanalysis and is a fascinating text revealing Freud's unique talent as a writer and ambitious theorist.¹

Since Freud, many other "scientists of the mind" began to get in on this new field of study, among these Carl Jung who founded analytical psychology. Jung attributed his inspiration to a muse—a familiar spirit named Philemon (Deuteronomy 18:11).

If there is one area of human imagination that can be called the greatest threat to the faith in these last days, it is psychoanalysis and its accompanying humanistic attempt to overcome the curse of sin, psychotherapy. (See our special report *Psychology: Science or Religion?* authored by Martin and Deidre Bobgan.) Yet to address issues of the soul, psychological methods are widely employed by churches in lieu of ministry from the Word of God. Even so-called Christian psychology is rooted in Freud, Jung and other ungodly, atheistic purveyors of this "science" falsely called. One cannot meld God's Word with humanistic theories in order to arrive at truth. A truth mixed with a lie equates to a lie. Can a barrel of clean apples change the rotten apple in its midst? Would not the rotten apple rather corrupt the clean apples? The same is true of trying to mix human wisdom with God's wisdom:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to YHWH, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says YHWH. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:7-9)

¹ <http://psychology.about.com/od/sigmundfreud/gr/interpretation.htm>.

Today, many pastors shunt their congregants to “Christian psychologists” and/or “Christian counselors” rather than minister from God’s Word through the power of the Holy Spirit. In some cases, pastors attempt to incorporate psychological theories into their own counseling. Required courses in psychology are *de rigueur* in almost all Bible schools and seminaries now.

Christians who think they can meld man’s thoughts with God’s thoughts are self-deceived, and they are leading astray those under their influence.

With each succeeding generation, the 20th century saw a great departure from the purity of the Faith. Modernism, which took root in the late 19th century, took off in earnest with the advances in technology and communications. A philosophical movement that rejected Enlightenment thinking and religious belief, Modernism began to influence all art forms—painting, sculpture, architecture, literature, philosophy, social organization and even religious faith.

At the turn of the century, at least in the West, a deep-seated faith in Christ characterized the average home, even as Modernism was flourishing among the elite. But with the advances in communications, the anti-Christ’s voice began to invade the consciousness of Christians everywhere. The arts, in particular, became a venue for soulful departures from the prior realism that reflected God’s hand in nature. Art merely reflected Modernism’s reach into virtually every discipline of creativity, philosophy, and religion. As we look at the 20th-century art movements we understand that these forms of communication establish the basis for all the evils that ensue; the greater exposure to ungodly ideas, the further from godliness man strays. In the process, we get a better picture of Western society’s descent into anti-Christ thinking.

Painting

As early as 1907, cubism was spawned through the imagination of avant-garde artists such as Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque—later entered into by others in the European art community. Although some cubism is pleasing to the eye, the art form itself distorts reality and appeals to the unregenerate spirit. Particularly as it relates to the depiction of man who is made in the image and after the likeness of God, cubism is a perversion of the nature of God as reflected in man.



Picasso - Dans un Fauteuil

Although much art is produced by individuals who just like to express their creativity, when it comes to movements within the artistic community art is not merely for art’s sake; it reflects the philosophical underpinnings of the artists’ belief systems. What makes an artist popular is not so much his talent as his

political connections within the world system which, remember, is Satan’s domain as the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The further from realism art strays, the less it reflects God in nature, and the more it reflects the anti-Christ spirit. As far from realism that cubism strayed, it merely laid the groundwork for other even more perverse art forms in the future.

From 1916 to 1922, another new art form known as Dada emerged. Dada was a protest against the established order—a form of artistic anarchy that reflected hatred of the social, political and cultural establishment of its time. Starting in Zurich, Switzerland, Dada spread throughout Western Europe and into the United States. Among the more famous Dada artists were Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, Raoul Hausmann, Jean Arp and Kurt Schwitters.



Hausmann - Tatlin at Home

In the 1930s, surrealism became the rage, particularly the works of Salvador Dali, a Spanish Catalan painter. The tremendously talented Dali influenced not only painting,

but sculpture, photography, motion pictures and other media. For a period of time, Dali’s art was influenced by Freud.



Dali - Persistence of Memory

Although it was not as anti-establishmentarian as Dada, Surrealism combined elements of realism

with abstract images, again distorting the realism created by God.

Following Surrealism was Abstract Expressionism in the 1940s and 50s, the first movement from America to influence the international art community. Foremost among the Abstract Expressionism artists was Jackson Pollock who is credited with revolutionizing all contemporary art that followed.



Pollock - She Wolf

The process for Abstract Expressionism is wide ranging as demonstrated by Pollock’s method: placing unstretched raw canvas on the floor, approaching it from all sides, and in a haphazard manner using

dripping, throwing and brushing paint as well as other media. Most Abstract Expressionism artists of its heyday were influenced by the era's anti-Christ Marxist philosophy and political radicalism.

The latest trend in the arts is defined as Postmodernism, which continues the departure from realism and incorporates diverse media blended to achieve humanistic expressions of revolt against "social norms." These diverse media include performance art and "happenings," assemblage art (which combines the assemblage of large physical objects, painting, photography, and even stuffed animals), pop art that celebrates consumerism, and several other expressions of "art" as defined by the cultural elite.

Although the term "postmodern" was first used in the late 19th century by John Watkins Chapman who suggested a "Post-modern style of painting" to replace French Impressionism, it wasn't until the 1920s that postmodernism was used in reference to new forms of expression in the arts, and particularly in the criticism of religion (read Christianity). Used throughout the early and mid-twentieth century to describe the emerging movements in art, architecture, music, theater and other art forms, Postmodernism really came into its own in the field of painting in the 1970s, particularly through the works of Jasper Johns.

Motion Pictures

Postmodernism continues to find expression in the theater, motion pictures and various other media through the use of nudity, profanity and anti-social messages. Contrary to popular belief, the early motion picture industry was not so pristine. From the very beginning, film was used to convey ungodly attitudes. Nudity, violence, even profanity were common. In 1922, because movies in the United States were becoming more risqué, and scandals involving beloved Hollywood stars were making the news, the major film studios called upon a Presbyterian elder, Will H. Hays, to clean up the industry's image. This led to the establishment of the Motion Picture Production Code—a set of moral guidelines for films released in the United States by major studios. Known as the Hays Code, it was meant to establish a more moral basis for the production of films in the U.S. European filmmakers were not bound by the Code, and their productions were considered more avant-garde and "sophisticated."

Even as Hays was enlisted to clean up the movie industry, anti-Christ knew how to temper any real reform. For his efforts, Hays was paid the then-lavish sum of \$10,000 per year to act not so much as a reformer as a mediator between the industry and its critics. For the 25 years he held the position as president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), Hays "defended the industry from attacks, recited soothing nostrums, and negotiated treaties to cease hostilities."² Again, Mammon ruled. As a result, the movie industry did little more than stifle the off-screen scandals of its major stars, believing that such scandals would hurt their pocketbooks. It wasn't too long before the industry realized that such scandals played to the lascivious nature of the populous and would actually increase interest in their products.

² Thomas Doherty, *Pre-Code Hollywood: Sex, Immorality, and Insurrection In American Cinema, 1930-1934* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 6.

So ineffectual was the Motion Picture Production Code that the same ungodly content continued unabated, if slightly downplayed. Local censorship boards developed by civic leaders were also largely ineffectual. The anti-Christ spirit within the industry knows that the sin nature of man naturally tends toward lasciviousness. As part of the anti-Christ world system, the movie industry is one of the most effective media for promoting ungodliness. All attempts to reign in the ungodliness permeating the industry met with failure. By the late 1960s, the Code was abandoned and replaced by a new rating system which allowed for any content imaginable, only with ratings designed to assuage the concerns of parents and morally-minded people about the content of particular films. But the rating system has undergone drastic changes since it was first introduced. Today, even G- and PG-rated movies contain many ungodly expressions. Especially onerous is the use of our Lord's name as an expletive.

Television

For a long time the television industry held more strict standards than did the movie industry, but over time it, too, has succumbed to the same ungodly elements and to the same degree, especially on cable and satellite channels. But even network television has succumbed to using the Lord's name as an expletive, even in news coverage. Everything that has been stated above about the movie industry is now relevant to the television industry. Only now the anti-Christ spirit does not have to be sought out by traveling to the local multiplex; it can be accessed in the comfort of one's living room.

Music

The field of music found different expressions as well, all progressively ungodly, reflecting the free spirit of unregenerate mankind. Worldly entertainment has always been linked with the excessive use of alcohol, and none more so than music and dancing, both on stage and on the ballroom floor. Music is unsurpassed as a means to express feelings and emotions both good and bad. Combined with lyrics, music can convey messages of love or lust, hope or despair, joy or sorrow, life or death, even godliness or ungodliness, and myriad other emotions. Contrary to those who excuse any form of music as an offering to God, musical styles are not neutral. From ancient times music has been used by the elite few to move the souls of the masses.

Music has been intimately associated with religion, including occult religions and magic. Beginning with simple instruments, over time, music evolved into more complex forms that incorporate many diverse instruments working in harmony. This required the talents of artists who could master their instruments almost to perfection.

Music reached its peak of artistic expression within Western Civilization which had been touched by the Gospel more than anywhere else. Even though mankind's sin nature rules for the most part, the truth is that the more man has understood and adhered to God's Word, the greater man's arts and sciences flourished; the Gospel reached into every area of human existence to bring a quality of excellence previously unknown, even as most people were not truly born from above through the Spirit of God. Yet it remains that most of man's musical expressions are used for soulish purposes rather than godly purposes.

The Renaissance brought recognition of music's power to exalt the human spirit. The excellence of art, including music, though talents bestowed by God, fell victim to man's pride. Building on the earlier excellence of those who strove to glorify God in their arts, ungodly men began to use the arts for personal profit. Perhaps the one art most used for profit is that of music, especially during the 20th century. Anti-Christ knows how to move the masses through the medium of music, from military marches to the cacophonous, discordant noises that rule the entertainment scene today.

More than in any other field of expression, Mammon rules the music industry. Anti-Christ plays upon the greed of men who see how huge sums of money can be gained from producing sounds that work people into frenzy, but cost little to produce. The rich tones of orchestral compositions gradually gave way to less sophisticated sounds, particularly in the late 20th century. The progression from godly to ungodly music, in Western Civilization especially, followed thusly:

At the turn of the century, Jazz was popularized as Western society began to throw off the Victorian conventions that ruled for the latter part of the 19th century. The preceding period known as "the Gay Nineties" laid the groundwork for Western Civilization's transformation from largely religious to irreligious attitudes. "Gay Nineties" is a nostalgic term for the 1890s that were influenced by the decadent art of Aubrey Beardsley whose works were based on occult and erotic themes. Oscar Wilde's irreverent plays became popular, and society scandals filled the newspapers. It was also the beginning of the suffragette movement which successfully sought to establish women as not only equal to, but in many cases dominant over men.

Music during the Gay Nineties departed from the more staid and formal toward more expressive sounds. Jazz grew out of the disparate groups that experimented with brass and percussive instruments, largely eschewing strings and the more mellow reeds. Nightclubs sprang up as venues for the new sounds, and contributed to the souliness that came to characterize Western Civilization as the 20th century progressed. Despite how Jazz and some of its later innovations, such as big band and even 50s rock music, contributed to more worldly attitudes, the quality of musicianship remained. It still took a lot of talent to put together compositions that were pleasing if not classified as godly.

I admit that I like just about every genre of music, provided it isn't ungodly, but at the worst neutral. Just as eating and drinking are not always for nutrition, but may also be engaged in for pleasure, so different musical styles can be enjoyed as long as the thoughts and emotions they engender are not sinful or do not lead to the appearance of evil. This applies to all forms of music that are soulish in nature, including that to which the artists claim they are glorifying God. As much as I enjoy big band music, I would in no way suggest that it is a genre that should be used in worship of our God. But today, churches incorporate into their worship, hip-hop, grunge, acid rock and other sounds that are far more removed from worshipful attitudes than even big band music. And just as the music moguls of the world know how to make large sums of money off of cheaply-made noise, so too do many Christian music purveyors know how to capitalize on the worldly attitudes of today's youth

culture. The raucous, discordant sounds that characterize much of today's Christian music scene do not glorify God—regardless of what those who promote those sounds say. God's nature is one of peace, joy, love—look at the fruit of His Spirit. His nature is opposite that of man's sinful nature, and man's sinful nature makes every excuse why it should be able to offer impure sacrifices to Him. How well this pleases the anti-Christ spirit that rules every facet of this world system including religion—including Christianity.

Devolution Into Idolatry

Just as the arts of man have devolved from the influences of the Gospel to influences of the world under anti-Christ's control, so too have the "Christian" arts in the churches.

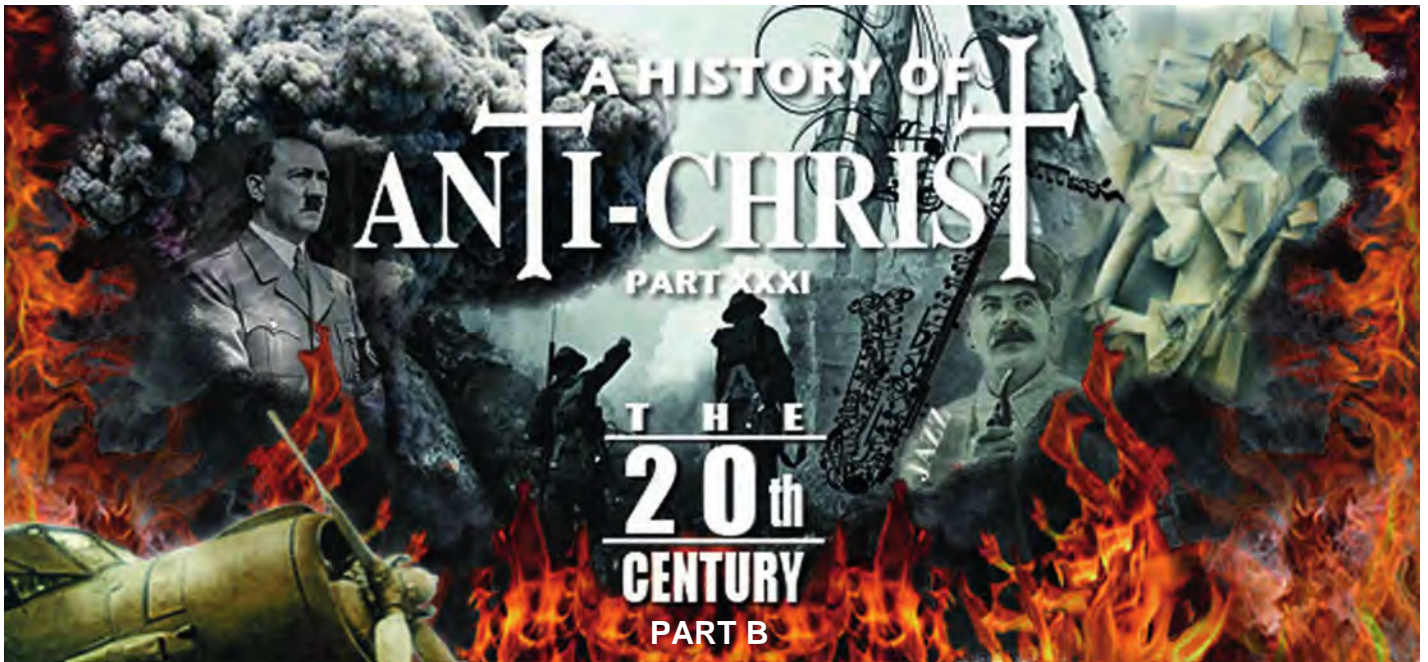
There are other artistic disciplines that form sub-sets of the aforementioned, all of which express human imagination, the vast majority of which works contrary to the Spirit of God. Although God's Word tells us to live in the Spirit, many producers of contemporary Christian music cater to the flesh.

Critics of those who lament the influence that art has on society claim that art in all its forms merely reflects the condition of society. The truth is that art influences society, which in turn influences art in its successive forms. This is especially true of the performing arts— theater, motion pictures, television, radio. For the most part, people are influenced more by their feelings than they are by reason and logic, and certainly more than by God's Word. That is how despots gain control over the masses; they know how to manipulate people's emotions to follow them. Think of Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin, televangelists, and every cult leader from Jim Jones to the Pope of Rome. It doesn't matter what the truth is; the lie that appeals to the emotions takes the prize.

This is idolatry in its more perfect expression. When juxtaposing images of Hitler swaying huge throngs of Germans, with images of today's popular entertainers performing before their hysterical fans, we find little difference. There is good reason one of the most popular television shows of late is called *American Idol*. Those working the masses into frenzy know exactly what they are doing. And this is where the little truth that is found in psychological theory is clearly evident: media moguls know how to use psychological techniques to garner huge followings for people who are no different, really, than those who idolize them. And at the core of all this idolization is Mammon, anti-Christ's most effective tool to lead people away from worshiping only the true God.

As man has thrown off true worship of the true God, he has produced a century of ungodliness that has witnessed the worst of mankind's nature in every aspect of man's endeavors.

These many-faceted approaches to communications across ethnic and nationalistic boundaries laid the groundwork for virtually all the evils of the 20th century, including the devolving of Western Civilization's politics, which has led to greater bloodshed in unceasing warfare. As we continue to look at the 20th century we will see how mass communications has played a major role in every aspect of man's expansion of evil designs.



THE 20TH CENTURY is by far the most complex period regarding the history of anti-Christ. The number of significant events are many times those of all the previous centuries combined. Thus, the best way to approach them would be to categorize only the major events according to each decade. Even then, some events have had far-reaching effects that span many decades. I'll attempt to put things in some semblance of order for easier reading. By no means can everything that happened be addressed, even in the cursory manner in which I have addressed previous centuries; that would take volumes.

In our previous installment I primarily addressed the arts and the tremendous increase in knowledge during the 20th century. From here on, I will focus on major events that have occurred in several areas, such as politics, warfare and, most notably, Christianity.

1900-1910

The 20th century didn't actually begin until January 1, 1901, but for our purposes we will consider some events of 1900 that had implications for the entire century.

SCIENCE

The Nobel Prize Instituted

Alfred Nobel (Oct. 21, 1833 – December 10, 1896) was the son of Immanuel Nobel, an architect, builder and inventor who opened a machine shop in St. Petersburg, Russia, to manufacture defense weapons for the Russian military. Alfred, a trained chemist, experimented with nitroglycerine, and created his first explosion in 1862. In 1863 he received a Swedish patent for his percussion detonator, the "Nobel lighter." He established a small factory at Helenborg, Sweden, to manufacture nitroglycerine, which proved a very dangerous substance to handle safely. His factory exploded, killing several people including his brother, Emil.

Undaunted, Alfred built new factories to manufacture nitroglycerine, but eventually invented a new and safer-to-handle explosive called "dynamite." Part of his reason (he evidently told himself) was his belief that the explosive power of dynamite would cause nations to abandon warfare and institute peaceful relations. He told Bertha von Suttner, an advocate for world peace, "My factories may make an end of war sooner than your congresses. The day when two army corps can annihilate each other in one second, all civilized nations, it is to be hoped, will recoil from war and discharge their troops."

History has proven otherwise.

Upon Nobel's death in 1896, everyone was shocked when his will was opened. He left 94 percent of his worth to the establishment of five prizes: physics, chemistry, physiology (medicine), literature, and peace. These were to be awarded to "those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind."



ALFRED NOBEL

On December 10, 1901, the fifth anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death, the first set of Nobel Prizes was awarded.

Although Nobel's dynamite has been used to great benefit in the areas of construction and other uses, far more has been employed by anti-Christ in the destruction of men in the 20th century through warfare. (Not to mention how much more is used in the pyrotechnics employed by the ungodly motion picture and television industries.)

New Theories of Physics

As stated in our special report, *Quantum Christianity*, the scientific field of quantum physics began with the development of Max Planck's quantum theory which he formulated in 1900. For the last several decades of the 19th century, physicists had been attempting to understand the results they were getting from studying how black holes functioned. From the time Isaac Newton expressed his understanding of gravity in his publication *Principia* (1687), astronomers puzzled over the mathematical findings that suggested the existence of mysterious bodies in the universe. In 1783, John Michell suggested that there might be an object or objects massive enough to have an escape velocity greater than the speed of light. Soon after, in 1796, Simon Pierre LaPlace predicted in *Le Système du Monde* the existence of black holes, stating that it "is therefore possible that the largest luminous bodies in the universe may, through this cause, be invisible."

The answer to the puzzle could not be found using the disciplines learned from classical physics. Planck's equation ($E=Nhf$, with E =energy, N =integer, h =constant, f =frequency) resulted in the constant (h), which came to be known as "Planck's constant." Planck discovered that energy, which appears to be emitted in wavelengths, is actually discharged in small packets (quanta). His new theory of energy revolutionized the field of physics and paved the way for Einstein's theory of relativity.

Einstein's theory of relativity, in turn, opened the door to the new scientific study of nuclear fission (the ability to release the energy of the atom to produce electricity) and many other inventions that have proven of benefit to man, including nuclear medicine.

Anti-Christ has directed nuclear physics into another area that has been used to destroy large numbers of humans with a single release of nuclear energy: the atom bomb and, later, the hydrogen bomb.

POLITICS

Radical Suffrage

In 1903, suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst brought a militant, violent means of imposing the suffragist movement upon Britain with the founding of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). The activities engaged in by the WSPU involved disruptive demonstrations and destruction of property through the use of bombs and arson. Incongruously, the WSPU adopted for the sashes worn across their members' (all women) blouses the colors green, white and purple, symbolizing hope, purity and dignity.

In March, 1912, with utmost "dignity," Pankhurst led a window-smashing rampage throughout London's commercial districts. Some 400 hammer-wielding women simultaneously smashed windows at the designated hour. In its battle for women's right to vote, the WSPU women vandalized public

places such as golf courses, government offices and railroad cars, even setting buildings on fire and planting bombs in mailboxes.

Many, including Pankhurst, were arrested, and went on hunger strikes, prompting jail officials to force-feed them. Some died as a result.

When women were required to fill in at jobs vacated by men conscripted to fight in World War I, and many proved themselves capable workers, the attitude toward women voting softened.

One of the most successful means by which anti-Christ sows discord among mankind is the creation of factions: blacks vs. whites; labor vs. management; poor vs. rich; youth vs. age, to name just a few. At the heart of many such factions is rebellion against authority established by God, which rebellion manifests itself in revolutions and protests against established societal norms. Especially targeted is the order that God has designated. This is nowhere more easily fomented than in the desire of women to overthrow the headship of men as pronounced in God's Word.

It is natural to the human condition to rebel against established authority. But although it is natural, it isn't righteous. Always at the heart of rebellion is pride—the opposite of the humility that characterizes the nature of Christ to which His Word tells us to aspire.

The natural, unregenerate woman yearns in her heart to rebel against male authority. And although many men have been unworthy of the authority granted to them by God's order, God does not want women to take authority over men. This is not only true in the Body of Christ, but within His order for society. His Word reveals that it is only when men become weak that women rule over them, and children abuse them:

"As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths. (Isaiah 3:12)

In the United States, the effect of suffrage, won in 1920, became immediately discerned with the passage in 1921 of the Sheppard-Towner Act which provided federal funding for prenatal care and education, including the creation of women and children's health clinics. Due to intense lobbying efforts by women, including threats of mass defection from candidates who did not support the bill, it passed Congress by a margin of 279-39 as the first federally-funded social welfare program. Today women's health clinics are cesspools of abortion.

The 1928 election of Herbert Hoover was greatly aided by women voters who favored him for his pro-prohibition stance criminalizing the sale and consumption of alcohol.

Women did not participate strongly enough in succeeding elections to significantly affect the outcomes until the new feminist movement of the 60s and 70s resulted in

women largely shifting from favoring Republicans to favoring Democrats. Since 1984, after the first term of Ronald Reagan, women have outnumbered men in voting. In recent voting, Bill Clinton garnered 11 percentage points more women than men. The only other president to get a higher vote count from women was Barack Obama with 56% in both the 2008 and 2012 elections.

Regardless how one views these facts, whether pro or con, the real issue goes beyond voter turnout (although elected officials tend to reflect the mindset of the nation, and Satan as the god of this world is instrumental in moving people to ignorantly and/or naively vote for his agenda). In the long run, however, we must recognize that it is God who ultimately decides what a nation deserves. And He determines the factors that will result in His will being done.

Even so, it is unfortunate that women who become embroiled in rebellion against male leadership often lose their femininity and become as crass as the men they so vociferously decry for exhibiting crassness.

Satan loves to cause women to act like men, and men to act like women, and he is adept at finding “good reasons” to bring them to such perversion. And there have been provided by many men, numerous such “good” reasons for women to rebel. Anti-Christ works in both men and women to accomplish these evils.

The WSPU was only one of many such perversions engaged in by women during the 20th century as they have sought to assert their equality.

WARFARE

The Boxer Rebellion

With initial stirrings in 1898, groups of peasants in northern China came together to form a secret society known as I-ho ch’uan (“Righteous and Harmonious Fists”). They came to be called “Boxers” in the western press due to the members engaging in boxing and ritualistic calisthenics that they believed would render them impervious to bullets.

The goal of the Boxers was to destroy the two-and-a-half-century-old Ch’ing dynasty and rid China of all foreign influence. The former goal was abandoned when the Empress Dowager backed the Boxers, so they focused on the latter goal. On June 18, 1900, the Empress Dowager ordered that all foreigners be put to death. This was anti-Christ’s means to purge the “western religion” of Christianity from China, using bands of Boxers to massacre Christian missionaries and Chinese Christians.

When the rebellion had reached Peking (now Beijing), an international armed force of Americans, British, Russian, French, Italian and Japanese were sent to protect their interests in China and to defend their countrymen. Although several foreign ministers and their families were killed before the force could protect them, the force took Peking on August 14, 1900, and subdued the rebellion.

In defeat, the Boxer rebellion inadvertently accomplished its original goal by weakening the Ch’ing dynasty. This brought about the Republican Revolution of 1911 that overthrew the boy emperor and created the Republic of China. The far-reaching result of anti-Christ’s designs would be realized decades later with the overthrow of the Republic by Mao’s communist forces after World War II.

The Second Boer War

Although the Boers’ (Dutch settlers in South Africa) had won autonomy from the British after the First Boer War (December 16, 1880 – March 23, 1881), relations remained strained. The two Boer republics in South Africa were on shaky ground financially and still relied on British help. With the finding of gold in South Africa, many Brits came with hordes from other countries to reap the wealth. This prompted the Boers to enact laws limiting the freedoms of the “Uitlanders” (Outlanders), thus causing even more tension with the British government.

Diamond magnate Cecil Rhodes, the Cape Colony’s prime minister, believed that Britain should annex the Boer territories and the gold fields. He exploited the Uitlanders’ discontent, and fomented a raid by 500 Rhodesian mounted police under his agent, Dr. Leander Jameson. The Jameson raid failed, resulting in Rhodes’s resignation as the Cape’s prime minister. The raid increased tension between the Boers and the British, and culminated in the start of the Second Boer War (October 11, 1899 – May 31, 1902). The Boers won most of the battles, but the British eventually prevailed under Lord Kitchener’s “scorched earth” policy in which he mercilessly destroyed the civilian infrastructure, and imprisoned in concentration camps women and children displaced by that policy.

Weary of the overwhelming strength of the British, the Boers surrendered, signing the Treaty of Vereeniging on May 31, 1902.

Eight years later, in 1910, South Africa was united under the British and became the Union of South Africa.

Again, anti-Christ successfully fomented war between Christian factions, causing death, destruction and ungodly actions against one another on both sides.

The 1905 Russian Revolution

Led by a Russian Orthodox priest, Father Gapon, in January, 1905, some 150,000 Russian citizens converged on the streets of St. Petersburg in protest of their meager lives. Their purpose was not to foment revolution, but to petition Tsar Nicholas II to grant to them opportunities for a better life. As the people marched toward the Winter Palace, they were faced by a small contingent of troops. The troops nervously faced the huge crowd, and for reasons unclear to historians, shots were fired. Several hundred protestors were killed in what came to be known as “Bloody Sunday.”

At the time, there were several revolutionary parties vying for preeminence in their desire to overthrow the tsar.

These were People's Freedom (a terrorist group), Marxists, Populists, Revisionists and Permanent Revolutionists. These all took the opportunity of Bloody Sunday to propagandize against the established order, first by inflating the number of casualties to thousands. The government downplayed the numbers to fewer than 100.

As news of the killings spread throughout Russia, workers began to strike, the Grand Duke Sergei, the tsar's uncle, was assassinated, transportation ground to a halt. Although the initial purpose of the protest was benign, by the summer it had consumed the nation and become rabidly political. In October, a general strike that began in Moscow quickly spread to other cities as students, teachers, factory workers, revolutionaries and even doctors took to the streets. The fervor of the people gave impetus to a new revolutionary party, The St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies. From Moscow, this fervor for working class unity spread throughout Russia's industrial cities.

Nicholas was faced with two equally unattractive choices: 1) he could use force to put down the revolt, but because he lost trust in his military he could not be sure of success; 2) he could make concessions to the demands of the people.

He chose the latter course by issuing the October Manifesto on October 30, in which he altered his opposition to a parliament (a Duma) demanded by the people. The Duma that was formed had little strength as it was relegated to an almost entirely advisory role to the tsar. It also provided means by which opponents of the tsar could be identified.

As members of the Duma tried to rally public support for their demands, the tsar's government would not allow the Duma to further foment rebellion by the people. After a short time, the Duma was dissolved.

With troops returning from the Russo-Japanese War, Nicholas used loyal troops to squelch the St. Petersburg Soviet and crush the strikers in Moscow.

Again, Christians were persuaded to rebel against authority and to engage in war against one another. Were the people justified in protesting to the tsar? Absolutely. Their initial petition was tendered in peace. But anti-Christ successfully stirred ungodly men to guide the Christian population toward ungodly actions. Yet not before stirring the tsar to use ungodly means to keep the people in subjection.

Satan can easily find good reasons to bring about evil consequences.

PSYCHOLOGY

Freud Publishes His Theory of Sexuality

As a doctor of medicine at the University of Vienna in 1881, Sigmund (Sigmund) Freud conducted research into diseases of the brain at the Vienna General Hospital. In the process of his medical practice, he created a new "science" called psychoanalysis—a clinical attempt to treat psychopathology by the use of dialogue between patients and psychoanalysts. Freud's techniques such as free association (which

includes past-memories regression) and transference (the redirection of feelings and desires and especially of those unconsciously retained from childhood toward a new object) led to his redefinition of sexuality to its infantile forms. This led, in turn, to his theory of seduction, whereby many patients allegedly experienced the emergence of "repressed memories" causing them to believe they had been sexually abused as children. At first he believed these stories, but later came to understand that they were by and large fantasies invoked through a treatment he called "pressure technique."

Although debunked, this technique is often used by psychologists and psychoanalysts today. It has been one way in which anti-Christ has been able to destroy families and drive wedges between baffled parents and their alienated children. Many homes have been broken up because women have believed their children's psychoanalysis results, blaming their husbands for unspeakable acts they never actually committed. That's not to say that parent-child sexual abuse and other forms of abuse don't occur, but most of what comes out of pressure technique psychoanalysis is bogus.

But that doesn't matter to "professionals" in the fields of psychology, social services, or law. All have vested monetary interests in convicting and incarcerating even the innocent.

Freud's later rejection of these results from using his pressure technique has not dissuaded many psychologists from consulting his book, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, in which he elaborated his theory of infantile sexuality. This is a basic "textbook" used to justify homosexuality as an expression of sexual identity formed in the early stages of infancy.

In spite of their ungodly origins, psychoanalysis and psychotherapy are not only widespread and used as the basis for judgment in courts of law around the world, and in treating societal misfits of every stripe, they are rampant in most Christian churches today. Pastoral candidates at virtually all Bible schools and seminaries are required to take courses in psychology. In turn, when they arrive at their pastorates they are expected to conduct "counseling" sessions or, at the least, refer their congregants to others deemed qualified to assess their psychological needs. They may or may not incorporate biblical principles, but they are careful not to call what they do "therapy" or "psychological counseling" for the simple reason that they would leave themselves open to lawsuits should their efforts prove damaging. Instead, they call what they do "ministry," thus placing their psychological therapy within the realm of religious practice, which is exempt from oversight by the secular system.

The infiltration of psychology into the churches is arguably the most ungodly and spiritually dangerous deception anti-Christ has used to invade Christianity, rivaled perhaps by nothing less than witchcraft and other occult methodologies that masquerade as "healing" ministries. These include inner healing which at its roots incorporates psychological techniques. (See our special report *Inner Healing*.)

RACE RELATIONS

NAACP Founded

In 1909, an organization was created with the mission “to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.” Thus, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) began with altruistic intent, first by launching anti-lynching campaigns and creating a legal defense fund for black people in America. Concerned especially with the disenfranchisement of blacks in the southern states, the NAACP took up the cause of desegregation, and other means to promote their cause.

As originally founded, the NAACP’s cause was (and in many cases still is) justified. Without the NAACP and other leaders in the early years of the civil rights movement, many injustices toward blacks and other minorities would still be prevalent. In some cases they still are, but as far as government and many major societal and industrial organizations are concerned, the problems of the past have been largely done away.

Yet anti-Christ is ever vigilant to stir up any incident, no matter how meager, to sow seeds of discontent and distrust among people of different racial backgrounds. He works equally in blacks, whites and other people of color to foment race hatred and violence. He also works to compromise morality, as in the case of the NAACP’s recent endorsement of LGBTQ rights and same-sex “marriage” under the contrived comparison of discrimination suffered by blacks in the past.

Today the NAACP has been complicit in stirring up racial hatred and hatred against law enforcement agencies with the charge of racism in every case where a black person has been injured or killed by police or other citizens, regardless whether or not the charge is justified. It most likely is justified in some cases, but certainly not in all, or even most, judging from the findings in most of the more public cases.

But truth matters to anti-Christ only if truth can be used for his ends. And he is well practiced in the art of deception, leading people (Christians and non-Christians) to hate others with whom they find some aversion.

SOCIETY

Boy Scouts of America Founded

On June 21, 1910, 34 national representatives of boys’ work agencies met in a YMCA office in New York City to develop organizational plans for Boy Scouts of America (BSA). The incorporator was William D. Boyce. The National Council office opened January 2, 1911, at 200 Fifth Avenue, New York City, with seven employees. The first annual meeting was held at the White House and was addressed by President Taft.

The goal of the BSA has been to train boys to be responsible citizens and to develop character and self-reliance through a wide range of outdoor activities and educational

programs. Older scouts are placed into career-oriented programs that partner with businesses and community organizations.

The BSA holds a Congressional charter under Title 36 of the United States Code, placing it in a unique category shared today with a small number of other national organizations such as the American Legion, the Red Cross, the National Academy of Science, and Little League Baseball.

Throughout the 20th century the BSA maintained a rigorous stand for morality and outward righteousness, even as many members are either nominal Christians or members of other religions. As such, it became of late a target of anti-Christ to rend BSA’s moral fabric by pushing for inclusion of homosexuals as members, contrary to the BSA’s “Duty to God” principle.

Although the BSA has largely stood its ground on the Duty to God principle, men of influence within the organization have worked to dismantle the ban on homosexual members and adult leaders. On May 23, 2013, 61% of the 1,400 member BSA National Council voted to remove the ban on membership for youth based on sexual orientation. The council emphasized that no sexual conduct of any kind—heterosexual or homosexual—will be allowed. For now, at least, “open and avowed” homosexuals are still prohibited as members, as are homosexual adults as scout leaders.

RELIGION

Christianity

Other than the meeting of the World Missionary Conference in 1910, the first decade of Christianity saw few events of major significance other than on-going persecution of Christians in various parts of the world, for which we may blame the anti-Christ spirit.

The single most important event in 20th-century Christianity began with William J. Seymour, a black son of former slaves and student of the well-known Pentecostal preacher, Charles Parham. Seymour led cottage prayer meetings at the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry at 214 N. Bonnie Brae Street in Los Angeles, California. From those prayer meetings was formed the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) on April 14, 1906. The AFM headquartered itself at the former African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles. The mission itself grew out of a particular meeting on April 9, 1906, during a Pentecostal revival meeting where there were exhibited ecstatic spiritual experiences. It was reported that some (unnamed) miracles took place among the interracial participants. Most prominent were exhibitions of glossolalia (“speaking in tongues”). Although the meeting was criticized by some Christian theologians as well as secular media, that meeting became the catalyst for the spread of Pentecostalism in the 20th century. The background to these events is documented in the *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*:

...Several theological threads emerged in American religious life during the 19th century that eventually were woven into the tapestry of Azusa. Restorationism, for one, spawned several new religious movements that viewed the church as returning to its NT glory. In some cases it brought an expectation of a “latter rain” outpouring of the Holy Spirit with an accompanying revival. Appeal was also made to the “apostolic faith,” “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) to demonstrate the relationship between the contemporary faith and that of the first apostles. Frontier revivalism contributed anxious benches, brush-arbor and protracted meetings, tarrying sessions, and altar calls for personal salvation and holiness of life from evangelists such as Charles G. Finney. F.B. Meyer helped popularize the “overcoming life” doctrine taught at Keswick, which became very influential in many American churches. Personal holiness and sanctification as a “Pentecostal” experience of the “full gospel” were given a theological framework in Asa Mahan’s work *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost* (1870). The Holiness movement also brought an understanding of the atonement of Christ as providing a “double cure for a double curse” that ultimately led to an emphasis on divine healing. Finally, concern for the Second Coming and prophetic events, originating in Britain with J.N. Darby and the Plymouth Brethren, came to the American context through a host of Bible prophecy conferences and the widespread usage of the *Scofield Reference Bible*, which provided annotated notes on Darby’s scheme. By 1900 these threads were all present in the religious life of the Los Angeles area. (sv., Azusa Street Revival)

Prior to Azusa Street, Pentecostalism had no formal place within Christianity, being considered by mainstream churches as a fringe experience.

In 1904, and for a time after, reports of the “Welsh Revival” reached Los Angeles. People in that city began holding cottage prayer meetings, seeking God for a similar revival among the churches there.

After William Seymour arrived in Los Angeles on February 22, 1906, being summoned from his church in Hous-



312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, in 1906.

ton, Texas, by W.F. Manley’s Household of God tent meeting at First and Bonnie Brae Streets, he broached the subject of speaking in tongues. This resulted in his being locked out, causing him to turn to holding meetings first at the home of Edward S. Lee, with whom he was staying, then at the home of the Asberrys on Bonnie Brae Street.

By the end of the year, in spite of the ecstatic demonstrations, no one seriously considered what happened at Azusa Street a revival. It was only after the *Los Angeles Times* sent a reporter to find out what was happening in view of reports that came to the publication’s editors, did the meetings receive the free publicity that would bring many from all over the world to the meetings.

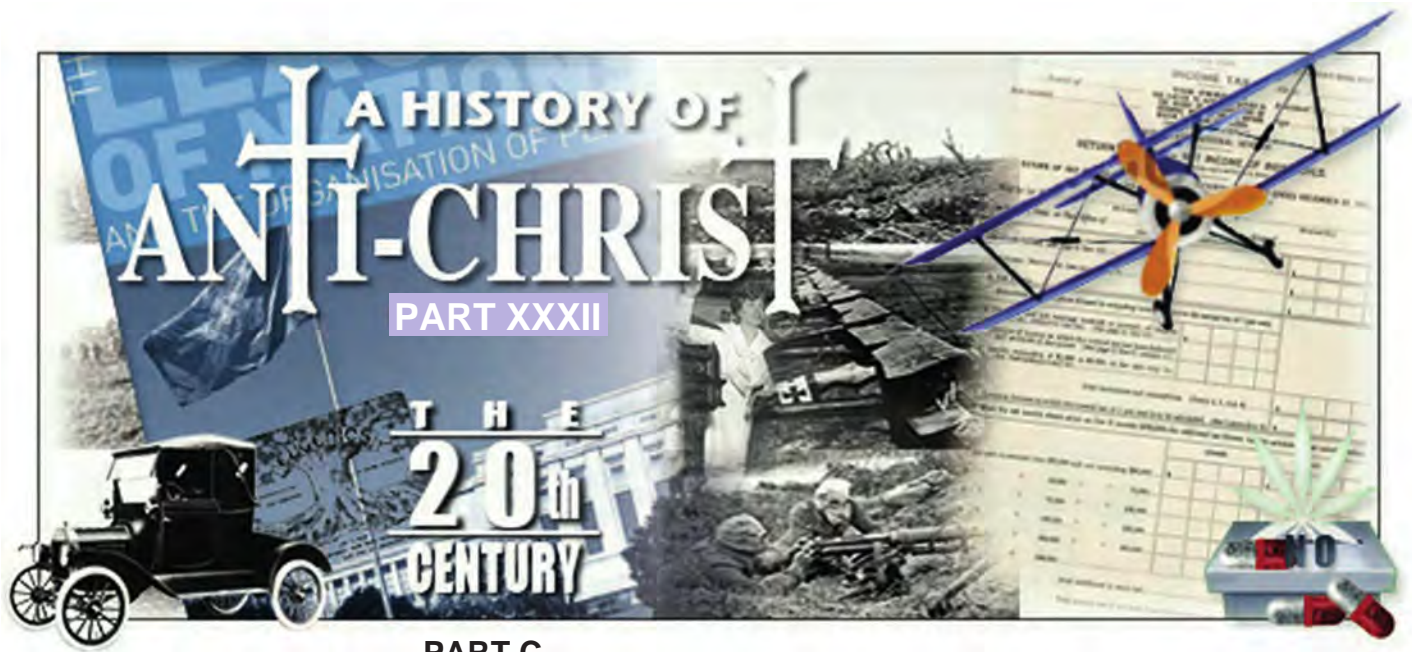
The rest is history, too long for this small space. Our concern is what anti-Christ has been able to do to turn the tide of what seemed like a move of God into a mish-mash of godliness and ungodliness.

As we traverse the decades of the 20th century in subsequent issues, we will see how anti-Christ has been able to persuade well-meaning people into following one significant spiritual error after another through alleged “signs and wonders,” and the infiltration of New Thought into the Pentecostal and subsequent charismatic movements through revered teachers. Pentecostalism, more than any other manifestation of spiritual influence in Christianity, also provided platforms for a large number of women to teach and take authority over men, contrary to Scripture. (1 Timothy 2:12-14)

As much as Pentecostalism has stressed holiness and “overcoming” the evils of the world, the flesh and the devil, it has often relegated God’s Word to second place behind subjective “new revelations” reported by teachers motivated by a desire for wealth, health and power.

More individual scandals have come out of Pentecostalism and charismatism than any other movements in Christianity. They have also spawned bizarre practices such as snake handling cults, word-faith, latter-rain, Manifested Sons of God doctrines, and many other false belief systems. And for those who stress the need for the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” as defined by Pentecostalism for holiness and, in some cases, even salvation, we have to ask where was the Holy Spirit in personal lives prior to Azusa Street, or even prior to the smattering of Pentecostal teachings of the 19th century?

While we cannot judge individuals who may or may not have had some true touch of God, in view of all the craziness that has come out of Pentecostalism (including a huge push for ecumenical relations with the papacy), we have to question whether the movement itself was ever of God. Or is it just possible that anti-Christ has been able to dupe a vast number of people into believing that what appears to be so holy in word is (or has become) his work in deed.



PART C

THERE APPEARED TO be a lull in world events during the second decade of the 20th century. Nations were still enjoying times of relative peace; colonization by the major European powers seemed to be going well, although stirrings of protest against colonization began to rise. The American and French Revolutions gave impetus to those stirrings of protest as people in third-world nations thought they could somehow build prosperity into their lives if they could just shake off the white man's dominance.

They failed to understand that prosperity is not automatically achieved through freedom. With freedom comes responsibility to act in a certain manner that engenders prosperity. The United States of America was uniquely suited to the attainment of prosperity because it was founded upon certain biblical principles that recognized the unalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as God-given rather than bestowed by government. Without the biblical ethic as the foundation for any nation's freedom, the people are quickly relegated to poverty and injustice, and the freedom they sought evaporates quickly. That has been the sad result of independence gained from European and American colonization over the course of the 20th century. And within Europe and America it is the sad result of these nations having moved progressively away from that biblical ethic toward the paganism from which they had been delivered by the Gospel.

It is anti-Christ's design to bring the masses under the control of the few dedicated to global dominance. To attain that, it's been necessary to foment discontent with anything associated with biblical faith. And although the European and even the American form of colonization had many ungodly elements, the Lord did use colonization to bring the Gospel to the lost within those nations that were otherwise often exploited for their natural resources.

Truth be told, without European expansionism, a far greater percentage of the world's population would still be living in dirt and eating meager, restricted diets than are doing so today.

Anti-Christ doesn't care whether a nation is materially prosperous or not. His desire is that the Gospel be rejected. But with the Gospel came the material blessings that accompany civilization. Take away the Gospel, and poverty will eventually come upon even the most civilized and prosperous nation.

The fullness of the colonized nations' revolt against their European and American masters would not be attained for decades, but the early part of the century had its share of discontent and rebellion.

1911-1920

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Nuclear Science

In 1911, New Zealand-born British physicist Ernest Rutherford developed a model of the atom that replaced the model generally accepted among physicists. He theorized that the electrical charge of atoms is concentrated within a very small nucleus. He had previously received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1908 "for his investigations into the disintegration of the elements, and the chemistry of radioactive substances." His research into the atom resulted in his being deemed "the father of nuclear physics."

It is Rutherford's experiments in nuclear physics that would lead to his splitting of the atom in 1917, which, in turn, would lead to many benefits for mankind through further nuclear research. Anti-Christ would, however, use that same research to prompt men into experimenting with the destructive side of nuclear physics, developing the atom bomb.

Mass Production of Automobiles

1913 saw the innovation of assembly-line construction of automobiles under the guidance of Henry Ford. Having already produced by hand the Model A, Model N, and Model T, Ford took ideas from watch makers, gunsmiths, bicycle makers and meat packers, and melded them into a new production line for the Model T.

The ability to mass produce the Model T made it so affordable that by 1922 half the automobiles in America were Model Ts. The rugged little car opened the door for Americans to travel great distances over rough terrain (there were few roads outside of city environs for some time). Before long, other car manufacturers followed suit with assembly-line production, and the automobile became an inexpensive mode of travel. Perhaps more than any other invention for its time, the automobile became the most influential medium for change in mores, prosperity and further technological achievements.

Anti-Christ was quick to find nefarious uses for the automobile as it was used to great extent in the transport of illicit drugs, prostitution and in the breakdown of morals among young people who found freedom from parental oversight, not to mention the carnage as millions have found death on the highways.

As with all things material, the automobile is not evil in itself; it is how men use it that makes it good or evil.

Warfare

Airplanes made dramatic advances during the second decade of the 20th century. Powered flight was only nine years old when airplanes began to be used for military purposes. The first military reconnaissance flight was undertaken by Italy in Libya on October 23, 1911, during the Italian-Turkish War (September 1911 – October 1912). The first bombing mission took place just over a week later on November 1, 1911.

Soon aerial warfare would determine battles during World War I. The French were the first to solve the problem of inaccurate shooting due to lack of a steady mount for guns when, in 1914, pilot Roland Garros attached a fixed machine gun to the front of his plane. But in July, 1915, German Luftstreikräfte Leutnant Kurt Wintgens, scored the first aerial combat victory with a purpose-built fighter plane that carried a synchronized machine gun capable of firing rounds between the spinning propeller blades.

The history of aviation—particularly military aviation—chronicles how anti-Christ would use this otherwise beneficial tool called the airplane for the destruction of millions of lives throughout 20th century and beyond.

Also in 1912, the first military tank was patented by Australian inventor Lancelot de Mole.

Motion Pictures

In 1912 motorized movie cameras were invented, replacing hand-cranked cameras. Now men could produce mo-

tion pictures without the jerky, fast-motion characteristic of earlier cameras. And anti-Christ's use of another otherwise benign instrument could be more realistic and attractive, particularly when it came to sex and violence (with words and music, yet).

Methamphetamine

On December 24, 1912, Merck and Co. Inc., filed for a patent for a styptic medication—a vasoconstrictor known as hydrastinine. Listed in the application as a chemical intermediate was 3,4-methylene-dioxy-methamphetamine (also known as “Meth,” “MDMA,” “ecstasy,” “E,” “X,” or “XTC”). Meth is a psychoactive drug that has no known medical properties, and is not found in nature; it must be synthesized in a laboratory.

It has become one of anti-Christ's most effective means to destroy people psychologically, physically and physiologically.

Eugenics

The study of eugenics, which was introduced in the 1890s by Sir Francis Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin, made a considerable advance with the first International Congress of Eugenics in London in 1912. According to Galton, “Eugenics is the study of the agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations either physically or mentally.”

Eugenics is a science devoted to the alteration of human genes in order to produce a “better humanity.” The process involves the elimination of “dysgenic qualities,” or bad traits, whether physical or mental, through scientific experimentation with the human genome.

In 1912, a “Study and Report on the Best Practical Means of Cutting Off the Defective Germplasm in the Human Population,” stated:

Society must look upon the germ-plasm as belonging to society and not merely to the individual who carries it.

This sentiment went hand-in-hand with the emerging Marxist socio-political philosophy undergirded by atheism. Without God in the picture, the highest moral agency becomes the collectivist state. Children would no longer be considered extensions of their parents, but extensions of the state—property of the state to be guided and indoctrinated with humanist reasoning.

Eugenics began in England and quickly spread to the United States where experimentation on physically and mentally disabled people would result in horrific exercises in torture and euthanasia. The U.S. model for eugenics would later be adopted by Adolph Hitler in his quest to produce his “master race.”

Eugenics would also form the basis for Margaret Sanger's organization, Planned Parenthood, through which she advocated the sterilization and abortion of less-than-desirable people such as Negroes whom she considered inferior be-

ings less advanced along the evolutionary path. Planned Parenthood has become the foremost proponent of abortion-on-demand for anyone who wishes to terminate a baby's life in (and lately outside) the womb. This is particularly encouraged should pre-natal tests determine that the child might be "defective."

Abortion and eugenics as a whole have been used by anti-Christ to kill millions upon millions of innocent people throughout the world in an attempt to destroy man created in God's image.

POLITICS

Other than World War I, the most significant and far-reaching event in the realm of politics during this decade was the Bolshevik Revolution that destroyed the Romanov Tsarist regime in Russia. Little publicized today is the fact that the Bolshevik Revolution did not directly unseat the Tsar. Prior to the Bolsheviks, and while Russia was embroiled in World War I, Tsar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate after the first of two 1917 Russian revolutions were supported by Russian Army forces. The Tsar was replaced by a provisional government under Prince Georgy Lvov, which was an alliance of liberals and socialists desirous of political reform. Ruling alongside the democratically-elected executive and constituent assembly was the Petrograd Soviet under an arrangement called Dual Power. The Bolshevik Revolution followed in October, 1917, bringing changes in Russia's social structure and setting the stage for the creation of the Soviet Union. The barbarous Bolsheviks assassinated Nicholas and murdered his family to ensure that the Romanov line of succession would never present an opportunity for revival of the Tsarist regime.

The atheistic philosophy of Marxism would provide the philosophical underpinnings of communism. This gave anti-Christ a strong police state and military that would crush biblical faith throughout Russia. The future Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would spread throughout Eastern Europe and influence large parts of Asia including China, Korea and Vietnam.

WARFARE

The true causes of World War I are virtually unknown to the masses. The cause put forth by most historians is tension over territory in the Balkans. Austria-Hungary competed with Serbia and Russia for territory and influence in the region and they pulled the rest of the Great Powers into the conflict through their various alliances and treaties. The catalyst, we are told, was the June 28, 1914, assassination of Austro-Hungary's Archduke Franz Ferdinand by 19-year-old Gavrilo Princip, a Serbian national acting on the orders of the secret Serbian society called Black Hand, which was backed by Serbian military officers. The alleged purpose was to take over the Austria-Hungarian south-Slav provinces so they could be melded into Greater Serbia (Yugoslavia). One

must question why the assassination of the Archduke of Austro-Hungary would spark a world war.

Ostensibly, it is because of certain alliances that compelled first Germany to ally with Austria, who shortly after declared war on Serbia. For obscure reasons, Germany decided to declare war against France, while Russia was making military preparations in support of Serbia. On August 1, 1914, Germany declared war against Russia. The next day, Germany and the Ottoman Empire signed a treaty, creating the Ottoman-German Empire. Two days later, Britain declared war on Germany in response to Germany's threat to Belgium if Belgium did not allow access to German troops in their campaign.

But what was the real cause of the war, and of the U.S. shift in foreign policy which has since kept us embroiled in war after war without a real threat to our national security?

To understand, we must again visit the matter of Babel, and anti-Christ's ages-old quest to unite mankind into a global mass prepared to challenge the Kingdom of God on earth when the Lord returns. For that to happen, national sovereignty must be surrendered to a global governing entity formed in response to nation vs. nation conflicts.

By the second decade of the 1900s, man's science and technology had advanced sufficiently to allow for global communications and speedy travel (relative to its time) across the globe. The stage was set for a "war to end all wars" which would condition the nations to accept a global governing body.

The first attempt was the League of Nations, formed after World War I to resolve international conflicts. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, the League of Nations was the alleged brainchild of President Woodrow Wilson, an internationalist, as part of his Fourteen Points, of which Article XIV stated, "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."

Although the League of Nations was Wilson's brainchild (as far as the public were meant to know), the U.S. Congress refused to ratify the treaty, and the U.S. never became a member. Thus, the life of anti-Christ's first attempt at globalization was cut short due to the still strong isolationist influences in Congress. Although the people were manipulated to move toward involvement in the war, they were not yet ready to surrender their sovereignty to an international body politic.

We know, however, that it was not the Lord's timing for such an organization. That would be the United Nations at a later date, which would set the stage for the anti-Christ's kingdom of the future.

As for the real reason for World War I, the secret powers behind governments, controlled by an international cabal of super-capitalist industrial and banking barons given to

the satanic deception embodied in a Freemasonry corrupted by subversive members of the Illuminati, were setting the stage for the moral and spiritual destruction of Western Civilization which had been established upon the biblical ethic found in God's written Word. At the time, Britain was the unchallenged "Christian" nation on whose empire the sun never set. Britannia ruled the waves, but that could not be allowed to continue. Britain's use in the globalist plans of the Illuminati had run its course. Now Britain's supremacy had to be tempered via revolution in its colonies and the sapping of her military might through warfare in the causes of other nations. Such wars destroy both the morale and the morals of a nation, as the ensuing history of the Allies after WWI has shown.

Now it was time for the United States to rise in military supremacy for a time in order to lead it into constant conflicts that would eventually destroy its morale and morals. For that reason America's policy of isolationism must be overturned. And the best way for that to happen would be to stir nationalistic pride to the point where a warlike mentality would take over the consciousness of the people. That would take an event of such stunning and barbaric proportions that the consciousness of a large portion of the populace would be outraged—such as the killing of innocent civilians.

With the sinking of the British ocean liner RMS Lusitania by a German U-boat on May, 7, 1915, the stage was set to draw the United States into the war through propaganda that the Germans had breached the Cruiser Rules forbidding firing upon passenger ships. At the time, the fact that RMS Lusitania was carrying munitions to Britain was withheld from the public. Britain's actions were also a breach of the Cruiser Rules, but the death of 1,198 passengers, including many Americans, shifted public opinion in the U.S. from the isolationist policies instilled since its founding, to an international mindset. For the first time, the United States military would be sent to foreign lands to fight for the cause of a foreign nation.

Although the anti-Christ powers that be have allowed the U.S. to prosper and lead the nations for a season, it is clear that our time has run out. Throughout almost the entire 20th century, the U.S. has been embroiled in war after war under the lie sold to the masses that we must "defend our interests overseas." Thus far we have been spared warfare on our own soil since the Civil War, discounting the 9/11 attacks and other relatively minor terrorist plots. But we must not be deceived to think that the destiny of this nation is in the hands of its people. It is first and foremost in the hands of God; it is secondarily in the hands of the god of this world, Satan, at the behest of the true God of Heaven who is working out mankind's history to His own purposes.

In the meantime, there will be a hefty price to be paid for this nation's having turned its heart from the true God to the god of this world through the latter's many enticements away from holiness.

GOVERNMENT

World War I and the League of Nations were not the only means employed by the secret powers behind government to destroy America's morals and morale. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to tax the people to the point where they see little reward for their labors. That is easily done through the imposition of an income tax.

The first attempt to impose an income tax upon Americans was undertaken when President Abraham Lincoln, with the aid of Congress, created the position of commissioner of Internal Revenue in 1862, and enacted an income tax to pay for the War of Secession (erroneously called the "Civil War"). That tax was repealed 10 years later. In 1894, Congress tried to revive the income tax, but the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional.

It would take a constitutional amendment to allow for an income tax, and that was accomplished in 1913 when Wyoming ratified the Sixteenth Amendment, providing the three-quarter majority of states needed to amend the Constitution. The income tax was originally meant to be temporary, and was levied at one percent on net personal incomes above \$3,000, with a six percent surtax on incomes over \$500,000. The income tax "coincidentally" was available to finance the U.S. involvement in World War I, during which the top rate rose to 77 percent. (To finance World War II, Congress imposed payroll withholding and quarterly tax payments from employers.)

Although the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution forbids indentured servitude of U.S. citizens, the government has conveniently applied that only to private interests. The government has, through the income tax, imposed its own form of indentured servitude.

Even so, believers in Christ are compelled to obey these laws lest we hinder our testimony and bring shame upon the name of our Lord.

While we are in this world we are subject to the authorities the Lord has placed over us. That doesn't mean we may not use all lawful means to right the wrongs, but it takes a lot of Mammon's help to accomplish anything contrary to anti-Christ's designs. Even then, unless the Lord is in it, nothing we attempt to accomplish will succeed.

Even more than the war efforts that would follow the enactment of the income tax, is the indentured servitude to private money interests under which the government would place its citizens. Again, the tax "coincidentally" provided the means to support the Federal Reserve Corporation which would, with Congress's action, remove the production of the nation's money and place it in the hands of the international banking cabal through the Federal Reserve Act.

ECONOMICS

Contrary to public understanding (which neither the government nor the mass media have made even a small effort to correct), the Federal Reserve Bank of the United

States of America is not owned by the government of the United States. It is a private bank whose Class A stockholders are unknown, but who are not all (or even a majority) American citizens. All the national banks of all the nations (including Communist China, North Korea, Cuba, and even the former U.S.S.R., now Russia again) are private banks owned by the same cabal.

Space does not allow for an in-depth study of the Federal Reserve System, but briefly, the Federal Reserve Bank (FRB) is charged with issuing money and controlling the monetary policies of the nation through influence in Congress and the administration, and through control of the inflation rate of the U.S. dollar. With the creation of the Federal Reserve System, Congress set the stage for taking the nation off the gold standard and replacing the true U.S. dollar (which was redeemable in silver) with the Federal Reserve Note made to look similar to the U.S. dollar.

Here is how the Federal Reserve robs the nation and its people:

When the government wants to place money into circulation it has the FRB print “X” number of dollars. The FRB puts the dollars into circulation through its member banks in major U.S. cities. The FRB member banks lend the money to other banks and lending institutions at a certain interest rate which goes to the FRB, not to the government. But the FRB is not limited to lending the “X” number of dollars it has printed. It can legally lend ten times that amount and charge interest on that sum. No actual money changes hands. These are all credit and debit items on the books of the banks involved.

Whatever amount a bank or lending institution borrows from the FRB, it, too, can loan up to ten times that amount through credit and debit entries to the public citizens, and charge interest on that amount.

In essence, the international banking cabal is sucking the lifeblood of the nation and enslaving the people through the income tax system. Thus, the nation’s morale is being slowly ebbed away as people work harder and harder to make ends meet.

To keep up with the scale of living imposed upon the consciousness of the people through manipulation by advertising and media hype, many families have both parents working while the children are placed in government-controlled indoctrination camps called “public schools.” There they learn the anti-Christ philosophy of globalism with its attendant evils of rebellion against parental authority; sexual license; feminism anti-Americanism; atheism, to name just a few.

Most people think all these things are merely coincidental; there can’t be a conscious conspiracy going on.

Yet behind the ungodly government, media and international banking conspiracy lurks the father of lies—Satan—the ultimate anti-Christ, working through super-wealthy indi-

viduals given to Satanism. But they do not promote Satanism. They promote atheism. Anti-Christ knows he can’t outright propagandize the majority of people to worship Satan. All that is necessary anyway, is to get enough people to reject the God of the Bible—the true God Yahweh—and they will be easy prey for the Satanists to enslave in their globalist Babel civilization.

Because all these national banks have their original foundation in the international banking family of the Rothschilds and certain Jewish-affiliated money interests, it is assumed that the international banking cabal is Jewish. It is to a large degree, but not exclusively. Wealthy nationals from many nations are involved in the international banking scheme. Yet we cannot escape the truth that certain unscrupulous anti-Christ Jews were the foundation and are still the backbone of the conspiracy. These are often referred to as those “who say they are Jews, but are not,” and are of “the synagogue of Satan” (Revelation 3:9).

The problem is that many anti-Semites associate all Jews with “the synagogue of Satan,” not distinguishing between the servants of Satan and the Israelites who are blinded in part until the time of the Gentiles is completed (Romans 11:25). This lack of discernment has been the reason many Christians, beginning with the Roman Catholic Church under the first popes, have persecuted Jews throughout history.

These anti-Semites are every bit anti-Christ as those they accuse.

RELIGION

With the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia came a determination to stamp out religion—especially Christianity—wherever communism would gain a foothold, beginning with Lenin’s persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church. It didn’t help that the Russian Orthodox Church collaborated with the White Army after the October Revolution. But it wouldn’t have mattered either way. The Soviet objective was to destroy all churches throughout Russia and the territories it conquered. The ethnic heritages of the Eastern Bloc and the Balkan States were strongly linked to their churches, and for communism to be successful it was necessary to break that link. Anti-Christ determined to wipe out Christianity first from Eastern Europe, with the hope of spreading atheism to Western Europe and the Americas. But it wasn’t in God’s plan, as we will see in ensuing installments.

Pentecostalism

While Christianity was being persecuted and almost wiped out under the Soviet pogrom, and Higher Criticism was decimating the churches in the West, there was beginning a new force within Christianity that would rock the foundations of the established churches which had fallen prey to a formalism that lacked any expression of spiritual life. A malaise seemed to hang over Christendom even as individual Christians longed for a deeper relationship with God.

As the Azusa Street phenomenon (1906) gained attention throughout the nation via secular media, new church institutions began to spring up which focused on the Pentecostal experience. These new churches allowed for freer expression, particularly in the practice of “speaking in tongues.”

In 1913, five men convened with the purpose of combating certain aberrant doctrines and practices that accompanied Pentecostalism. Eudorus N. Bell, Howard Goss, Daniel C.O. Opperman, Archibald P. Collins, and Mack M. Pinson put out a call for a general council on Pentecostalism through Bell’s periodical, *Word and Witness*, which was publicized in other periodicals as well.¹ From their efforts was born the largest and most influential Pentecostal denomination, the Assemblies of God (AG), formed in 1914.

Even as the AG was in its fledgling state serious disputes arose, not only around the idea that “tongues” is the necessary evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but over the doctrine of the Trinity and restorationism, as well as other issues. *The International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Zondervan, 2003), states:

Before the AG had organized, another disagreement had agitated independent pentecostals. Early pentecostals had tended to regard sanctification as a second, instantaneous spiritual crisis. The leader of a Chicago mission, William Durham, had challenged that view after 1908 and had advocated, rather, “the finished work of Calvary.” Responding to the extreme teachings some contemporary Holiness advocates urged, Durham insisted that penitent sinners received both Christ’s pardon and cleansing at conversion. Their further responsibility was not to pursue crisis cleansing but to live an “overcoming” life....

Since the AG did not seek to enforce doctrinal unity, it embraced people who held various views on sanctification. Participants at the first general council heard Mack M. Pinson advocate Durham’s position. Early versions of the Statement of Fundamental Truths attempted to satisfy those with Holiness sympathies while identifying with Durham’s essential approach. As time passed, it became increasingly evident that the AG supported Durham’s understanding. The denomination’s early leaders, accused by Holiness advocates of minimizing holiness, found it necessary to assert frequently that they believed in sanctification.

A third doctrinal issue, in addition to the Trinity and sanctification, that helped mold the AG emerged in 1918 when a popular evangelist, pastor, and former executive presbyter, F.F. Bosworth, resigned from the denomination in a disagreement about evidential

tongues speech. Bosworth published his critique of the movement’s espousal of tongues as uniform initial evidence of Spirit baptism in a pamphlet entitled [sic] “Do All Speak with Tongues?” His actions prompted a thorough discussion of evidential tongues and marked the culmination in the AG of an evolution toward rigid promotion of evidential tongues without qualification, but increasingly the movement had tended to do so. It became committed to that position. The denomination was saved from a showdown by Bosworth’s magnanimous spirit. Only he and his brother resigned over the issue.²

One of the most divisive issues within Pentecostalism concerned the nature of “the Godhead,” which was known as the “New Issue.” In 1916, the AG was faced with this “New Issue” when proponents of the “Jesus’ Name” Pentecostal movement (a.k.a. “Oneness Pentecostalism”) began to exert influence. Teaching a modalistic view of God, the Jesus’ Name faction denied the doctrine of the Trinity, asserting that there is one divine Spirit who manifests Himself in many ways, three of which are as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Oneness Pentecostals split from the AG to form several other Pentecostal denominations, two of the largest being the United Pentecostal Church and the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World.

The noisy and expressive manner in which Pentecostals worshiped resulted in much criticism from the mainline churches, including from the older Holiness and fundamentalist churches that were closest to Pentecostalism in theology and practice.³

As fervent as Pentecostals were in attempting to adhere to biblical truth concerning the gifts of the Spirit, the anti-Christ spirit wormed its way into the movement to create divisions and to draw away from the genuine working of the Holy Spirit by appealing to emotions rather than God’s Word when it came to expressing themselves.

Perhaps the most obvious departure from Scripture is the manner in which “tongues” are approached in the assemblies in contrast to God’s Word:

Brethren, do not be children in understanding (however in malice you be children), but in understanding be men.

In the Law it is written, “‘With men of other languages and other lips I will speak to this people, and yet for all that will they not hear Me,’ says the Lord.”

Therefore languages are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to those who do not believe. But prophesying does not serve for those who do not believe, but for those who believe.

¹ *International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Revised and Expanded Edition, Ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), p. 333.

² *Ibid.*, p. 334.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 554

Therefore, if the whole assembly has come together into one place and all speak with languages, and there come in those who are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and there comes in one who does not believe, or an unlearned one, he is convicted by all, he is judged by all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made known. And so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is truly in you.

How is it then, brethren? When you come together every one of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a language, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.

If any speak in a language, let it be by two, or at the most by three—and that by sequence—and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter let him keep silent in the assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God.

Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge. If anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first hold his peace. For you may all prophesy one-by-one so that all may learn, and all may be comforted. For the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets, for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all assemblies of the saints. (1 Corinthians 14:20-33)

I urge my Pentecostal brethren to re-read these verses as many times as necessary to have it settle in their spirits. It isn't that Pentecostals are purposely defying God's Word, but they are not being taught by their denominational leaders how God's Word must be honored in all we do for Him.

When Christians wish to act contrary to God's Word they often say that we must listen to the Holy Spirit, and that is true. But the Holy Spirit does not lead us contrary to God's Word. The Holy Spirit is the author of God's Word, having inspired the human authors to write what they did.

God is not double-minded. It is a lie from anti-Christ that the Holy Spirit is our authority. God's Word is our authority, and the Holy Spirit holds us to it by convicting and convincing us to obey it.

Women in Ministry

Until the early 1800s when the Society of Friends (Quakers) allowed women to take roles of leadership and teaching in their congregations, there is no historical evidence of women taking those positions in any of the established denominations. A few were ordained in the mid- to latter-19th century, primarily in some Unitarian, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. In 1909, the Church of God (Cleveland TN), a Pentecostal denomination, began ordaining women. The Assemblies of God struggled early on with the issue, and has largely held to male leadership.

Membership in the [AG] general council was limited to ministers. Numerous pentecostal women had engaged in ministries before they had embraced pentecostalism. Some had been ordained (though usually in nontraditional and highly irregular settings). Although their ordination was recognized by the AG, such women could not vote at general councils until 1920. Full ordination of women by the AG was not granted until 1935. Even then the proviso "when such acts are necessary" was appended to women's permission to administer the ordinances.⁴

Among denominations that might fall under the heading of "fundamental," the Pentecostal churches took the most liberal position toward ordaining women and placing them in positions of authority and teaching contrary to Scripture (1 Timothy 2:11-14; 1 Corinthians 14:34-35).

One of anti-Christ's most potent weapons against the authority of God's Word and against the order for male-female relationships according to His eternal purposes has been feminism which first reared its head in the 19th century among rebellious women who were able to manipulate weak men in the world system. That feminism began to spread within the churches almost immediately. It gained its greatest achievements within Pentecostalism which through the 20th century has seen many women not only take roles as pastors and teachers, but as apostles. Some even founded their own denominations.

I believe it is the emotionalism attendant to Pentecostalism that set the stage for feminism to make such a strong mark among its churches. When anti-Christ can get Christians to focus as much, or even more, on ecstatic experiences, Scripture becomes more subjective in areas not considered "essential," as if the whole counsel of God is not important. Pentecostalism to a large degree (though not exclusively) has retained the so-called essential truths of Scripture, but it has allowed what people have claimed to experience to mold its approach to many practices, particularly where women in ministry is concerned.

Anti-Christ has had, and is having today more than ever, a great influence through feminism that has rocked not only Pentecostalism, but virtually all of Christianity.

CONCLUSION

Other influences of anti-Christ in Christianity during this second decade of the 1900s include the Jehovah's Witnesses doctrine that Jesus returned invisibly in 1914 with the beginning of WWI, an increase in the rise of snake-handling cults, and the increasing influence of New Thought in Pentecostalism through the teachings of E.W. Kenyon and John G. Lake, among others.

⁴ Ibid., p. 335.



NOTE: In our previous issue we mistakenly identified Part XXXII as Part XXXIII. This issue contains Part XXXIII (33).

AMONG ANTI-CHRIST'S MOST effective weapons to corrupt mankind has been warfare—particularly warfare between “Christian” nations. But there had never been a war of such destructive force in all of history leading up to “the war to end all wars.” And there had never been an unleashing of inhibitions after any war as there was after that war.

The Gay Nineties was a carnal response to the Victorian morality that many felt was repressive. The following decades after the 1890s saw a gradual decline in morals, but with the tension building up to World War I, there remained a soberness that kept much of human nature in check. That soberness dissipated quickly after the war as the tension was relieved by a peace that would prove all too tenuous.

The 1920s was a decade of decadence. Relieved that the Great War was finally over, Europe and America licked their wounds by embarking on a binge of indulgence that dramatically altered their respective societies.

Secular humanism and social Darwinism had already made great inroads into Western Civilization, and with Higher Criticism on the rise God's Word began to take a back seat as secularism drove society greater distances from the Creator.

CULTURE

The Roaring Twenties

The third decade of the 20th century was a time of dramatic change, not only in society, but in politics. America's wealth was on the way to doubling by the end of the decade as consumerism assuaged people's desire to distance

themselves from the horrors of that awful conflict. Large chain stores began to spring up all over the United States, leading to nation-wide advertising that would push many small and independent merchants out of business.

The 1920s was the decade of mass culture where mass communications and the entertainment industry influenced the population's thinking and conduct as never before. This was just what anti-Christ needed to begin his last-days onslaught against the truth of God's Word and His righteousness.

With the increase in mass communications, people all over America were listening to the same music, doing the same dances, and adopting a new language called “slang.” Night life surged as people sought venues for gaiety. In 1923, the Charleston dance craze took the nation by storm.

Many members of the older generation became alarmed at what they perceived as debauchery taking over society. But the younger generation opened themselves up to whatever became popular as admen for entertainment told them what they must do to be popular themselves. This was especially true of those living in many nations' big cities. The free-spirited departure from convention during this decade gave it a distinctive name: The Roaring Twenties.

Flappers

One of the most familiar and compelling figures of the Roaring Twenties was the flapper. The anti-Christ spirit of rebellion took hold of many women's consciousness. Eschewing the past ideal of womanhood expressed as demure, chaste, and at least outwardly innocent, young women took on many of the trappings of men, engaging in drinking, smoking, and sexual license. Bobbed hair and short skirts made a statement that the “New Woman” was nothing like mom, and certainly nothing like grandmother.

Although this was not the norm for most young women, flappers became a favorite topic of newspapers, magazines, and motion pictures because of their dramatic departure from convention. And although the flapper was in a minority and largely the product of big city culture, the flapper wardrobe was adopted by many women everywhere, not only in the United States, but in Europe.

The 1920 passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote, further emboldened women to assert themselves in every area of society. A burgeoning economy coupled with the need for women in the workforce during World War I opened many doors of opportunity for women to leave the home. Wives worked alongside the husbands of other wives, creating many opportunities for adultery. The availability of birth-control devices made promiscuity all the more inviting, and allowed women to concentrate on earning money instead of raising children. Technology provided labor-saving appliances such as the washing machine and vacuum cleaner which gave more free time to women who did keep their homes.

Anti-Christ's efforts to debase women and cause them to behave like men had an effect on men that caused them to shrink from the position of heads of their households and churches and turn over the reins of leadership to women.

With the growing economy many found themselves with discretionary funds that could be spent on consumer goods and entertainment. The first commercial radio station in the United States, KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had gone on the air in 1920. By 1923 there were more than 500 commercial radio stations in the U.S. By the end of the decade, 12 million households sported radios. It is estimated that by then some three-quarters of Americans frequented movie theaters every week. With the invention of talking movies (1923), they were exposed to worldly philosophy mingled with a mixture of wholesomeness and worldliness.

In 1927, the first feature-length motion picture with synchronized dialogue sequences, *The Jazz Singer*, starred Al Jolson as a Jewish young man whose father wanted him to be a cantor in his local synagogue. Taken by the era's music, the young man, Jakie Rabinowitz, leaves home, changes his name to Jack Robin, and becomes a popular nightclub singer. Incorporating dance into his act, Jolson's terpsichorean abilities suggest an earlier version of Elvis Presley.

Automobiles made mass culture all the more widespread as individuals enjoyed the freedom to move from one location to another quickly. Soon, young people would be fleeing their homes to engage in pleasurable activities (many not so wholesome), and to be on their own without parental oversight. Here, too, over time, anti-Christ developed wedges that would eventually minimize the nuclear family and leave children—young girls especially—open prey to unsavory characters they were ill-equipped to resist.

Prohibition

For almost a century the American Temperance Society, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Anti-Saloon League and other temperance organizations had been fighting to turn Americans away from the use of alcohol. And for good reason: many husbands and fathers were spending inordinate amounts of their time in saloons and income on alcohol at the neglect of their family responsibilities. It is not normally stated, but the turning of women away from their previous innocence may have played a part in many men's departure from family life.

In any case, the temperance movement worked to get the government involved in the crusade against drink. As a result, several states imposed laws that prohibited the manufacture and sale (but not the drinking) of intoxicating beverages. But that wasn't enough; the movement wanted to impose morality upon the entire country through national legislation. In 1919, after several years of effort, the Congress of the United States passed the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, declaring illegal the production, transport, and sale of alcohol (though not the consumption or private possession). The Amendment took effect on January 17, 1920.

The Volstead Act (named for Andrew Volstead, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who oversaw the legislation) had been enacted in 1919 to carry out the intent of the 18th Amendment. The Act allowed alcohol for a select number of purposes including scientific research, the development of fuel, dye and other lawful industries, and certain practices such as religious ritual.

Although the intent of the temperance movement was noble, it did not take into account man's sin nature that would find ways to circumvent the law. Thus there sprang up speakeasies, where people could indulge in illegal drinking and give greater abandon to their sin nature than they had in previously legitimate saloons and taverns. And now more women joined them.

The origin of the name "speakeasy" is found in the *Online Etymology Dictionary*:

speakeasy (n.)

"unlicensed saloon," 1889 (in the New York "Voice"), from verbal phrase, from speak (v.) + easy (adv.); so called from the practice of speaking quietly about such a place in public, or when inside it, so as not to alert the police and neighbors. The word gained wide currency in U.S. during Prohibition (1920-1932). In early 19c. Irish and British dialect, a speak softly shop meant "smuggler's den."

Prohibition induced many average citizens to become lawbreakers in order to indulge in the vices of those days. This was a great victory for anti-Christ, even as prohibition did seem to have a sobering effect in some areas while contributing to more drunkenness in other areas.

Gangsterism

The promise of easy money through the sale of illegal alcohol gave rise to gangs that used violence to enlarge their territories. Large sums of money bought “protection” from unscrupulous cops and politicians who looked the other way as the gangs pursued their ill-gotten gains. Bloodshed became widespread in the cities as rival gangs fought one another over lucrative territories. The media often romanticized gangsters, portraying them as basically good guys gone wrong because of the government’s bad policy against alcohol. Gangsterism was yet another way anti-Christ could corrupt the morals of our “Christian” society.

Jazz

Although by today’s cultural standards the jazz of the 1920s era seems tame, for its day it represented liberation and sensual indulgence. Eschewing traditional structure for improvisation, jazz was a radically different music form. With its roots in Black culture, many considered jazz primitive and even barbarian. Well-known Americans spoke out against it as “the Devil’s Music.” These included such notables as Henry Ford and Thomas Edison, the latter stating that jazz sounded better when played backwards.

Yet jazz gained in popularity as it was played in speakeasies and other social clubs. Like most music since then, jazz represented rebellion against the strict morals of a “repressive” society.

Earlier in the century, New Orleans became the first center of jazz as “honky-tonk” clubs sprang up throughout the city’s red-light district called “Storyville.” Thus, the association of jazz with immorality was imprinted upon the nation’s consciousness. But that didn’t matter. It sounded good to the soul—fertile ground in which anti-Christ works to instill rebellion against godliness.

Even so, I must admit that some jazz is good music. Especially as it began to take a more conventional and ordered form through the rise of big bands, jazz developed into a less anti-social genre that today represents the best in musicianship. Big band jazz is second in many eyes only to classical compositions. This perhaps resulted as practiced musicians developed their own styles of jazz that incorporated structure learned from their classical training. This was especially true of the white bandleaders, the most popular during the 1920s being Paul Whiteman.

TECHNOLOGY

The First Television

Television was a much earlier invention than supposed by many. In 1920, then 14-year-old Philo Farnsworth discovered a cache of science magazines in the farmhouse into which his family had recently moved. With a sense of awe at technology from an even earlier age, having experienced the marvels of the telephone and electric light, Farnsworth became an avid investigator into scientific discovery. Even as a teenager he envisioned a device that would transmit

pictures and sound. In 1927 he unveiled his prototype for television using a video camera tube. He had sketched this device as a teenager in his chemistry class.

RCA made an offer to purchase the rights to his device, but he turned them down, instead accepting a position at Philco in Philadelphia. Shortly after this in 1929, a Russian inventor, Vladimir Zworykin, invented the cathode-ray tube called the kinescope. Eventually coming to work for RCA who funded his research, Zworykin improved the device using an imaging section similar to Farnsworth’s patented dissector. Farnsworth and RCA engaged in litigation throughout the late 20s and early 30s, with RCA eventually being forced to start paying Farnsworth royalties.

As wonderful an invention that the Mormon Farnsworth produced, through it anti-Christ has found perhaps the most effective means to transform the thinking of people around the world from right thinking to ungodliness. Cable television, not controlled by the Federal Communications Commission, has introduced some of the worst programming imaginable, almost as bad as some from European countries that have little or no censorship.

SCIENCE

Edwin Hubble

In the early 1920s, one of the puzzles that confronted astronomers was the nature of nebulae—cloudy patches of unknown matter in space. It was commonly believed that they were all part of our Milky Way Galaxy. Having been hired in 1919 as a junior astronomer at Mount Wilson Observatory in Los Angeles shortly after the 100-inch reflector telescope had been constructed, Edwin Hubble worked to solve the puzzle. As he took photos of these objects, Hubble became convinced that at least some of them existed well outside the Milky Way. What he was observing were other galaxies far beyond the known universe at the time, revealing that the size of the universe is 100-fold what had been believed. Additionally, by measuring the distances and motions of the galaxies he discovered that the universe is expanding, thus surprising the scientific community, including Einstein, which had assumed that the universe is static.

On October 4, 1923, Hubble was comparing a photograph he had taken of the Andromeda Galaxy with photos taken on earlier nights. In the process, he discovered in Andromeda a Cepheid variable star—the only kind of star that could allow for determining the distance to the galaxy. His calculations determined that Andromeda was approximately 900,000 light years away.

Previously, the diameter of the Milky Way, also a spiral galaxy, had been determined to be 100,000 light years. Thus, Hubble’s discovery revealed that Andromeda (as are all galaxies) is far beyond the Milky Way. It was later discovered that Hubble’s calculations were wrong. He had unknowingly compared the bright Cepheid star in Andromeda with a dimmer Cepheid in the Milky Way,

which meant that Andromeda was some 2 million light years away—twice as far as he first calculated.

In spite of that error, Hubble's work led to the eventual determination (according to present knowledge) that the universe is at least 30-billion light years across and growing. This suggests strongly that the universe is far more ancient than is traditionally accepted by most Christian religions.

The discovery that the universe is expanding gave rise to the Big Bang Theory—the idea that the universe sprung into existence from a pin-point of matter that had existed from time immemorial. Anti-Christ has been quick to use the Big Bang Theory as the basis for denying the existence of God.

Of course, the Big Bang Theory immediately caused consternation among Christians who believed that God created the universe as it exists by speaking it into existence in six twenty-four-hour days. They were not prepared to think that God could have created the universe from a central point and flung it outward billions of years ago. Young earth creationists still insist that scientists have miscalculated and misunderstood what they have observed. Some even insist that the earth is the center of the universe and that the sun, stars, and galaxies all revolve around us—the pre-Galileo theory called geocentricity.

In many Christian circles, belief in anything other than a young (approximately 6,000-year-old) creation is tantamount to denying the Word of God and allying oneself with Darwinian evolutionists. This has caused rifts in the Body of Christ between those who accept the evidence of science for an ancient creation and those who accuse them of selling out to secularism.

It isn't the purpose of this article to defend either position. My focus is on how anti-Christ has pitted brethren in Christ against one another, even to the point of breaking fellowship, over how one perceives the evidence in Scripture regarding the creation of the cosmos. The important issue is the creation of man as a unique being in the image and likeness of God. Whether the six days of Genesis describe the original creation or its re-creation from chaos doesn't bear on our relationship with our Father in Heaven. But to suggest that man evolved from a lower life form is to denigrate not only all mankind, but Jesus Himself.

Whatever one believes regarding the creation of the cosmos, I do not disqualify him as a brother in Christ. We may have all knowledge, but if we do not have love, we are nothing. We cannot allow Satan to drive this wedge between us as brethren in Christ.

ECONOMICS

Stock Market Crash Ignites the Great Depression

The god of this world is Mammon—riches placed in the hands of unscrupulous men to do the bidding of Satan. Riches in themselves are not evil; God has blessed many of His people with riches for their faithfulness if it suited His purposes. But the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil,

and anti-Christ knows how to manipulate the riches of this world in order to wage warfare against God and His people. Yet anti-Christ can do nothing unless God permits it.

As America and Europe were basking in their newfound license throughout the Roaring Twenties, offending the God whose name the West for centuries claimed for its basic religious philosophy, the affront could not last long. For all intents and purposes it seems as if our holy God said, "Enough!" As His Word says, "Those who would be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful desires that drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Timothy 6:9).

The economic boom during the 1920s that took stock prices to peaks never before seen—some even quadrupling in value—created a false sense of security and confidence in capitalism. Many average people, believing they could strike it rich by investing in the "Cash Cow" of Wall Street, dumped their life's savings into the Stock Market. But just as all schemes designed to provide wealth sans hard work are doomed to failure, so the Stock Market would prove a path to financial ruin for most. At the same time, however, some insiders, particularly those behind the scenes of the world's financial system, gained considerably.

In 1929, the financial bubble burst and stocks began to rapidly decline in value, dropping precipitously to the loss of 80% of their value. Because many people had borrowed money to invest in the Market, they found themselves bankrupt and heavily in debt. This, in turn, had a devastating effect on the economy. People could no longer afford to purchase the goods that were being produced, thus leading to layoffs and further economic suffering. Fearing further losses, no one would buy stocks, so there was no capital to invest for further economic growth.

Now, banks tried to collect on loans made to those who had invested in the Stock Market, but the borrowers could not pay back the loans. Worse, many banks had invested depositors' money in the Market and were also in deep financial distress. Many banks failed, causing depositors to lose \$140 billion. No longer were checks acceptable for payment to creditors because no one knew which banks were on the verge of failing. It became cash-only for transactions in many instances.

Because people were rushing to withdraw their money from banks that could not give it to them, two days after taking office in 1933, President Roosevelt declared a bank holiday, after which banks reopened with a limit on how much any depositor could withdraw at any given time.

But there was little Roosevelt could do during his tenure in office to right the economic ship of the United States. The Great Depression, which began with the 1929 Stock Market crash would last until World War II imposed necessary government spending to finance the war effort.

Western Christianity's proud flaunting of its wealth was brought to humiliation by anti-Christ at the behest of a holy God. Yet in spite of the economic deprivation suffered, there always seemed to be enough to support the liquor, illicit drug, and prostitution trades. Anti-Christ knows how to assuage the appetites of the sinful soul.

In 1930, following the Stock Market crash, John Maynard Keynes published his *Treatise* of economics based on socialism. According to Keynesian economics, the state must intervene and control the financial and business systems of the nation in order to moderate "boom and bust" cycles. After World War II, leading western nations would adopt Keynes's policies, which included the idea of deficit spending with the false assumption that this would keep a nation financially stable under adverse conditions. In the United States, this policy of deficit spending has resulted today in a national debt of close to \$20 trillion.

Anti-Christ knows how to use these socialist policies to destroy "Christian" nations, and today we are seeing the fruits of his labors paying off big time.

Kemal Atatürk founds modern Turkey

During World War I, the Ottoman Empire allied itself with Germany and Austria-Hungary, leading to its decline after the victory of the Western Allies. The postwar peace treaty of August, 1920, stripped the Ottoman Empire of all Arab provinces, established independence for Armenia, and, among other debilitating provisions for the Ottomans, left the Allies in economic control of what little was left.

Out of the ruins of the Ottoman Empire arose the independent Republic of Turkey in 1920, founded by an ex-Turkish Army officer named Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which eventually resulted in Turkey adopting many western cultural and economic policies and a primarily secular political philosophy. Eventually, Turkey would become the bridge between the Muslim Middle East and "Christian" Europe (the old Roman Empire). Scripture tells us that Pergamum in Turkey is the seat of Satan. What better place than Turkey for the man anti-Christ to rise from?

1922 Mussolini marches on Rome

Having formed the Fascist Party in Italy in 1919, Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini, much like Adolph Hitler, capitalized on public discontent with his country's weakness following the nation's defeat in World War I and the sanctions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. He had organized a paramilitary unit called the "Black Shirts" in 1919, that terrorized political opponents, increasing his party's power. By the end of 1922, the Black Shirts, largely made up of disgruntled soldiers, numbered some 200,000 members. Mussolini was emboldened by this to stage a grand display of his power by marching on Rome from October 22-29, 1922. On October 28, Italy's King Victor Emmanuel III handed over power to Mussolini. Gradually dismantling all democratic institutions, he made himself dictator, assuming

the title, "Il Duce" ("The Leader"). Mussolini would later become one of anti-Christ's allies along with Hitler to bring the world to the brink of utter desolation.

Hitler jailed after failed coup

During the early 1920s, Hitler's Nazi Party grew as Germans became dissatisfied with Germany's democratic government, especially after the government resumed payment of reparations to Britain and France for Germany's part in World War I. On November 8, 1923, Adolph Hitler and his *Sturmabteilung* (SA), the original paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party, stormed a public meeting at a beer hall attended by some 3,000 people. The "Beer Hall Putsch" was the Nazi's first attempt to seize the German government by force, hoping that the dissatisfied German army would get behind him. However, the Nazis were immediately suppressed, and Hitler was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison for high treason. His sentence was reduced to one year, during which he dictated most of the first volume of *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) to his deputy, Rudolf Hess. The book presented Hitler's plans for establishing a racially purified Germany society.

Mein Kampf was published in 1925, and became much of Germany's inspiration for asserting Aryan supremacy, outlining Hitler's plan for the "Final Solution" of Germany's alleged problem with the Jews. In it Hitler proposed that Europe must be totally purged of all Jews, hoping to send them east into Russia, and the island of Madagascar.

Thus was germinated anti-Christ's largest assault against the Jews, hoping to eradicate them from the face of the earth, thus nullifying any hope of God's Word of prophecy concerning Israel's regathering into the Promised Land coming to pass.

V.I. Lenin dies

In May, 1922, U.S.S.R.'s Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin), suffered the first of three strokes, the second coming in December of that year. Debilitated and on the verge of death, Lenin reflected on his dictatorial leadership and came to regret much of what had transpired under his leadership. He was especially wary of Josef Stalin, the general secretary of the Communist Party, who had begun to amass great power. Lenin suffered his third stroke on March 10, 1923, which left him without speech, thus ending his political efforts.

On January 21, 1924, he died, leaving Josef Stalin as absolute dictator over the U.S.S.R. Lenin's reign had been brutal, particularly in the early stages as he sought to establish his absolute power. But Stalin's reign proved far more brutal, and under his watch communism amassed far more millions of victims than even Adolph Hitler's Nazism.

Yet for most westerners, Hitler is the poster boy of Evil Personified, thanks to the mostly Marxist-leaning mass media in the West. It's possible that more Jews perished under

Stalin's pogroms than under Adolph Hitler's, pleasing anti-Christ further.

In 1930, Stalin began collectivizing agriculture in the U.S.S.R., taking almost all the land from its owners and centralizing the nation's crops. This led to years of famine and deprivation. The history of the U.S.S.R. is a bleak reminder that collectivism doesn't work, and no wonder. God's Word does not allow for it. But anti-Christ loves any system that will demean and impoverish mankind, made in the image of God.

CHRISTIANITY

During the decade of the 1920s, two major personalities came on the scene who would have tremendous impact on Christianity.

Essek William "E.W." Kenyon

E.W. Kenyon founded Figueroa Independent Baptist Church in downtown Los Angeles in 1923, where he pioneered in radio evangelism on the secular station KNX. After moving to Seattle, Washington, he began a daily program, *Kenyon's Church of the Air*, there. This led to the founding of a new church in Seattle by the same name as his L.A. church, which would later become known as New Covenant Baptist Church.

Kenyon is considered the father of the Word-Faith (aka, Positive Confession) movement with such devotees as W.J. "Ern" Baxter, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Charles Capps, Joseph Prince, and many others who have gained tremendous popularity.

Although not a Pentecostal, Kenyon is highly revered in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. His belief that Jesus died spiritually originated in Gnosticism. His proponents argue that because Kenyon believed that Jesus also died physically and rose physically, his beliefs are not Gnostic. However, that anti-Christ philosophy is at least partially evident in the Jesus-died-spiritually teaching which has been widely adopted within the Word-Faith movement.

Kenyon's positive confession views are traced to his attendance at Emerson College of Oratory in Boston, a spawning ground for New Thought philosophical ideas. New Thought's major tenets center on health, prosperity, and happiness.

New Thought is traced to Phineas P. Quimby (1802-66), who gained prominence toward the close of the 19th century. Quimby was immersed in spiritism, occultism, hypnosis, and other aspects of parapsychology. He is said to have healed Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of Christian Science, in 1862. By using scientific language he attempted to bring witchcraft into acceptance among mainstream religions. Thus, Quimby called his formulation the science of Christ. This prompted Eddy to adopt the term "Christian Science" for her mind science cult. Quimby's faulty concept of "God" was adopted by John G. Lake, who brought it into Christianity along with William Branham and E.W. Kenyon—

a concept also espoused by Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Frederick K.C. Price, and the late Charles Capps.

John G. Lake asserted, "Man is not a separate creation detached from God, he is part of God Himself...God intends us to be gods. The inner man is the real governor, the true man that Jesus said was a god."

We see how anti-Christ has influenced Christianity greatly through these men. Yet those who follow their anti-Christ doctrines, blinded by their desire for blessings above obedience, become angry when confronted with the truth.

Aimee Semple McPherson

As a seventeen-year-old girl, Aimee Kennedy was torn between Darwinism and faith in God. Drawn to a revival meeting, she heard (and instantly fell in love with) a handsome Irish preacher named Robert Semple. She made up her mind that Christianity is true, and Darwinism false. After their marriage, they went to China as self-proclaimed missionaries. But Robert died a scant two months later. Even after his death she felt they had a call from God, although no fruit came of their work. As a money raiser for the Salvation Army, she met her second husband, an accountant named Harold McPherson, and agreed to live a normal life with him in Providence, Rhode Island. But the role of wife didn't suit her, so she left him to pursue her "ministry." With no income, no savings, and no backing, she set out to make a name for herself as a female preacher, contrary to Scripture. Although it seemed as if she started with nothing, when she needed money her mother provided it.

Aimee was a mistress of theatrics and flamboyance, adeptly mixing religion with entertainment which attracted tens of thousands. She built a religious empire as one of the first female pastors and teachers by appealing to people who succumbed to her emotional message during a time of worldwide turmoil, war, disease, and human calamity. There is no shortage of photographs of Aimee in action, whether on stage or among the masses, which made their way into mainstream publications. She is often seen with outstretched arms, gazing fervently into the heavens in obviously staged postures. She even made sure to have a black man baptize her daughter Roberta as a show of her desire to reach out to all races.

Eventually, Harold McPherson followed Aimee on her campaign trail for a time, but couldn't take the role of second fiddle to his wife. He eventually left her and filed for divorce. Aimee continued "serving" God.

Because of her popularity, McPherson held credentials with several other churches which allowed her to strike out on her own. She had enjoyed for several years great acceptance as an itinerant preacher that took her across the United States. In 1921 she decided to build her own church which would be interdenominational and ecumenical, focusing on world-wide evangelism. In 1922, as an "evangelist"

with the Assemblies of God (a Pentecostal denomination), Aimee turned in her credentials rather than cede to the church the title to the then-under-construction “tabernacle” called Angelus Temple in Los Angeles. The 5,300-seat building, sporting a statue of Aimee in one of her classical poses with uplifted hand and face above a theater-styled marquee, was dedicated on January 1, 1923, and became McPherson’s permanent home where she pastored her growing flock. There she hired press agents and engaged in publicity stunts to draw attention to herself. Considering the (for its time) grandiose and costly “temple,” one critic exclaimed that Aimee “had put the ‘cost’ in Pentecost.” As she entered the auditorium to conduct services, the 5,000-strong audience would rise and applaud her wildly.

Eventually, Aimee embarked on a “healing” ministry, claiming it was forced on her by public demand.

During the 1920s, “Sister” as she was affectionately called, wrote several works, including *Divine Healing*. She even started her own denomination, The International Church of the Four Square Gospel, which continues today. As she gained tremendous popularity, Aimee would bring local politicians onto her stage, and eventually came to declare that Christians must take control of government and rule the nation. Her foray into politics eventually caused politicians to consider her a threat.

In spite of her wide-ranging fame, Aimee was lonely, with no friends. But she did develop a close friendship with her radio engineer, Kenneth Ormiston, a married man. Unaware that the acoustics in her auditorium were so good that their conversations over the intercom could be heard throughout the room, Aimee and Kenneth would speak in intimate terms that raised concerns among some who overheard them.

On May 18, 1926, Aimee went to Venice Beach with her secretary. As her secretary watched Aimee swimming, she lost sight of her. Aimee had inexplicably vanished among the beach-going crowd. When Aimee didn’t appear for her sermon that evening, news went out that she had drowned in the Pacific Ocean. Not everyone was convinced. One reporter suggested the event was a publicity stunt, and that Aimee would come back, ostensibly as part of a “resurrection” story.

For over a month her followers held a vigil at the site of her disappearance. Interestingly, Kenneth Ormiston had also disappeared at around the same time that Aimee had gone missing.

Then, on June 23, 1926, Police came to the church’s parsonage and told Aimee’s mother Minnie Kennedy that Aimee had been found at a hospital in Arizona, having walked out of the desert in Mexico. She claimed to have been kidnapped by a couple named “Steve” and “Mexicali Rose,” but managed to escape. Investigators stated that her clothes and shoes didn’t fit the conditions of those that had

been worn on a long trek through the desert. Some speculate that she was so exhausted from her work that she just wanted to escape for a season. Despite several holes in her story, and the concurrent disappearance and reappearance of Kenneth Ormiston, her devoted followers then, and even today, refuse to believe she would have had an adulterous affair. Some 30,000 people were on hand to greet her at the train station when she returned to Los Angeles to pick up where she had left off. But within weeks of her return, the Los Angeles District Attorney launched an investigation into her disappearance. The D.A. charged Aimee with fabricating a hoax, among other charges. It was suspected that his purpose was really to discredit her by revealing a sex scandal because of her political involvement that had turned the previously amenable politicians against her. Ultimately there was insufficient evidence to make the charges stick.

As she tried to regain her reputation that had been soiled by the publicity of her relationship with Ormiston and her alleged kidnapping, Aimee produced a theatrical show about her life, which flopped. She entered into a brief marriage with a singer from one of her productions, Dave Hutton. This horrified some of her church members, but did nothing to significantly affect her religious empire. Some did break away to form another denomination.

During the future Great Depression, Aimee found new grounds for her work among the disenfranchised, returning to her Pentecostal roots which she had previously abandoned in order to appeal to a wider audience.

Aimee Semple McPherson died at age 54 on September 27, 1944, from an overdose of barbiturates while on tour in Oakland, California. Although initially reported a suicide, the official coroner’s report was that her death was accidental.

There is no question that Aimee’s theatrics, by God’s grace alone, genuinely touched hearts and brought many to Christ, at least outwardly. But anti-Christ knew how to use her as a poor role model for other women who would consider their own marriages expendable, and even commit adultery if it meant freedom to serve Jesus or, for that matter, their own flesh. Although there were a number of little-known and unknown women who took it upon themselves to assume the role of men in the Body of Christ, Aimee Semple McPherson threw wide open the doors for other women to act contrary to God’s Word by asserting themselves over men and flagrantly disobeying God’s Word.

Even so, the Lord honors His Word no matter who proclaims it. His judgment will be between Himself and those who take it upon themselves to act contrary to His Word. Sadly, many women will find that although they saw “results” in their works, they built nothing but wood, hay, and stubble, which will be burned in the judgment. ❖



ARRIVING ON THE heels of the 1929 Stock Market crash, the third decade of the century began with turmoil. Many wealthy people, not just in America but around the world, became impoverished overnight when they found themselves leveraged too deeply in stocks that had risen sharply during the '20s. Unable to meet margin calls, or finding the stocks they owned suddenly worthless, some even took their lives rather than face ruin.

ECONOMICS

The Great Depression

The collapse of the Stock Market propelled the world into the greatest economic recession in history, called the Great Depression. From 1929 to 1932 worldwide Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by 15%. Unemployment in the United States rose to 25%; some countries saw an unemployment rate as high as 33%. With the loss of jobs, tax revenue fell, profits for commerce and industry followed suit, and international trade suffered a drop of 50%.

Satan had a heyday with the manipulation of Mammon that would send the world into a downward spiral of poverty and despair. But his minions that could buy and sell souls with the great wealth they controlled through the central banks of the nations were made all the richer for it. For the rest of the world's population there was only despair.

The Great Depression gave socialists like President Franklin Delano Roosevelt the opportunity to drastically alter the economic policies of the U.S. toward big-government policies that would change the attitudes of the people from self-sufficiency to dependency on government welfare.

Utilizing the economic theories of British socialist John Maynard Keynes, Roosevelt embarked on a policy of deficit spending that would send the United States into never-ending debt that plagues the nation today, and is projected to reach \$20 trillion by the end of Barack Obama's second term.

Keynes posited in his *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* that the decline in income and employment is due to low aggregate expenditures (the value of all finished goods and services in the economy). Keynes declared that government must run deficits when the economy is slowing because investment in the private sector would not be sufficient to keep production at the normal level to avoid a recession. Thus, the government must pick up the slack by increasing government spending and/or cutting taxes. One means to increase government spending would be through the creation of government jobs, particularly bureaucratic positions that would give further control of the economy and the people to the government.

Following Keynes's socialist approach, Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression was to announce his "New Deal" in 1933, and to embark on government programs such as public works and farm subsidies to keep employment up. But according to Keynesian economists Roosevelt didn't spend enough to bring the nation out of the Great Depression. It would take a war of Roosevelt's making (at least partially) to end the Great Depression. But for the entire 1930s the people paid a high price for the government's experimentation.

The most prosperous industries other than the international banks were illicit gang-related operations that pushed drugs, alcohol, prostitution, gambling, sex trafficking, and other vices. This was an added benefit to anti-Christ's efforts to demoralize and debauch society, driving people further from Christ.

RELIGION

Cristo Redentor

In 1931, further south in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, high on a hill overlooking the city, a statue called *Cristo Redentor* (Portuguese for Christ the Redeemer), begun in 1922, was

completed. Built in the Art Deco style popular during that time, the statue stands 98 feet tall, not including its 26-foot high pedestal. Its arms stretch 92 feet wide. Considered one of the New Seven Wonders of the World, it is located on the 2,300-foot high Corcovado Mountain in the Tijuca Forest National Park. The large edifice dominates the Rio de Janeiro landscape as a protest to the “Godlessness” of the city at the time. Throughout its history the statue has been struck by lightning and damaged several times. Additionally, it has had to undergo periodic restoration not only from lightning strikes, but from fungi and other microorganisms that, along with weather, contribute to its erosion.



One might think anti-Christ would be responsible for attacking an image of Christ, but it appears as if it may be the Lord Himself who is displeased with images that purport to represent Him. God’s Word condemns such images as idolatrous. No image formed by the imagination of man can replicate what Christ (or the “saints”) look like. One can make any representation and call it “Christ,” “Mary,” “Peter,” or whomever. In fact, there are as many different images of these people as there are artists who make them. But iconography has always been profitable for religions of every stripe, including various forms of Christianity. It’s this latter form that pleases anti-Christ as he persuades people to worship before icons rather than in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

In the meantime, the godlessness of Rio de Janeiro has increased over the decades, and “Christ” is forced to overlook that godlessness in stony silence.

Still, were it in the United States, it would have been torn down by now.

SCIENCE

The Splitting of the Atom

In 1932, nuclear physics reached a milestone when British physicist John Cockcroft teamed with Ernest Walton of Ireland to split the atom with protons accelerated to high speed. This would lead to the discovery of nuclear fission in 1938 at the Kaiser Wilhelm Society for Chemistry in Berlin, Germany. Enrico Fermi proposed that when an

atom splits it releases other neutrons, and that under the right conditions those neutrons could continue on to split other atoms in what would be called a “chain reaction.” If each splitting atom caused one released neutron to split one other atom, the chain reaction would become “critical” and would create a steady release of energy. If each fission event released two or more neutrons that went on to split other atoms, the chain reaction was called “supercritical,” and would rapidly generate an almost instantaneous and massive release of energy. This would lead to the development of the atom bomb—one of anti-Christ’s most destructive weapons against mankind.

POLITICS

The Rise of Nazism

1933 saw the rise of another destructive force in the person of Adolf Hitler when he was appointed chancellor of Germany. His appointment by President Paul von Hindenberg was made in the hope of keeping Hitler and his National Socialist Party (Nazis) in check. Hitler had run against the incumbent Hindenberg in the 1932 election for president, receiving 30% of the vote. Hindenberg won with 39%. Because neither received a majority of the votes, a run-off election was conducted in April, 1932. Hitler gained over two million votes in the run-off (36%), but Hindenberg’s one-million-vote increase gave him 53%—enough for him to be elected to another term as president.

Although he opposed Hitler, Hindenberg was swayed by the overwhelming popularity of the man and his Nazi Party. Due to the increasing political instability of the Weimar Republic, Hindenberg dissolved the parliament twice in 1932. As the government slid further into instability, and amidst the rumor that the recently resigned chancellor, Kurt von Schleicher, was plotting to overthrow him, Hindenberg decided that the only way to remove that threat was to appoint Hitler chancellor, which he did in January, 1933.

The next month, Hindenberg issued the Reichstag Fire Decree, in response to the fire that destroyed the Reichstag (Germany’s parliament building) under suspicious, but unclear circumstances on February 27, 1933—six days before the next parliamentary election.

Hitler and his party quickly took advantage of the fire by blaming it on the opposition communists. Thus the Nazis stirred up fear among millions of Germans at the threat of communist terror.

At the same time, Hitler began his pogrom against the Jewish citizens of Germany by proclaiming a one-day boycott against Jewish-owned businesses. Kosher butchering was outlawed and Jewish children began to experience discrimination in Germany’s public schools.

Earlier in life, Hitler was ambivalent toward Jews, not holding any particular hatred of them. It was during and after his imprisonment that he formulated his Aryan purity philosophy. Writing *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) while in

prison, he reflected on Germany's humiliation resulting from restrictions upon the nation suffered under the Versailles Treaty following World War I. He began to view Jews as vermin that were polluting the Aryan blood pool through intermarriage with Germans, and decided that the only solution for lifting Germany to the level of its former glory was to separate the Jews from the rest of German society.

Upon Hindenberg's death on August 2, 1934, Hitler declared himself Führer ("Leader"), bringing an end to the German Republic. Over the course of the next two years, Hitler would greatly increase his power over the German government and military.

On September 15, 1935, Germany enacted the Nuremberg Laws designed to establish racial policy within the Third Reich in an attempt to establish Aryan purity. These laws would "regulate the problems of marriage between 'Aryans' and 'non-Aryans,'" especially targeting Jews by depriving them of their German citizenship and cutting off the Jewish ghettos from the rest of society.

On October 27, over 15,000 Jews, originally from Poland, were expelled from Germany without warning. Forced into boxcars, they were sent by train and dumped at the Polish border. One Jewish family named Grynspan were among the deportees. In retaliation for his parents' poor treatment, 17-year-old Herschel Grynspan shot and killed a member of the German Embassy staff. This event provided Hitler with the perfect propaganda opportunity to incite Germans to "rise in bloody vengeance against the Jews."

On the night of November 9, 1938, a night which would be called *Kristallnacht* ("Broken Glass," referring to broken Jewish shop windows), a coordinated attack on Jews throughout the German Reich began when Nazi storm troopers, members of the *Schutzstaffel* ("Protection Squad"), also known as the SS, with the Hitler Youth, wreaked havoc against Jewish homes, beat and killed Jews and brutalized Jewish women and children. As many as 25,000 men were taken prisoner and sent to concentration camps to be beaten, some being put to death at random.

Realizing the effectiveness of propaganda, Hitler established the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, placing Joseph Goebbels at its head. The objective was to ensure that the Nazi message of racial purity and the German destiny to rule the world would be communicated to the German citizenry through art, theater, music, radio, films, education, and the press, not dissimilar to how the Marxist message is communicated to the masses in the West today. Nazi propaganda films such as *Der Ewige Jude* (*The Eternal Jew*) (1940), contrasted the Nazi view of Jews as subhuman with the Nazi ideal of vigorous, handsome Germans.

With these beginnings, anti-Christ would use Hitler to foment the most destructive course in human history as he sought first to take Europe under his control, with the goal

of establishing a Thousand-Year Reich ("Realm") over the whole world.

Even before declaring himself Führer, Hitler had begun his pogrom to eliminate "undesirables" from German society. This was facilitated through the construction of concentration camps, the first being Dachau, established in March, 1933. In its first year, Dachau housed some 4,800 prisoners, and by 1937 they numbered over 13,000. Initially, the purpose was to hold political opponents of the Nazi regime—German Communists, Social Democrats, and others. In time, other groups of people were interned there such as Roma (Gypsies), Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, asocials (people who couldn't function well in society), and repeat criminals. These were imprisoned under an "emergency decree" proposed by Hitler and approved by Hindenberg. The "Decree for the Protection of the People and the State" suspended the civil rights of German civilians and prohibited the publishing of anti-government materials.

The horrors committed at Dachau and subsequent concentration camps throughout Hitler's reign would take volumes, of which many have been written. For our purposes, we will limit this portion to the design of anti-Christ to rid the earth of as many Jews and Christians as he could through this demi-anti-Christ Adolf Hitler.

A munitions factory during WW I, Dachau was located about 17 kilometers (10 miles) northwest of Munich. It wouldn't be for a number of years that Jews in large numbers would be interned at Dachau and other concentration camps and death camps that sprang up afterwards throughout Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe. Hitler's intention initially was not to kill Jews, but to have them deported to the east, especially Russia and Palestine (working with Zionists [whom he hated] to get around British restrictions on Jewish immigration).

When the logistics of that attempt proved too cumbersome, and at the behest of the Islamic mullahs that allied themselves with Hitler because of their shared hatred of Jews, America, Britain, and France (the nations principally responsible for the defeat of the Ottoman Empire during WWI), it was decided that the Jews must be put to work in concentration camps and, if unable to bear the work load, be put to death along with other undesirables. As a strong German ally, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, convinced Hitler that a Jewish homeland in Palestine would be detrimental to the whole world and establish Jewish power. He stated that it would be better to send them to concentration camps than to Palestine. Later, after the war, the Grand Mufti would deny knowledge of the death camps and that Jews were being exterminated there. This was recently alluded to by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but he was roundly criticized by the world's leftist media.

Hitler was careful not to establish any such camps within Germany's borders so as not to alarm German citizens of the horror that he unleashed upon the "undesirables." By putting the camps in outlying German-occupied areas he was able to largely keep secret his murderous policy. Nazis and their sympathizers have been able to (almost) rightly state, "No Jews were ever put to death in Germany." They have also been able to say that six million Jews were never gassed by the Nazis. (The number of Jews who died under Nazi persecution is in question, but whatever number died as a result of that pogrom, not all were gassed; many died by other means).

The result of Hitler's murderous policies was not only the extermination of millions of Jews, but the resultant sympathy for Jews that for a short time allowed for the world's willingness to tolerate a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

What escapes the attention of historians is the equally large number of other victims besides Jews, who had no advocates such as the Jews had in well-funded Zionism.

Nor do the world's media point to many more victims who perished under the same policies against "undesirables" and political prisoners instigated by Josef Stalin and the Union of Socialist Republics (USSR).

Even as many Jews were killed by various means from accidents to murder under the Nazi machine, God used that horror to bring the Jews into a small portion of the land He promised to the natural descendants of Jacob. This was in line with His preparation for the Lord's return. Prophecies surrounding Jesus' Second Coming require the Jews to occupy Jerusalem at that time.

It is argued by some that the Jews have been abandoned by God for rejecting their Messiah; the "Church" has replaced Israel as the apple of God's eye, and will one day rule in place of Israel in the coming Kingdom of God on earth. This is called replacement theology and is promoted largely by the Reformed churches. The argument rests on the misconception that because Israel once occupied all the land in that promise but lost it in the Babylonian Captivity, there is no more such promise for natural Israel.

But Scripture cannot be broken. Even while Israel was in captivity in Babylon, the prophet Jeremiah wrote:

YHWH, God of Israel, speaks this, saying, "Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you. For, look, the days come" says YHWH, "that I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel and Judah," says YHWH, "and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." (Jeremiah 30:2-3)

Notice that Jeremiah speaks specifically of Israel and Judah; this cannot mean "the Church" which is made of both Jew and Gentile as one new man in Christ, often referred to as "spiritual Israel" but never "spiritual Judah" or "spiritual Israel and Judah."

Clearly, God promised to restore all the land to Israel and Judah that they possessed prior to their captivity. That includes all the land as one possession because before Solomon died Israel and Judah were one nation. Therefore, the restoration will include the city of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 30:2-3 is a *new* promise, made during Judah's captivity in Babylonia to *restore* the natural descendants of Israel and Judah to their entire land. The new possession will be larger than the previous one, but it will encompass the borders occupied by Israel and Judah before their captivities.

This later promise has never been fulfilled. The kingdom of Judah has not existed since the beginning of the Babylonian Captivity, and Israel has never in this age returned to possess all the land promised to their fathers. Nor will they, until the Lord returns to call them back.

Reform theologians fail to recognize that God's plan of redemption foresaw that Israel would reject her Messiah. Did God not know of it from the beginning? Of course He did. Yet He made these promises of a new Israelite kingdom anyway. God is not double-minded.¹

Christian Palestinian sympathizers must recognize this. Although rightly expressing sympathy for the Palestinians (who are victims of the Arab nations even more so than of Israel), they should not rail against what God is doing through the currently anti-Christ Jewish nation.

Christian Zionists must recognize that the modern state of Israel is not the kingdom of Israel; that kingdom will be restored only after Jesus returns. The Christian Zionist penchant to withhold the Gospel from the Jews is anti-Christ. Their attitude of "Israel, right or wrong," is ungodly.

Israel is blinded in part until the time for the Gentiles to be melded into the Kingdom of God comes to an end. They are still largely a rebellious, stiff-necked people—much as are their enemies among the Arab nations, and the anti-Christ minions that control the world system. We, as Christ's disciples, must love both Jews and Arabs, and seek their spiritual welfare through the ministry of the Gospel.

The Great Terror

At the same time Hitler was embarking on his plan of removing undesirables from Germany, Josef Stalin and the Communist Party was conducting a similar pogrom in Russia. The collectivization programs instituted in 1930 resulted in the famine of 1932-33, which led to uncontrolled migration into the cities by peasants seeking survival. Fearing the "social disorder" caused by that scenario, and with the threat of war hanging over Russia, Stalin's perception of threats from within the marginalized population and political enemies was heightened. He began his elimination of opposition within his own Communist Party, many members of which saw his dictatorial stance as detrimental to their cause and to the nation. In 1933 the Party expelled

¹ Albert James Dager, *The Day of Yahweh* (Redmond, WA: Sword Publishers, 2013), pp. 89-90.

some 400,000 members in a purge that at first was benign, but expanded to include arrest, imprisonment, and often execution. Soon the purge was extended to all suspected individuals and groups that did not find favor with Stalin and the Party. Even former Soviet heroes became the target for elimination as even the slightest dissent brought down the wrath of Stalin.

In 1934, Sergei Kirov, a prominent Bolshevik leader who rose to become the head of the Communist Party in Leningrad, was shot and killed by a gunman while in his office. Stalin used the assassination to foment what came to be called the Great Purge, during which some one million people died. The *Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs; KNVD) went into full purge mode and charged former oppositionists (and an ever-growing list of suspected oppositionists) with a list of offenses including treason, terrorism, sabotage, and espionage. Nobody was safe from the purge. Thus, the purge of the Party became a purge against the entire Soviet society, prompting its name: "The Great Terror."

Under Stalin, Jews would become a target for relocation to parts of Siberia in keeping with Stalin's agreement with Nazi Germany's foreign minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop. In order to prove his worth to Hitler and secure a non-aggression pact with Germany, Stalin promised Ribbentrop that he would eliminate "Jewish domination," especially among the intelligentsia.

The Russian Revolution had been greatly aided by the Jewish intelligentsia, but not so much from among the Bolsheviks. There were two revolutionary factions: the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks comprised a large contingent of ethnic Russians with a minority of Jews, while the Mensheviks comprised a large number of Jews with Bundists, followed by Georgians and Ethnic Russians. The Mensheviks (Russian: "One of the Minority"), were members of the non-Leninist wing of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party. The Mensheviks largely opposed Lenin's plan for a party restricted to professional revolutionaries. They were in favor of a party modeled after Western European democratic parties. They were part of the February Revolution (1917), but were not sufficiently united to maintain a strong position. After the Bolshevik Revolution in October, 1917, they were permanently suppressed, and many Mensheviks went into exile. Former Mensheviks remaining in the Soviet Union under Stalin became victims of The Great Terror.

Anti-Christ continued to use "Christians" to kill Jews, albeit as those Russian "Christians" were subject to the atheist-controlled Soviet government.

Nazi-Soviet Pact

In March, 1938, Hitler annexed Austria without a struggle. Secretly holding plans to expand his aggression against all of Europe, he did not want to repeat the mistake Germa-

ny made in World War I of fighting on two fronts. Thus, on August 23, 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact which guaranteed that the two countries would not attack each other. The Soviet Union was awarded land, including the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and eastern Poland. Hitler's advantage with the Pact was to avoid confrontation with Russia when he invaded Poland. Thus, anti-Christ would use Hitler to bring about another worldwide conflagration of Christian nations at war with other Christian nations.

World War II Begins

After suffering so greatly during World War I, the world was weary and willing to do almost anything to prevent another such conflagration. The Sudetenland (the western regions of Czechoslovakia) was largely populated by German-speaking people, and Hitler decided that they should be under his rule. This did not sit well with the Czech army and fortifications were built in anticipation of a German invasion. This defense attempt was known as the Sudeten Crisis.

The threat of war prompted British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain to meet with Hitler in Berchtesgaden on September 15, 1938, and to cede the Sudetenland to Germany. Three days later, French Prime Minister Édouard Daladier did the same. No representatives from the Czech government were invited to the meetings. With no support from England and France, Czechoslovakia acceded to the terms and Hitler's troops were able to walk into the Sudetenland without firing a shot.

On September 22, 1938, Chamberlain again met with Hitler to confirm the agreements. Hitler, wanting a pretext for war, used the Sudeten Crisis to demand not only the annexation of the Sudetenland, but the immediate military occupation of the territories. The Czech army had no time to adapt their defenses to protect the new borders. At the request of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, a conference of the major powers met in Munich on September 29. There, Chamberlain and Daladier met with Hitler and, on September 30, signed the Munich Agreement, agreeing to Mussolini's proposal (actually prepared by Hermann Göring) to allow Hitler to take immediate occupation of the Sudetenland. Again, the Czech government was not a party to the meeting, but fearing Germany's strength it submitted and promised to abide by the agreement.

The Sudetenland's military occupation by Germany was finalized on October 10, 1938 [my birthday, in fact].

On the same day the Munich Agreement was signed, Chamberlain and Hitler signed the Anglo-German Declaration—a nonaggression pact between Great Britain and Germany. This agreement granted Germany the right to build its navy (the *Kriegsmarine*) to a ratio of 35% of the total tonnage of the Royal Navy, which was beyond the limits set by the Treaty of Versailles. With this agreement, England

hoped to limit German expansionism. But Hitler regarded the treaty as the beginning of an alliance against France and the Soviet Union. Returning to England the same day of signing the Munich Agreement, Chamberlain stood outside 10 Downing Street and greeted the crowd of Brits with the following infamous declaration:

My good friends, for the second time in our history, a British Prime Minister has returned from Germany bringing peace with honour. I believe it is peace for our time. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Go home and get a nice quiet sleep.

Less than one year later, in March 1939, Hitler sent his troops to invade the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, annexing a portion, with the remainder turned into the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. The Slovak portion declared its independence from Czechoslovakia and became the Slovak Republic, a satellite state and ally of Nazi Germany. Other portions were annexed by Hungary.

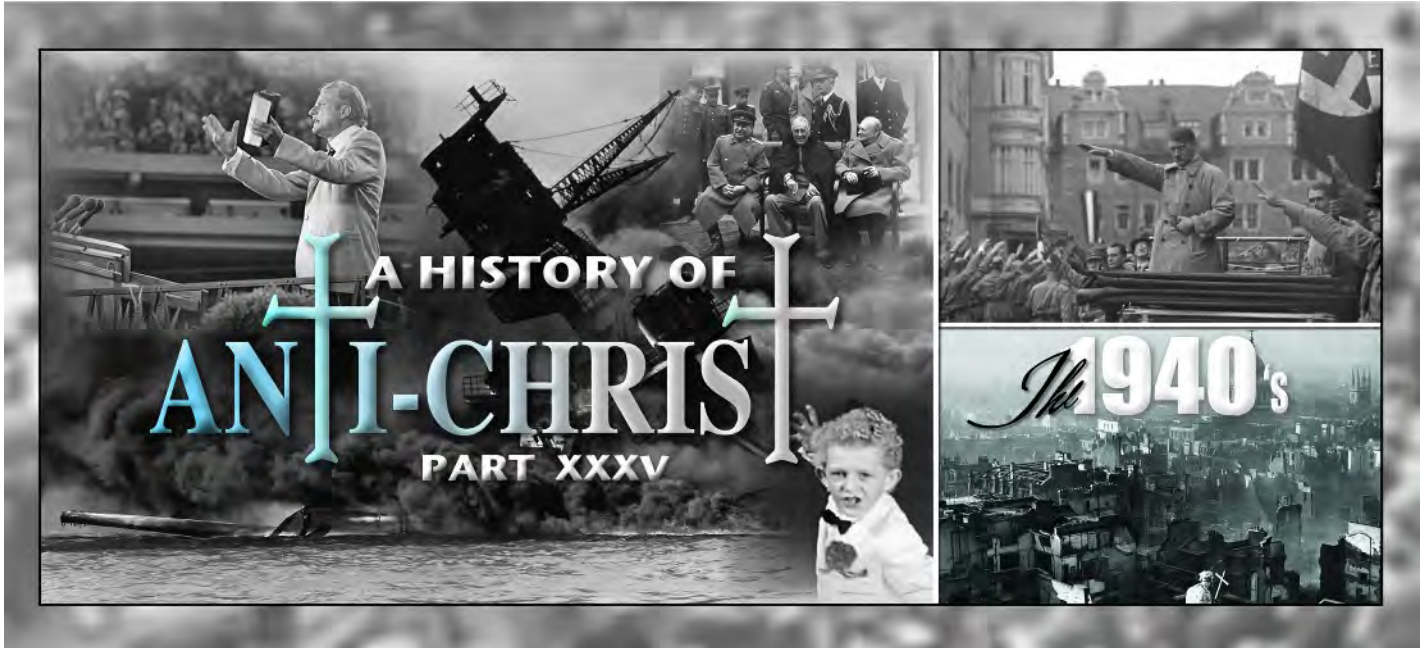
On September 1, 1939, a week after signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Germany's and Slovakia's armies invaded western Poland while the Soviet Union attacked eastern Poland. The Polish government went into exile in Paris, and later London, remaining there until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1990. The invasion of Poland was the "official" start of World War II.

Allies vs. Axis

Even before Hitler began his invasions of Eastern Europe, Japan had already been at war with China. In July 1937, Japan captured the imperial capital of Beijing, leading to the Japanese campaign to invade all of China. Soviet Russia quickly signed a nonaggression pact with China in order to lend materiel support. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's forces waged a strong battle to defend Shanghai, but the Japanese pushed his forces back, moving on to capture the then capital of Nanking in December 1937.

Eventually the intrigue surrounding several nations' international agreements resulted in a convergence of what would be called the "Axis" nations of Germany, Italy, and Japan at war with the "Allied" nations of Britain, France, Canada, and the United States of America and other primarily western nations that would wage World War II.

Anti-Christ would again succeed in causing "Christian" nations to fight one another. But what would come out of World War II would result in increasing ungodliness unveiling on the world stage.



THE SECOND HALF of the 20th century was without doubt the most eventful period in all of history up to that time, both in religion and secular society, beginning with the prelude of the 1940s. Despite (or, more likely because of) Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s socialist New Deal, the United States was still deeply entrenched in the Great Depression. Having had enough of the deprivation, Americans were becoming disenchanted with what they perceived as half-way measures to solve the economic malaise. Foolishly thinking that even more of the same government oversight would fix the problem, many were seriously considering communism as the answer.

Yet rather than prioritizing their budgets to buy the essentials of food, clothing, and shelter, for many there was always enough to support the alcohol, tobacco, gambling, drug, and prostitution industries. In the midst of the Depression, on April 3, 1941, El Rancho Las Vegas, the first casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, opened. It’s no secret that mob money built this Mecca of gambling in the United States, which became known as “Sin City” because of the added attraction of legalized prostitution. The casinos couldn’t rely on only wealthy clientele, but depended on the average citizen to keep their coffers full.

Certainly many were drawn to gambling because of their dire financial straits; the industry counts on the needy who hope to strike it rich, even at the cost of their family’s welfare.

This nation, in which at the time some 95% of its citizens would identify as Christian, was being guided by anti-Christ on the path toward moral degradation even while God continued to bless us according to His inscrutable purposes.

CHRISTIANITY

Due to the impact of radio and the printed media, Christianity in the United States, especially, embarked on the Age of the Evangelist. Although public evangelism

became and still remains prevalent, particularly within Pentecostalism, evangelists are mentioned only three times in Scripture (Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5; Acts 21:8), and only the apostles Philip and Timothy are named as evangelists (Acts 21:8; 2 Timothy 4:5). Also, there are no specific instructions in Scripture on how evangelism should be conducted, whether on a one-to-one basis or in mass meetings, or in the assembly, on street corners, or in public venues; it seems that all methods are okay.

The reason what passes as evangelism exists today is that it is part of the larger “Christian” concept of having “professionals” minister the Gospel, causing average believers to think they are not qualified to do so, just as they believe they are unqualified to teach, pastor, or engage in any other of the five-fold ministries unless they have undergone formal training, preferably at a religious institution’s sanctioned Bible college or seminary.

The word “evangelist” derives from the Greek *euaggelistes*, which denotes “a proclaimer of good news.” It is closely associated with the Greek *aggelos*, which means “messenger,” and is most often translated “angel.” An evangelist is one who proclaims a message of good news, or the Gospel. There is nothing in Scripture to suggest that evangelists must travel outside the assembly to do their work (that is the role of the apostle—one who is sent, which included Philip and Timothy). Yet the tradition of the Christian churches has been to send missionaries whom they *consider* evangelists to spread the doctrines of their particular religious institutions. They do not proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom as much as they proclaim the Gospel of personal salvation coupled with a call to membership in their denominations. The Gospel of personal salvation is part of the Gospel of the Kingdom, but it is not the whole Gospel that the Lord commanded be proclaimed throughout the earth (Matthew 24:14). (See our book, *What is the True Gospel?* [Sword Publishers].)

As good as the intentions of missionaries may be, and although many souls have been brought into the Kingdom through their efforts, anti-Christ has managed to dampen the complete Gospel of the Kingdom through his influence upon Christian religious institutions.

The 1940s saw the rise of evangelistic “crusades” that brought thousands of people to tent meetings and open-air venues to hear the Gospel of personal salvation. Men like Billy Graham focused strictly on personal salvation, while Pentecostal preachers incorporated promises of healing for physical and emotional maladies, as well as poverty.

Marjoe

On January 14, 1944, in Long Beach, California, a baby was born who would become a cause celebre among gullible Christians and seekers of truth. Because he displayed a remarkable speaking ability at an early age, his parents arranged for him to become an ordained preacher who they would take along on what was called the “revival circuit.”

Hugh Marjoe Ross Gortner took the revival circuit by storm, preaching hell fire and damnation under the guidance of his father Vernon, a third-generation evangelical minister. Under his parents’ tutelage he learned how to perform dramatic gestures and emphatic lunges. At four years of age he performed a marriage ceremony attended by the press and photographers from *Life*.



Marjoe practicing his dramatic gestures.

Marjoe (his stage name—a combination of “Mary” and “Joseph”) was taught by his parents how to use money-raising tactics such as selling “holy” articles at revivals, claiming they could be used to heal the sick and dying. Through such tactics his parents raised some three million dollars by his sixteenth birthday. Shortly

after, his father absconded with the money.

Disillusioned, Marjoe left his mother and became a hippie, traveling aimlessly until his early twenties when he decided to go back to the circuit in order to make money. He developed a stage presence modeled after popular rock stars, and would work until he had enough money to live half a year without working. Then he would pick up where he left off, fleecing gullible people with promises of healing and God’s blessings on their finances as they gave to support him.

Many people went forward in response to Marjoe’s theatrics, unaware they were being given some truth with more lies.

In 1971 he gave a final “revival” performance in California, Texas, and Michigan, followed by a film crew for documentarians Howard Smith and Sarah Kernochan.

Backstage, he gave interviews to them, explaining how he and other healing ministers operated to fleece the people. The documentary, *Marjoe*, won the 1972 Academy Award for Best Documentary.

As a result of his exposé, many who had trusted him and his message became disillusioned and rejected the faith they professed under his preaching.

With new-found fame, Marjoe entered the world of entertainment as an actor and musician.

Billy Graham

Billy Graham began as an evangelist for the newly formed Youth for Christ, co-founded by Torrey Johnson and the Canadian evangelist Charles Templeton. In 1947 Graham struck out on his own to begin an outreach with several *Billy Graham Crusades* each year, which continued until his retirement in 2005.

When he scheduled a series of revival meetings in Los Angeles in 1949, Graham attracted the attention of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst who put out the word to his newspaper chain to “Puff Graham.” This led to Graham becoming a national figure with coverage in the wire services and national magazines.

It can be said of Graham that when he stood at the podium he had the spiritual gift of evangelism, or at least the natural talent, to impress perhaps millions of people with the Gospel of personal salvation. Yet away from the podium he has dismayed many believers with the idea that the Gospel must be coupled with social activism, including international efforts against nuclear proliferation and “climate change.” As well, his cooperation with Roman Catholic prelates in funneling Catholics who respond to his message into the Catholic Church has been a source of consternation. Then, too, with his suggestion that Muslims and members of other non-Christian religions worship the same God as believers in Jesus, Graham’s service has been tainted by anti-Christ. But we will leave to our heavenly Father the final judgment on that service.

Franklin Hall

At about the same time Billy Graham was coming on the scene in the mid-40s, several Pentecostal “evangelists” were drawing huge crowds to their campaigns. One of the earliest was Franklin Hall who in the fall of 1946 established a “major fasting and prayer daily revival center” in San Diego, California. Hall was assisted by Jack Walker, father of child evangelist Davillo “Little David” Walker. Hall’s message of fasting as a means to bring about revival and the “restoration” of the “Church” spread throughout the Pentecostal world. Hall’s teachings became increasingly bizarre, eventually centering on the idea of immortalization. He claimed to have achieved a degree of immortalization (what he called “body-felt salvation”) which allegedly affected everything that came in contact with his body. He wore a light colored jacket for



Franklin Hall

seven years which he said had never been cleaned or aerated, but resisted all spots, stains, discoloration, or body odors though worn repeatedly over seven years in travels on 200 airplanes.

Hall dabbled in astrology and American Indian mysticism, as well as other occult practices, including those pertaining to UFOs. In spite of many rambling, occult-laced teachings verbally and in print, Hall found favor among many Pentecostal

leaders of his day because of his claims to heal people of diverse ailments. Out of this emphasis on healing and supernatural manifestations, anti-Christ would soon form a new movement called “Latter Rain” that would take the Pentecostal world by storm.

William Branham

In 1948, William Branham, a Baptist preacher turned Pentecostal, was greatly influenced by Franklin Hall’s booklet, *Atomic Power With God Through Fasting and Prayer*. Branham gained notoriety for his teachings on what he called “God’s Seventh Church Age,” which is supposedly the final move of God before the manifestation of His Kingdom throughout the earth. He claimed that the angels to the seven assemblies in Revelation were men who appeared at various times throughout “Church” history bringing new revelations that led “the Church” into progressive stages of sanctification. As indicated on his tombstone, Branham was thought to be the angel to the “Church” of Laodicea—the end-time “Church.”

Branham denied believing in oneness doctrine, but he had his own form of oneness doctrine that defined God as one person who manifested Himself as three different “attributes”: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, rather than three persons, the Son and the Holy Spirit having proceeded from the Father—of the same nature and essence as the Father. Like Hall, Branham delved into the occult, and believed that the Word of God was given in three forms: the Zodiac, the Egyptian pyramids, and the written Scriptures.

Due to early childhood influences, Branham had an aversion toward women, which led to his doctrine of the “Serpent Seed.” He taught that when Eve stated “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat,” she meant that the serpent had seduced her sexually, resulting in the birth of Cain. Since then, he believed, evil has been passed from generation to generation through women, who keep the seed of the serpent alive in the earth.

Space doesn’t allow for a full accounting of Branham’s unscriptural and occult foundation to his teachings, but anti-Christ was able to use him mightily to bring about the stirrings within Pentecostalism for what he professed was the latter rain new move of God that would bring about the Kingdom of God on earth through the perfection of God’s people. Eventually the teaching came about that the perfected saints would wreak vengeance upon the ungodly through supernatural means in order to bring about righteousness in the earth even as Jesus remained in Heaven. This came to be known as “Kingdom Theology,” or “Dominion Theology.”

The Sharon Brethren

In the fall of 1947, two former pastors for the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, George Hawtin and Percy G. Hunt, joined in an independent outreach which had originally been started by Herrick Holt, pastor of the North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Church of the Foursquare Gospel. That outreach became Sharon Orphanage and Schools. Holt had been teaching that God was about to do a “new thing” in accordance with the prophecy in Isaiah 43:18-19.

The leaders and work at Sharon were greatly influenced by Franklin Hall and William Branham. As Sharon’s influence spread among Pentecostals, particularly in the United States and Canada, the phenomenon known as the Latter Rain Movement developed with an emphasis on supernatural power, healing, and signs and wonders. From the Latter Rain Movement sprang a number of famous “healing evangelists” such as John G. Lake, Oral Roberts, T.L. Osborn, Rex Humbard, etc. Although the Latter Rain Movement is believed to have ended, its influence is strongly evident today in all the so-called “healing ministries” that continue to proliferate and influence Christians all over the world, including Benny Hinn, the Kansas City Prophets, the Toronto Blessing, the Brownsville Revival, and virtually all signs-and-wonders hoaxes including John Wimber’s Vineyard Christian Fellowships (although since Wimber’s death some Vineyards have distanced themselves from some of the more bizarre elements of that movement).

All such movements, while claiming to glorify Jesus, have their roots in the bizarre, unscriptural teachings and practices of the Latter Rain Movement which, in turn, can be traced to William Branham and Franklin Hall. Through these, within a few short decades, anti-Christ was able to turn the innocent beginnings of Pentecostalism into a virtual sideshow of signs-and-wonders chicanery. Many Christians became convinced that they had to be touched by some popular “healer” in order to receive a blessing from God. They forgot that where two or three are gathered in His name, He is in their presence (Matthew 18:20).

Yes, the primary context of Matthew 18:20 has to do with discipline in the assembly. But if the Lord is in the presence of two or three in that circumstance, is He not present in all circumstances? Yet many Christians are led to believe they must travel to one venue or another to “find Jesus.”

Agnes Sanford

In 1947, a different kind of “healer” came on the scene with the publication of her book, *Healing Light*. Agnes Mary White Sanford combined Jungian psychology, occult healing theories, and Scripture which she incorporated into her “inner healing” philosophy. That book, and subsequent others, took the Pentecostal (and later the charismatic) world by storm. (See our special report *Inner Healing*.)

Where is God in all this?

That’s not to say that God hasn’t worked through these things; He is still sovereign and will use evil to bring about good according to His purposes (Romans 8:28). But that does not excuse the evil, or the penchant to follow or justify that evil because of any good that results. Often God will allow evil to proliferate, even in His name, in order to drive those who reject His truth as the only truth further into their deception.

(For an in-depth understanding of these teachers and movements see my book, *Vengeance is Ours: The Church in Dominion* [Sword Publishers 1990]).

These movements, and the teachings of the men and women associated with them, proliferated through word-of-mouth testimonies and promotion from Pentecostal pulpits. Radio ushered in the age of electronic evangelism, not so much by mainstream Christian denominations as by Pentecostal preachers who further influenced Christians in the West. With the later advent of television, their aberrant theology has further expanded until today. They do not glorify the Father or the Son as much as they do the Holy Spirit, which is contrary to Scripture:

“When He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth, because He will not speak from Himself, but whatever He may hear He will say. And He will tell you of things to come. He will glorify Me because He will receive from Me and will tell it to you. Everything the Father has is Mine. Therefore I said that He will receive from Me and will tell it to you.” (John 16:13-15)

Most people must see to believe. And if there are any miracles, signs, and wonders, whether from God or from other sources (occult philosophies also claim such), when the miracles cease, “belief” ceases as well.

The World Council of Churches

The student and lay movements of the 19th century and the 1910 Edinburgh world missionary conference gave impetus to a move toward an ecumenical fellowship of churches that was prompted by a 1920 encyclical from the Orthodox Synod of Constantinople. Leaders from more than 100 churches voted in 1937-38 to found a World Council of Churches (WCC), but the outbreak of World War II delayed its inauguration.

Although elements that would form the WCC were working for ecumenical unity and social services since 1938, the WCC was not formally inaugurated until its First Assembly ten years later in 1948 with 147 member churches.

Over the decades, anti-Christ presented the faulty premise of unity among Christian institutions as unity in the Holy Spirit among believers. Eventually the WCC would engage in ecumenical fellowship with Roman Catholicism. Supposing that unity among institutions was God’s idea of the unity of believers, the WCC has devolved into a liberal social justice organization where the purity of the Gospel has been relegated to the back seat, if it even exists at all in its pure form anywhere within the institution. Today it is nothing more than a “Christian” United Nations focusing on social action without regard to doctrinal purity.

WORLD WAR II

Although much of the Third World remained largely unchanged during the 1940s, Europe and the United States were greatly impacted by change, as were Russia, Japan, and China, primarily because of their roles in World War II and its aftermath. Societal upheaval occurred especially in the United States because of the nation’s new-found role as the greatest superpower among all nations from all time. Yet there was much more to the picture than the masses were allowed to know.

It is disconcerting to even think of the possibility that both world wars, the rise of Bolshevism in Russia, the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the seizure of power by Adolf Hitler in Germany, were orchestrated by an international cabal of financiers largely made up of the Wall Street financial elite (aka the Eastern Liberal Establishment). This led to the establishment of socialism in the three major continents—Soviet socialism in Russia and Eastern Europe, New Deal socialism in the United States, and National Socialism (Nazism) in Germany. Until now, Roosevelt’s New Deal socialism has not been as devastating as the socialism in Russia and Germany (and other nations to which it has spread). This is only because the American free enterprise system coupled with a faith in Jesus Christ among a large portion of the population have until recently been bulwarks against the more radical forms of socialism.

The idea that certain elements of Wall Street and the U.S. government working to pull the United States and Europe into a war that would adversely affect their social and moral status at the cost of millions of innocent lives suggests that citizens of America and Europe have been dupes of treasonous actions on the part of super capitalism and their governments (including the United States Government) at the highest levels. Yet history has proven that the outcome of these and related intrigues in international politics have led us to where we are today: on the verge of a global super government that will rise as the basis of the anti-Christ’s kingdom.

When we speak of Wall Street's role in the rise of Hitler, we do not mean the vastly major elements of Wall Street businesses, but a cabal of supranational financial and industrial corporations that manipulate the governments and economies of the world.

A full treatise on the global conspiracy's fomenting of World War II and its attendant evils is not possible in this short space. The best I can offer is an outline and sparse list of some of the entities involved.

The Financial Cabal

As early as the 1920s, shortly after Germany's humiliation at the hands of the Allies following World War I, German industrialists with ties to the United States were at work to rebuild the German Wehrmacht, contrary to terms of the Versailles Treaty. American financiers and industrialists, working with the international banking community, supplied the necessary financial aid and technology for Germany's rearmament largely through the German-American chemical giant I.G. Farben.

A 1933 report from the Commercial Attaché with the U.S. Embassy in Berlin reported to the State Department, "In two years Germany will be manufacturing oil and gas enough out of soft coal for a long war. The Standard Oil of New York is furnishing millions of dollars to help."

The Standard Oil Company New Jersey transferred to I.G. Farben the hydrogenation patents and technology to produce synthetic oil. Control of synthetic oil output in Germany was held by the I.G. Farben subsidiary, Braunkohle-Benzin A.G., which was created in 1926 with Wall Street financial assistance.

Historians generally attribute the buildup of Hitler's Third Reich to the "accidental" help of American and multi-national corporate and financial institutions who had no idea of or design in Hitler's rise to power. But the evidence suggests a considerable degree of premeditation on the part of the heads of those institutions.

American-born Canadian historian Gabriel Morris Kolko stated:

The business press [in the United States] was aware, from 1935 on, that German prosperity was based on war preparations. More important, it was conscious of the fact that German industry was under the control of the Nazis and was being directed to serve Germany's rearmament, and the firm mentioned most frequently in this context was the giant chemical empire, I.G. Farben.¹

German cartels in the United States received profitable loans through the reparations commissions, the Dawes Plan and later the Young Plan, approved and sponsored by the U.S. Government, and engineered by central banks in the

¹ Gabriel Kolko, "American Business and Germany, 1930-1941," *The Western Political Quarterly*, Volume XV, 1962, p. 715.

U.S. controlled by the Federal Reserve System (a private banking system that controls U.S. financial policy). Central banks of other nations also contributed to the scheme.

Who were the New York international bankers who formed these reparations commissions? Historian Antony C. Sutton explains:

The 1924 Dawes Plan experts from the United States were banker Charles Dawes and J.P. Morgan representative Owen Young, who was president of the General Electric Company. Dawes was chairman of the Allied Committee of Experts in 1924. In 1929 Owen Young became chairman of the Committee of Experts, supported by J.P. Morgan himself, with alternates T.W. Lamont, a Morgan partner, and T.N. Perkins, a banker with Morgan associations. In other words, the U.S. delegations were purely and simply, as [historian Carroll] Quigley has pointed out, J.P. Morgan delegations using the authority and seal of the United States to promote financial plans for their own pecuniary advantage. As a result, as Quigley puts it, the "international bankers sat in heaven, under a rain of fees and commissions."

The German members of the Committee of Experts were equally interesting. In 1924 Hjalmar Schacht was president of the Reichsbank and had taken a prominent role in organization work for the Dawes Plan; so did German banker Carl Melchior. One of the 1928 German delegates was A. Voegler of the German steel cartel Stahlwerke Vereinigte. In brief, the two significant countries involved — the United States and Germany — were represented by the Morgan bankers on one side and Schacht and Voegler on the other, both of whom were key characters in the rise of Hitler's Germany and subsequent German rearmament. Finally, the members and advisors of the Dawes and Young Commissions were not only associated with New York financial houses but, as we shall later see, were directors of firms within the German cartels which aided Hitler to power.²

Owen Young was the major financial backer for Franklin D. Roosevelt in the United European venture which sought to take advantage of Germany's hyperinflation in 1925.

Hitler's Minister of Economics for Germany, Hjalmar Horace Greeley Schacht, and Nazi industrialist Fritz Thyssen, both credited the 1928 Young Plan (successor to the Dawes Plan) with bringing Hitler to power.

Concerning Schacht's cooperation with Young and the J.P. Morgan interests as part of a vast system of cooperation and international alliance, American historian Carroll Quigley, professor of history at Georgetown University, stated:

² Antony C. Sutton, *Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler* (Cutchogue, NY: Buccaneer Books, 1976), pp. 24-25.

...the powers of financial capitalism had another far-reaching aim, nothing less than to create a world system of financial control, in private hands, able to dominate the political system of each country and the economy of the world as a whole. This system was to be controlled in a feudalist fashion by the central banks of the world acting in concert, by secret agreements arrived at in frequent private meetings and conferences. The apex of the system was to be the Bank for International Settlements [B.I.S.] in Basle, Switzerland, a private bank owned and controlled by the world's central banks which were themselves private corporations. Each central bank, in the hands of men like Montagu Norman of the Bank of England, Benjamin Strong of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, Charles Rist of the Bank of France, and Hjalmar Schacht of the Reichsbank, sought to dominate its government by its ability to control Treasury loans, to manipulate foreign exchanges, to influence the level of economic activity in the country, and to influence cooperative politicians by subsequent economic rewards in the business world.

In each country the power of the central bank rested largely on its control of credit and money supply.³

It is no coincidence that the banks involved in the B.I.S. were the central banks of the four major powers on both sides during World War II: Britain, France, the U.S., and Germany.

Major players among the international bankers were the Jewish banking family, the Warburgs. From 1933 until 1938, Max Warburg, a son of Moritz Warburg, the director of the Warburg Hamburg, Germany, bank served on the Nazi Reichsbank, reporting directly to Hitler's finance minister, Hjalmar Schacht. In 1938 he immigrated to the United States. Prior to World War II, he served on the board of directors of Interessen Gemeinschaft Farben (I.G. Farben), the giant German chemical firm that produced Zyklon B gas used in Nazi internment camps. Zyklon B, an insecticide, was used to kill lice and stop typhus disease in the camps, and it is disputed whether it was later used as a means to exterminate prisoners at death camps. However, the Kilgore Committee Report of 1942 accused all I.G. Farben board members of having full knowledge that Zyklon B was being used to murder civilians in death camps, but had no intent to halt its production, or at least its distribution to the Nazi genocide effort.

Max's brother Paul Warburg served on the board of directors for I.G. Farben's American subsidiary, which was also associated with Standard Oil. After the war, all board members of I.G. Farben were convicted of war crimes except Paul Warburg. In fact, only the German principals in the companies involved in aiding Hitler were indicted, while no American was.

³ Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope, A History of the World in our Time* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), p. 324.

There are a number of conspiracy theories involving the international banking community in which certain prominent banking families are accused of fomenting wars on behalf of the Illuminati's goal of world domination. That includes one of the most famous families, the Rothschilds. One can find many theories in books and on the Internet accusing the Rothschilds of these nefarious deeds. Most merely restate what has been stated before, but there is little empirical evidence to place the "smoking gun" in the Rothschilds' hands. It is true that the Rothschild bank helped finance Britain in its war against Napoleon, but that's about it. There is no empirical evidence linking them to Hitler. Evidence suggests that family members had different opinions regarding Germany's Fuhrer.

For example, some supported Zionism, while others opposed the creation of a Jewish state. Lord Victor Rothschild was against granting asylum or helping Jewish refugees escape Hitler's pogrom during World War II. On the other side, Walter Rothschild (2nd Baron Rothschild) was the addressee of the Balfour Declaration to the Zionist Federation, which led to the establishment of the Jewish state in 1948.

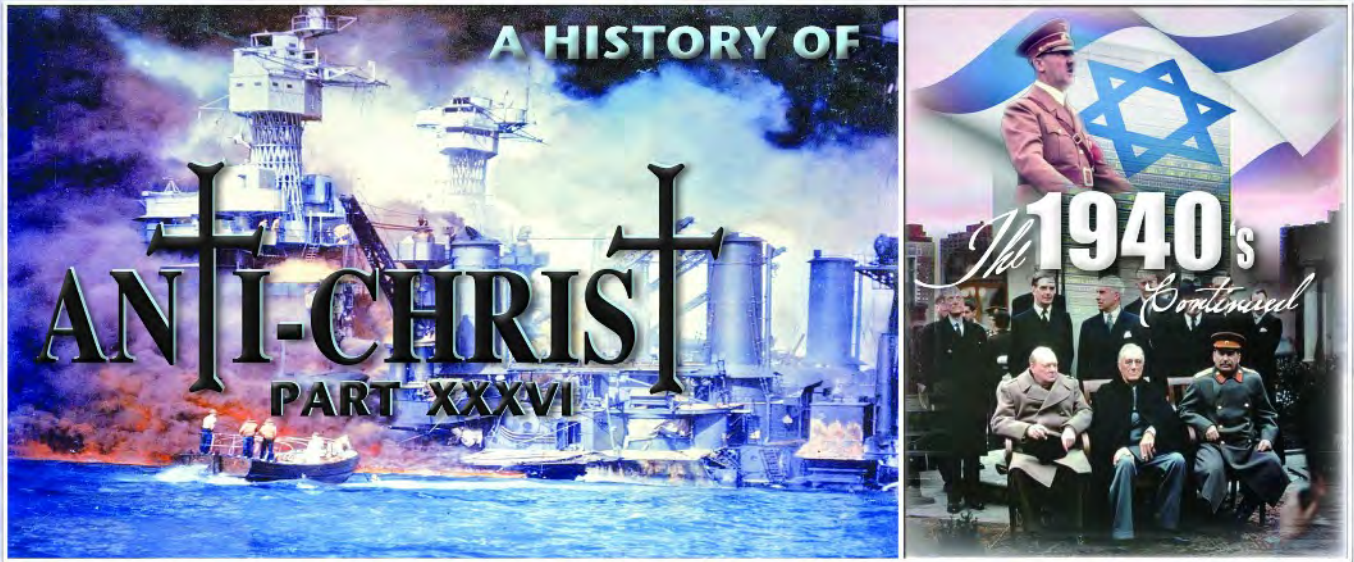
It well may be that elements of the Rothschild family were complicit in fomenting World War I and World War II, at least to some degree, but unlike the Warburgs no empirical evidence has ever been uncovered. Most "evidence" is anecdotal.

However, the idea that several international banks are owned or controlled by Jews has been fodder for anti-Semitic sentiments that blame all the world's evils on "the Jews." The truth is that many international bankers are not Jewish, and in fact are comprised of Asians, Europeans, and Arabs, among others.

That doesn't diminish that certain Jews make up a large segment of the conspirators to inculcate a global government. In 1917, many Bolsheviks were Jews. Soviet communism would be the next step toward globalism.

As for American-owned supranational corporations that aided Hitler by helping build Germany's war machine to one degree or another, government documents and historical research have shown that the following were complicit: General Electric, Henry Ford, General Motors, DuPont, to name just a few. They have been part of the military-industrial complex of which Dwight D. Eisenhower warned.

The most nefarious conspiracy, which has been proven via historical documentation, is that of Franklin D. Roosevelt striving to implicate the United States in the war in Europe according to a promise he had made to Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill. To close this installment we will leave it that Pearl Harbor was no surprise to Roosevelt or Churchill, and there was no legitimate reason for the United States to enter the European Theater against Germany. Just because Hitler was prompted to declare war on the U.S. didn't mean we had to take the bait. ❖



IN OUR PREVIOUS installment we addressed the international financial interests that brought Adolph Hitler to power in Germany. That led to the Second World War, beginning in 1939 with the invasion of Poland on September 1. This war, the most destructive in history, was inevitable; it was an outgrowth of the impossible terms of surrender imposed upon Germany through the Versailles Treaty (1919)—terms that led to the destruction of the German economy, resulting in hyperinflation, poverty, and a sense of despair among the German people. After fifteen years of suffering humiliation and privation, Germany was ready to accept the socialist programs and military buildup under Hitler in desperate hope that a strong leader (*Fuhrer*) would raise the nation to its once prosperous level. Through much political intrigue in the early 1930s, Hitler would finally become Chancellor of Germany in 1933. Five years later, in 1938, he would lead the restored Wehrmacht (the German army) on a new campaign to assert Germany’s supremacy over the nations of the world. Anti-Christ’s most destructive program against Europe would prove the beginning of the end for Christianized Western Civilization, even though it would take over 60 years after the war to realize, as we today face the peril of Islamic hordes invading the West.

The year 1940 would prove a difficult period for Western Europe, first with the invasions of Denmark and Norway in April, followed by France, Belgium, and Holland in May. Britain was already gearing up for the expected conflict with Germany, instituting rationing for her citizens.

Although possessing greater numbers of military personnel, Britain was no match for the well-disciplined and effective German tank commands on land, and she faced considerable challenge by the Luftwaffe in the air. Britain’s attempt to aid France would end in humiliating defeat, with over 226,000 British and 110,000 French troops having to

be rescued from the English Channel port of Dunkirk by a motley crew of vessels, ranging from pleasure boats to Navy destroyers. The success of the Dunkirk operation in view of the superior German forces might easily be considered a mercifully directed miracle by God.

France was forced to sign an armistice with Germany, with the installation of the puppet French Vichy government in control of parts of southern and eastern France, and Germany in control of the nation as a whole. Then Hitler turned his attention to Britain, planning to use his Luftwaffe to destroy British air power, which would make his conquest of the island nation much easier.

The Battle of Britain lasted from July to September, during which time the Germans switched their plans from attacking factories and airfields to attacking major cities. The British had a superior number of airplanes, and were able to narrowly prevent the Germans from gaining air victory which they needed in order to bring the British to their knees. This did not stop the Germans, but it managed to postpone their plans for invasion. Britain, the last significant bastion of Christianity in Western Europe, was spared—at least for the time being.

Over the course of the war, the German bombing of Britain’s cities claimed some 40,000 lives. More important, it set the course of modern warfare from battlefield conflict among military personnel to the destruction of civilian infrastructure and life—a throwback to the ancient barbarism that characterized warfare among tribal groups of the past. The “civilized” rules of war developed over centuries within Western Europe had for a time prevented or at least discouraged the involving of non-combatants in the conflicts between nations, although even in World War I some aerial bombing of cities was practiced. That practice was considerably heightened during World War II.

Yet contrary to the understanding of most, Germany was not the first to engage in the bombing of cities during World War II. That “honor” fell to Britain, who first launched air attacks against strategic targets in German cities in 1939, shortly after declaring war on Germany. It was after the victory over France that the Luftwaffe turned its attention to bombing British cities, including London. In retaliation, British bomber raids in and around Greater Berlin were conducted, which led to increased raids on British cities by the Germans. Of course, each side blamed the other for its “barbaric” conduct.

In 1941, Hitler (foolishly?) decided to break his non-aggression pact with Russia by first taking Sebastopol at the end of October and then attacking Moscow at the end of the year. The timing couldn’t have been more disastrous for the German troops who were rendered impotent by the extreme conditions of the Russian winter.

In the Pacific, Japan launched its “surprise” attack against Pearl Harbor early on the Sunday morning of December 7, 1941. War had officially come to the United States of America, one of anti-Christ’s foremost targets for destruction because of its predominantly Christian populace.

Contrary to conventional belief, the attack was not unexpected. Nor was Japan especially anxious to go to war with the United States; it had taken over northern (Vichy) French Indochina in 1940 in an attempt to prevent the movement of Chinese military supplies over the railroad lines. On July 21, 1941, Japan came to occupy southern Indochina. Two days later, the U.S., Britain, and the Netherlands responded with an oil embargo, which historians say was one of the immediate causes of the Pacific War.

Soon after, American intelligence intercepted and decoded a Japanese Foreign Ministry message to its diplomats abroad stating that Japan could not endure commercial and economic relations with the countries led by England and the United States. In the communiqué, it was stated:

Our Empire must immediately take steps to break asunder this ever-strengthening chain of encirclement which is being woven under the guidance and with the participation of England and the United States, acting like a cunning dragon seemingly asleep. This is why we decided to obtain military bases in French Indo-China and to have our troops occupy that territory....¹

The Franklin D. Roosevelt administration was fully aware that Japan was a military threat to the U.S., yet it did nothing to prepare for that threat. It was left to Admiral Husband Kimmel, who, acting on his own initiative, had his woefully limited resources on the ready at all times, even while in the dark about the exact attack plans. Knowing the vulnerability of the fleet, Kimmel had the most important bases for the

Pacific Fleet’s ability to recover from an attack—its formidable aircraft carriers—out of port and on maneuvers at various times. He had on numerous occasions asked for Army and Navy increases in personnel and materiel to protect against an expected attack, but had been repeatedly refused.

Over the previous two years, U.S. cryptanalysts had cracked hundreds of Japanese codes, including some requesting intelligence on Pearl Harbor from espionage agents on the island, but (it seems) they were never followed up.

Historians generally attribute to FDR ignorance of the coming attack, yet it seems incredulous that with so many decrypted Japanese messages regarding an attack against the U.S., he would have been taken by such surprise. On the evening of December 6, 1941, Roosevelt was in serious conversation with one of his closest friends and White House boarder, the communist Harry Hopkins, when the first thirteen parts of a fourteen-part Japanese transmission were handed to him by a young Navy Lieutenant, Lester R. Schulz. After reading the message, Roosevelt turned to Hopkins and said, “This means war.”

It is important that we digress a bit to address the role Harry Hopkins played in the Roosevelt administration. As Roosevelt’s closest advisor, Hopkins was one of the architects of Roosevelt’s socialist New Deal. He lived at the White House for some three years as a constant companion and inspiration for Roosevelt. Hopkins was the leading American official dealing with the Soviet Union during World War II, working with Soviet officials of the highest rank, including Stalin. At a 1943 photo shoot for the Tehran Conference participants, he can be seen standing just behind Stalin’s right shoulder.



Harry Hopkins at Tehran, partially visible in upper-left corner.

As the leading decision maker for the Lend Lease Program, Hopkins gave top priority to the Soviet Union over the objections of Republican lawmakers.

The U.S. Liaison for Lend Lease, Major George Racey Jordan, testified of Hopkins’s WW II espionage before the

¹ *The Pacific War Online Encyclopedia*, s.v., “French Indochina.”

House Committee on Un-American Activities in December, 1949, accusing him of passing not only nuclear secrets to the USSR, but the plans and material (Uranium 234) necessary to build their first atomic bomb. But Democrats dismissed his testimony, accusing him of fabricating his account. In 1952, Jordan's book, *From Major Jordan's Diaries*, was published. In it, he delineated Hopkins's treason and that of Harry Dexter White and Alger Hiss, two other communists in the White House during the Harry S. Truman years. Jordan's claims were verified in testimony before a congressional committee led by then Senator Richard M. Nixon.

Although initially eager to help the USSR with Lend Lease, supposing it was necessary to aid an ally, Jordan became disillusioned as revealed in this statement from his book, *From Major Jordan's Diaries*:

I went into the Army as a businessman in my forties and a veteran of World War I. From the First, as my story shows, I worked wholeheartedly on behalf of the Russians because, like everyone else, I considered it my duty to do so. That they were satisfied with my efforts is indicated by the fact that it was Colonel Kotikov, head of the Russian mission at Great Falls, who requested my promotion to Major. But the tremendous volume of Lend-Lease material going through under "diplomatic immunity," the infiltration of Soviet agents through the Pipeline, the shipments of nonmilitary supplies and even military secrets, were more than I could stomach. I finally protested through proper channels, first in Great Falls, and then in Washington; nothing happened. This was in 1944, while I was still in the Army.

Jordan was then, and continues to be, vilified by the leftist media.

Additionally, mainstream historians still regard Hopkins as nothing more than a liberal pro-American activist. This in spite of the fact that in 1992 British intelligence smuggled out of Russia one Vasili Mitrokhin, a KGB archivist who had for years copied and secreted copies under the floor of his country house KGB documents that revealed the names and activities of Soviet secret agents all over the world during and after World War II. In 1999 a book revealing the contents of many of those documents was published, titled *The Sword and the Shield: the Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB*. The book is authored by Christopher Andrew,¹ a Cambridge University Fellow, with Vasili Mitrokhin.

Accounts of the revelations in the book have been addressed by major mainstream media outlets including the

¹ Andrew is Professor of Modern and Contemporary History, former Chairman of the History Faculty at Cambridge University, Official Historian of the Security Service (MI5), Honorary Air Commodore of 7006 (VR) Intelligence Squadron in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, Chairman of the Cambridge Intelligence Seminar, and former Visiting Professor at Harvard, Toronto, and Canberra. He is also co-editor of *Intelligence and National Security*, and a regular presenter of BBC Radio and TV documentaries.

New York Times, *The Washington Post*, CBS's *60 Minutes*, and ABC's *Nightline*. Although the media giants covered many of the stories as credible accounts from Mitrokhin's documents, none addressed the role that Harry Hopkins played as a Soviet agent while acting as Roosevelt's closest friend and most influential advisor.

As early as 1990, before the revelation of Mitrokhin's documents, Christopher Andrew had reported this in his book, *KGB: The Inside Story*, based on information given him by Oleg Gordievsky, a former high-level KGB officer who had also been smuggled out of the Soviet Union by British Intelligence.

The evidence against Hopkins given through the KGB documents held by Mitrokhin confirm Major Jordan's claim that he witnessed the shipment of Uranian 234, necessary to build the USSR's first atomic bomb, through the Lend Lease Program. When Jordan contacted the Truman White House, he was told to let the shipments go through.

Interestingly, in spite of all the evidence against Hopkins, Andrew paints him as an "unconscious rather than a conscious agent." Knowing the intrigue behind international politics, to indict Hopkins as a conscientious traitor would also indict Roosevelt and Truman as at the least, dupes, and at the worst, conscientious traitors themselves. That would not sit well with the U.S. Government that is very adept at obfuscating truth and engaging in outright lies to protect its history and reputation. Many presidents, Republicans and Democrats alike, insist that they are committed to telling the truth to the American people. That, in itself, is a lie.

George W. Bush's Justice Department argued before the U.S. Supreme Court that the government has the right "to give out false information...incomplete information and even misinformation" whenever it deems this necessary. Arthur Sylvester, a Defense Department official under John F. Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis, stated, "It's inherent in [the] government's right, if necessary, to lie to save itself."

Can a nation trust that God will bless it when its elected leaders lie, not just to protect the nation, but to protect themselves from public scrutiny?

Given that U.S. intelligence spurned Mitrokhin's documents as "possible forgeries," leaving it to British Intelligence to bring them to light, who knows how much duplicity continues to exist in the U.S. government?

Not knowing Andrew, I can only speculate that perhaps to indict Hopkins as a traitor, even at this late date, might bring down upon him the wrath of the powers that be. Fear through intimidation can work wonders. Even so, it's amazing that this information has even been brought to light.

Hopkins was all for America to become involved in World War II. There is no doubt that it would have been not only in Britain's interests, but the Soviet Union's.

Regardless of Roosevelt's strong desire to involve America in the war, he was up against public opinion which was equally strong against the idea. He confided to Hopkins that the U.S. could not strike the first blow, but certainly if the U.S. were attacked by Germany or one of its allies, public opinion could be turned.

I recall a *London Daily Telegraph* from that era where the entire British Parliament was shocked by the attack on Pearl Harbor, and only Churchill did not seem surprised.

Whether or not Roosevelt and Churchill were fully aware of Japan's plans, anti-Christ used them to embroil America in another world war pitting Christian nations against one another. In the process of conducting that war, as in all wars, Christians are compelled to perform acts contrary to Scripture, becoming less humane and more brutal. As well, the moral fabric of the nation suffers as young men and women are thrust far from home and placed in compromising situations. And the outcome of all wars is a push to convince people to surrender their sovereignty to international governance, desiring peace and safety above personal freedom.

Yet in spite of these evils, one must be grateful for the military personnel who stand guard over the nation. It is a great sorrow that they are too often pawns in the game of government, supranational capitalism, and satanic secret forces that rule in the affairs of men both in the natural and the supernatural realms.

The Second World War saw the greatest destruction of military and civilian infrastructure and loss of life than any conflict before or since. Of the 1940 world population of some 2.3 billion souls, some 3-4% (estimates range from 50-80 million civilian and military directly and indirectly) were killed from war and war-related injuries, diseases, and famines.

The war in Europe ended the night of May 8, 1945, after Russian troops took Berlin as U.S. and French troops stood outside the city, forbidden by the American government from entering first. Under the terms of agreements set at the Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences between Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, the USSR was to be awarded after the war, significant parts of Eastern Europe and Germany, including the city of Berlin. General George Patton determined to take Berlin, but he was denied fuel for his tanks, stalling his command some distance from the city.

The result of the Roosevelt/Truman duplicity in granting Josef Stalin the prizes he demanded was decades of communist tyranny in the areas occupied by the USSR. Under the atheistic dominance of Soviet Communism, faith in Christ was severely persecuted, with untold numbers of Christians murdered, tortured, and deprived of civil rights. As well, Jews also suffered under Soviet Communism, but not those at the top of the Communist Party elite.

Anti-Christ's pogrom against Christians and Jews worsened under the Cold War as leaders in the West wrung their hands in feigned futility.

On the morning of August 6, 1945, The *Enola Gay*, an American B-29 bomber, dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima the first atomic bomb used in warfare. Three days later, another atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, prompting the unconditional surrender of Japan to Allied forces, and ending the war in the Pacific theater.

The deaths of Japanese civilians in just the two atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are conservatively estimated at 135,000 and 50,000 respectively.

At such a horrific price, those bombings brought an end to the war in the Pacific, concluding World War II. It has often been debated whether or not the bombings were really necessary, with the pro-side insisting that they saved hundreds of thousands of American soldiers' lives. Only our heavenly Father knows for certain.

THE UNITED NATIONS

On August 15, 1941, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill drafted the Atlantic Charter at the Atlantic Conference (code-named *Riviera*) in secret aboard the British battleship HMS Prince of Wales in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland. The public was told that Roosevelt was on a fishing trip.

Although the U.S. would not enter the war until almost four months later, the Atlantic Charter would serve as a statement of goals and aims of the Allied powers in regard to the war and the post-war world. The goals of the Charter were based on international cooperation among the Allied Powers (which at the time excluded the USSR, which had entered into a non-aggression pact with Germany). Those goals included no territorial annexation; no territorial changes made against the wishes of the people; self-determination for all nations; restoration of self-governance; reduction of trade restrictions; global cooperation for better economic and social conditions; freedom from fear and want; freedom of the seas; abandonment of the use of force; disarmament of aggressor nations. The Atlantic Charter also bound the U.S. to support Britain in the war, and formed the basis for the "Declaration by United Nations."

In a meeting at the White House on December 29, 1941, there was drafted a document outlining Franklin D. Roosevelt's plans for a replacement organization for the defunct League of Nations. That document, "Declaration by United Nations," was drafted by Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Roosevelt's closest advisor, the secret Soviet agent Harry Hopkins. On New Years Day, 1942, Roosevelt, Churchill, Maxim Litvinov of the USSR, and T.V. Soong of China, signed the Declaration. The next day, representatives of 22 other nations added their signatures.

Roosevelt had first coined the term "United Nations" to describe the Allied nations at war with the Axis Powers. The

first official use of the term was at the signing of the Declaration, which would later be known as The United Nations Declaration.

At Roosevelt's insistence, a major addition to the provisions in the Atlantic Charter to be included in the Declaration by United Nations was the guarantee of religious freedom.

Three years later from April 25, 1945 to June 26, 1945, 46 nations, including the four sponsors of the Declaration, were invited to the San Francisco Conference to draft a charter for the newly formed United Nations Organization (U.N.). Later, four more nations, all Soviet satellites, would also sign as original members, 50 in all.

The United Nations Charter, which is patterned after the Soviet Union's Constitution, was largely drafted by the communist Alger Hiss, the assistant to Assistant Secretary of State Francis B. Sayre. Hiss had served as executive secretary of the Dumbarton Oaks Conference which drew up plans for the future United Nations. Like Harry Hopkins, Hiss was present at the Yalta Conference. Although he argued against Stalin's proposal at Dumbarton Oaks that each of the 16 Soviet republics be given one vote in the U.N. General Assembly (he knew there was no chance the western nations would agree), there was managed a compromise which Stalin accepted, granting one vote each for the USSR, Ukrainian SSR, and Belorussian SSR.

It was later discovered in hearings during a 1948 House Committee on Un-American Activities that Hiss had been involved in espionage against the United States. Because the statute of limitations on espionage had run out, Hiss could not be charged with that crime. But he was convicted of lying in denying that involvement, and in January, 1950, was sentenced to two concurrent five-year sentences, of which he served only three-and-a-half years.

The United Nations has been a bane on America's foreign policy, largely anti-American except when needing financing for its worldwide programs. Roosevelt sold out the United States to an international body that is one of anti-Christ's best means to reinstitute the one-world system that Yahweh broke up by confusing the languages of the people at Babel. Although the U.N. gives lip service to religious freedom, we see Christianity under attack not only in anti-Christ Middle East and Asian countries, but in the United States and Western Europe, with no voice of protest from that organization.

Space doesn't permit all that could be said about the anti-Christ and anti-American sentiments and actions that abound in the U.N. It should suffice that atheistic communism formed the basis for its inception.

THE YALTA CONFERENCE

The collusion between the three super powers among the Allies was brokered at the Russian resort town of Yalta in the Crimea, from February 4-11, 1945. There, with victory over Germany inevitable, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin came

to agreements that would surrender all of the German-occupied countries to the USSR, placing them in as bad or worse a situation than they had been under German control. There, anti-Christ would have Christianity virtually wiped out through the atheistic control of education, government, and the media, just as he is accomplishing in the West today. These concessions to the worst butcher in history were made under the pretext that the Allies needed Russia's help in winning the war in the Pacific. In fact, however, the USSR never really made any meaningful contribution to that war. Yet it was afforded every opportunity to arm the rebel Chinese forces under Mao Tse-tung to overthrow the U.S.'s previous ally, the Republic of China, led by Premier Chiang Kai-shek. From there, in a short time, communism spread to other parts of East Asia, including North Korea, North Vietnam, Cambodia, and other nations.

From the end of World War II to the present, the West has consistently dealt communism a winning hand in every seeming conflict. Some may think the demise of the USSR under the Reagan administration was the defeat of communism, but it was only a restructuring of Russia. Communism continues to wield its influence in the West through the takeover of political parties sympathetic to the Marxist ideology, including here in the United States.

THE HOLOCAUST

The "Holocaust" is a subject that could easily take several books, and it is my intention to do a thorough study on this subject. In fact, I've already started to do so. For that reason, this section will be somewhat sparse considering the minimal space available in this article.

There is much controversy surrounding the Holocaust, primarily because of revisionist historians who deny that the Holocaust ever took place. Or if it did, it wasn't the horrific experience painted by Zionists who have exploited it for political purposes.

Before we dismiss their claims, we have to look objectively at this chapter in Germany's history in order to delineate between fact and fiction. Truthfully, there are questionable "facts" on both sides of the controversy, but certain things cannot be denied: the Nazis did institute a pogrom against Germany's Jews, as well as Jews in German-occupied territories; large numbers of Jews perished under that pogrom; Zionist propaganda did use it as a basis for garnering sympathy for the establishment of a Jewish state in the Middle East.

The history of what came to be called "The Holocaust" did not begin with the Jews. And there were many people from among other groups who suffered equally under Hitler's attempt to rid Germany of "undesirables," including Christians, Gypsies, homosexuals, political and ideological opponents, and the physically and mentally handicapped.

Nor were the first concentration camps meant to kill people. They were work camps that relied on the labor of

prisoners to help build Germany's war machine. The Academy Award-winning movie *Schindler's List* is an account of one German industrialist's efforts to save as many Jews—especially women and children—from the death squads that were later a part of the Third Reich's "Final Solution to the Jewish Question."

The first residents of the work camps were political prisoners and social misfits (communists, anarchists, democratic socialists, etc.). Because of this, the left, highly influenced by Marxist propaganda techniques, has consistently placed Nazism on the right in the political spectrum. In truth, Nazism is in the left of the political spectrum. It is just one of several socialist ideologies. The Nazis were the National Socialist Party. The conflict between Nazism and Communism was merely a struggle for supremacy, Communism being generated by the USSR. Yet so successful has been the propaganda campaign of the left, that Nazism and Constitutional Conservatism in the U.S. have been made ideological bedmates. Even many of today's neo-Nazis have believed that lie, and have attempted to attach themselves to conservative causes.

But I digress.

Regardless of the scope of the pogrom against the Jews, and whether exaggerated or not, there is no question that anti-Christ used it as a means to destroy many Christians and Jews, and to turn the once-Christian (Lutheran) nation of Germany into a menace that threatened the stability of the entire world.

Yet even as Satan meant it for evil, our heavenly Father turned it to good. That is the premise upon which my study of the Holocaust will rest.

FURTHER JEWISH STRUGGLES

Anti-Christ's hatred of the Jews has been unabated from the time ancient Israel was born as a nation. The Jews have always been at odds with the rest of humanity, sometimes as a result of their own intrigues; sometimes just because they are so hated by anti-Christ.

In spite of the fact that many Jews were complicit in the Bolshevik Revolution, and had good standing in the communist parties of various nations, under Soviet communism average Jews suffered almost as much as they did under Hitler. One of the more notorious incidents occurred on July 4, 1946, at Kielce, Poland, where 42 Jews were killed in violence against the Jewish community under the watchful eyes of the Polish Communist armed forces.

One year later, the British turned back Jewish refugees from migrating to Palestine, forcing them to return to Europe. After World War II, millions of Europeans were still living in camps for "displaced persons" within Germany and Austria. European Jews organized an underground network known as *Brichah* (Heb.: "flight") moving thousands of Jews to ports on the Mediterranean Sea with certificates for immigration to Palestine. The British were against large

migrations of Jews to Palestine, intercepting over half of the 142 attempts and sending the immigrants to internment camps in Cyprus, Mauritius, and even Palestine. Although there were many attempts made to bring these displaced Jews to Palestine, the *Exodus 1947* was the largest ship carrying among its passengers the largest-ever number of illegal immigrants to Palestine.

Historians credit the account of the *Exodus 1947* with garnering international sympathy for the Jews, particularly after the revelations of the plight of Jews under Hitler publicized by Zionist interests, thus rallying support for the idea of a Jewish state.

Anti-Christ's hatred of the Jews was reflected in both the Kielce, Poland, pogrom and the attempt to keep the Jews out of Palestine and other nations, among other incidents over time. But God has not forgotten His promise to again restore Israel to the land given to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The present ungodly Zionist state of Israel is not the full realization of that promise, nor will it be in this age. It is for the Father to restore the Kingdom to Israel when His Son returns. Yet Scripture tells us that the Jews must have a strong presence in Jerusalem at that time. The modern state of Israel is merely a prelude to the Lord's coming again.

DR. SPOCK

In 1946, Dr. Benjamin Spock's *The Common Book of Baby and Child Care* was published, offering parents radical new guidelines for raising their children. Prior to Spock's book, which was well-publicized by the leftist media, child-care experts stressed teaching self-denial and respect for authority. Spock's techniques eschewed these biblical and civilized principles in favor of accommodating children's feelings and preferences. No longer were parents the guides for their children's moral and civil upbringing. Now the child himself ruled the household through demands that parents were afraid to ignore or worse, deny.

Since the publication of Spock's book, Western society has consistently become more jaded and self-centered. The "me-first" attitude increasingly permeates the thinking of youth with each succeeding generation. This is a major reason for women choosing abortion over the inconvenience of raising children. Anti-Christ has successfully warped the moral fiber of modern western society so that it is on the verge of judgment from God. Spock, who later admitted at least some of his errors, largely contributed to that warpage.

THE BIG BANG THEORY

Since the turn of the 20th century it was postulated and later proved that the universe is expanding. This led to many hypotheses and tested models for the structure of the universe. Although around for some time, it is English astronomer Fred Hoyle who is credited with coining the term "Big Bang" during a 1949 BBC radio broadcast as a means to express the difference between the expanding and steady

state theories. The term has since developed a life of its own, incorporating other non-universal theories such as natural selection and the “accidental” evolution of man through stages from microbial life to primates.

There is nothing in Scripture to void the idea of the universe being created by Elohiym from a single point in space untold eons ago. The problem is that both skeptics and Christians find it difficult to separate Darwinian evolution from the idea of a “Big Bang” which suggests an ancient creation. But Darwinian evolution has nothing to do with the age of the universe or how Elohiym brought it into existence.

Anti-Christ is behind the confusion, and he has cleverly seduced academia into accepting the theory of evolution as fact and promulgating it to succeeding generations almost since Darwin’s *Origin of Species* was first published in 1859. He has also cleverly confused Christians with the idea of a young creation on the basis of misunderstanding Scripture, using the creation of man as the starting point without regard to the possibility that the six days of Genesis 1 are days of re-creation or refurbishing a chaotic earth made so through angelic warfare.

Although I happen to believe in an ancient creation, I am not so dogmatic as to be argumentative or rejecting of our brethren who reject that view. All I ask is that they cease associating the idea of an ancient creation with the theory of evolution. We can still dwell in harmony as long as we do not allow anti-Christ to use the difference of understanding to separate us.

Regardless of how one sees the creation—as young or ancient—we must never reject the truth that Adam was made a unique creature in the image of Elohiym, taken from the dust of the earth, not as a result of an evolutionary process.

STATE OF ISRAEL FOUNDED

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly presented to member nations a Partition Plan for Mandatory Palestine, specifying borders for new Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem and its environs under international governance administered by the U.N. The British Mandate over Palestine would end at midnight on May 14, 1948.

For Zionists this meant the beginning of a new homeland for Jews which had been sought ever since the Diaspora following the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in AD 70. For Christians it meant the fulfillment of last-days prophecy regarding the Second Coming of Christ. For the rest of humanity it meant either a happy end to the Jewish immigration plight, or a threat to international peace. In all cases, anti-Christ has had his hand in the mix.

The Zionists have managed to develop a thriving democratic socialist state that considers non-Jews largely as second-class citizens, even while granting them (including

Palestinians within its borders) representation in the Knesset (Israel’s Parliament).

Christians have misread the prophetic Scriptures to the confusion of millions, falsely predicting the Lord’s imminent return, often by erroneous date-setting that has destroyed or severely hampered the faith of many.

Christian Zionists have an “Israel-right-or-wrong” mentality, willing to overlook Israel’s failings while demonstrating little if any concern or love for average Palestinians, including Palestinian Christians. As well, Christian Zionists are reticent to witness to Jews, many believing that they do not need Christ for salvation, but by virtue of their ethnicity they are already in His favor.

The Arab states, especially, have been in constant consternation over the existence of Israel, many vowing to drive the Jews into the Mediterranean Sea and retake what they believe should be theirs.

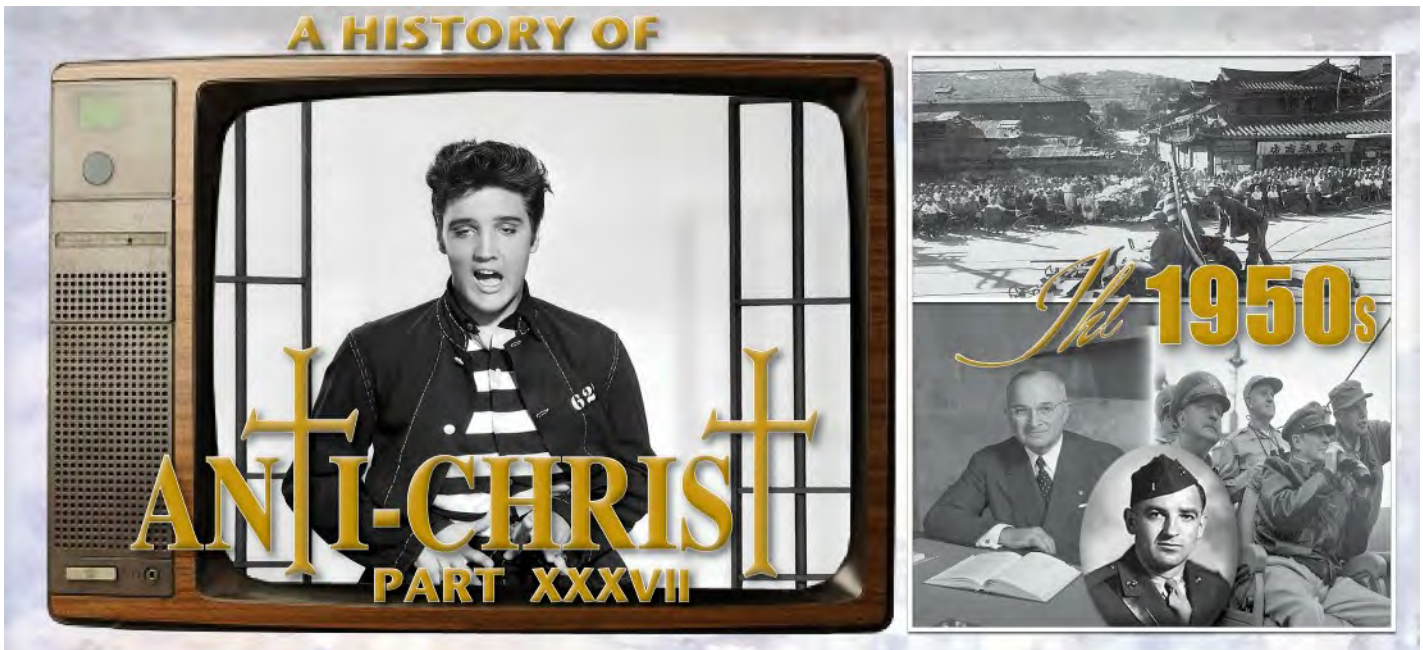
The rest of the world has largely done an about-face from the sympathy toward the Jews that their forebears demonstrated after World War II. There are very few nations that are pro-Israel today, and under the Obama administration Israel’s staunchest ally, the United States of America, is slowly but steadily dancing away from our best ally in the Middle East.

From the day of its birth, the State of Israel has been under siege from its surrounding Muslim neighbors vastly superior in numbers of population and military materiel. Before the midnight deadline of May 14, 1948, the Arab states were mustering their forces to carry out their threats while Britain literally abandoned the tiny, fledgling state to what the world deemed certain death.

Space doesn’t allow for details; suffice it to say that the Arab states were humiliated in defeat by an ill-equipped, out-manned, out-gunned, and largely civilian Israeli defense force. What happened at that time can only be described as a miracle as anti-Christ’s forces were not merely defeated, but routed, no doubt, by unseen angelic hosts that protected and guided the hapless Israeli cadre.

Every attempt to displace Israel since then has been met with failure. Elohiym will not be denied what He has promised in His Word. Even while they are blinded in part until this time for the gentiles is concluded—even as they are ungodly in so many respects—even as they are anti-Christ themselves—Elohiym has protected them until they who pierced Him mourn when they see Him. ❖

**NEXT
THE 1950s**



AS WE LOOK at the decade of the 1950s we discern a giant leap in the decline of morality in Western Civilization. This is the period known as “Happy Days” according to the popular ABC television series that ran from 1974 through 1984. *Happy Days* depicted a time familiar to me, as those were my teen years. It was a time of muscle cars, drive-in eateries, drive-in movies, sock hops, and, by today’s standards, an innocence that was in transition to worldliness. The increasing popularity of television aided that transition with the introduction of instant access to the world’s influences by millions of homes. The United States was at the time still relatively sheltered from the *avant garde* influences upon art, politics, education, and other aspects of European culture. Television would prove to be anti-Christ’s most effective tool to change the mores of America.

Although I have often said that I grew up at the best time and place in human history, in truth that is as far as soulish satisfaction is concerned. Los Angeles during the 1940s and 1950s was still blessed with the best climate on earth. There was no smog to speak of until toward the end of the ’50s. I recall one day in January (I believe it was 1957) while at one of Southern California’s great beaches, lying on the warm sand and looking toward the northeast. I could see snow-capped mountains, and realized that within a little over an hour I could be enjoying winter sports in the snow.

The seasons still provided rain during the summer, the skies were clear, often with billowy clouds. Believe it or not, on a clear night during the 1940s and early ’50s one could see the Milky Way and thousands of stars if one lived even a little distance from the center of the city.

The temperatures, although sometimes hot, were not blasting hot for endless days or weeks. That was before the basin was paved over to become a giant frying pan. In short, it was as close to Paradise one could get while still on earth.

I understand the reason singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell wrote *Big Yellow Taxi* in 1970, with the oft-repeated refrain, “They paved paradise and put up a parking lot.”

Although inspired by a visit to Hawaii, Mitchell’s song bespoke the fate of Southern California even better. And the physical deterioration of Southern California is likewise reflected in the spiritual deterioration of not only that region, but of the United States as a whole.

TELEVISION’S INFLUENCE

The beginning of the end for Southern California’s halcyon days, I believe, came with the nationally telecast New Year’s Day Rose Parade and Rose Bowl games from Pasadena. Here were people in the Midwest, east coast, and south, freezing in sub-zero temperatures, watching folks in their shirtsleeves enjoying the festivities. The next thing we native Californians knew, millions of displaced refugees from the less hospitable climes of the United States invaded like locusts.

There went Paradise.

But that’s not the worst that television brought us. Although beginning innocently enough from a humanistic point of view, the stage was set for the coming invasion of gross ungodliness into America’s living rooms. It would take decades to come to fruition, but anti-Christ is patient, if lacking all other godly attributes. Had Americans of the 1950s known how far afield would go the blasphemy, filth, and philosophical evil that characterizes today’s television offerings, it’s quite possible that they would have never brought the monster into their homes.

That, unfortunately, is a moot point now. It is too late to turn back history, and there is no such thing as time travel whereby one could go back in time to warn them. Yet even if it were possible to warn them somehow, I doubt they would have ears to hear. As Jesus said, “Even if one were to rise from the grave, they wouldn’t believe.” Television even then offered

so many promises of leisurely entertainment and escape from the cares of the world, that people quickly became mesmerized by the monster. And it began innocently enough.

Programs such as *Leave it to Beaver*, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, *Father Knows Best* (isn't that a joke today?), *I Love Lucy*, *I Married Joan*, and others portrayed home life as the ideal everyone longed for. Although average home life wasn't as quaint and perfect as those shows projected, they nevertheless promoted a sense of love and wholesomeness that most people desired for themselves. So why would they believe that the lovely monster in their home would eventually turn on them and destroy their children's morals?

Yet if we look closely at some of the programming of the 1950s, we will discern a worldliness that reflects a distinction between "good" and "godly."

The relative innocence of *Gunsmoke*, for example, still contained elements of ungodliness, albeit in a "wholesome" manner. Did anyone really think Marshall Dillon's longstanding relationship with Kitty Russell was all that innocent? Did people really know what saloon madams and those pretty girls sitting with their arms around the cowpokes were all about?

Of course, nothing was portrayed to give any indication that things were less than wholesome in Dodge City during the 1870s, other than the presence of bank robbers, cattle rustlers, and other ne'er-do-wells. But there was just the hint...

In 1956, the TV remote control was invented, and people could now change channels from the comfort of their chairs and sofas. In time, the remote would do far more than change channels and control volume, making it far easier for people to become couch potatoes. And whereas there were limited stations and hours of viewing to start, today there are hundreds of stations working around the clock to push gross ungodliness.

ROCK 'N' ROLL

Whereas love songs of the '30s and '40s were mostly about love, music of the '50s began to introduce more love songs that weren't so much about love as about lust. I need not go into detail, but anti-Christ knows how to appeal to the baser instincts of mankind. The big bands began to give way to guitar-and-drum combos as music saw a decline in the desire for melody, for a stronger emphasis on beat.

Oh, it was great stuff. Elvis Presley, Little



Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bill Haley and the Comets—they brought some terrific sounds that provided for upbeat dancing. I really dug it.

But with it came less godly attitudes towards the opposite sex. That, and the easy access to cars for teens, produced a lot of "marriages" in the back seats of Chevys. Some of those "marriages" became lifelong commitments, but too many of them ended in unwanted pregnancies, which led to abortions. Those unwanted pregnancies fueled the campaign to legalize abortion at a later date, playing into anti-Christ's design to corrupt and further destroy humanity.

CREDIT CARDS

From early on in the 20th century, individual store credit accounts were available. Some stores offered credit cards, as did major oil companies for their gasoline stations. In 1949, Frank X. McNamara, head of Hamilton Credit Corporation, met at lunch with Alfred Bloomingdale, grandson of the founder of Bloomingdale's department store, and Ralph Sneider, McNamara's attorney. At Major's Cabin Grill, next to the Empire State Building in New York City, they met to discuss a problem that Hamilton Credit Corporation was having with a customer who could not pay his debt. When McNamara reached for his wallet to pay for the meal in cash, he discovered that he had forgotten his wallet. Embarrassed, he called his wife to have her bring him some money. That event sparked a new idea in McNamara—a credit card that could be used in multiple locations. This led to the creation of a middleman who would act as a liaison between merchants and their customers. That first credit card middleman was Diners Club, formed in 1950 and financed with funds from McNamara, Bloomingdale, and Sneider. The first merchants were restaurants. Although beginning slowly because restaurants didn't want to pay the middleman fees, by the end of 1950 some 20,000 people were using the Diners Club credit card—a paper card with participating merchants' names on the back. In 1958, both American Express and the Bank Americard (later called VISA) were created, and the credit card became a mainstay of the American economy.

What a blessing it was. People no longer needed to earn enough money before buying high-priced items. Now they could receive instant gratification by passing a plastic card over the counter. Credit reporting agencies became a necessity to handle the task of checking credit for card issuers.

The credit card had another plus side to it. Now, manufacturers could produce goods at a faster rate to keep up with the demand. This gave rise to employment, and the employed could use credit to further increase the demand.

But with the blessing of easy credit came the curse of bad credit ratings for those who got too far in debt. No longer were people's souls owed "to the company store" (thank you, Tennessee Ernie Ford); now their souls were owed to banks and lending institutions. With the use of easy credit came the need for more income, which in turn eventually required

both spouses to find employment. This, of course, meant that, with both parents working, children had to be shuffled off to day care, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, then public elementary and high schools. In time, most parents would no longer be the character-molding factor in their children's lives. That task would fall to child care professionals and teachers, as well as to (drum roll) television programming that filled the kids' down time.

As wives and mothers left the home to earn enough to support the materialistic needs of the family, spousal relationships began to suffer. Meeting "more interesting" members of the opposite sex at work caused discontent with what they had at home. The divorce rate began to rise, to where even in Christian homes today the divorce rate is almost equal to that of the world.

It may not be obvious to most, but anti-Christ's design to destroy the nuclear family and drive its members further from God was greatly aided by easy credit. Today, the nation is reaping the whirlwind for having sowed to the wind the posterity entrusted to us by Yahweh. The satanic philosophies that permeate our public schools have, for the past several decades, turned each generation further from our Father's truth and produced a nation of many crybabies and dependents upon government largesse, as well as amoral, violent, impatient protestors against law and order.

Yet this is in keeping with the Lord's warnings that in the last days it will be as it was in the days of Noah and Lot (Luke 17:26-30) when mankind will again corrupt himself, and violence will fill the earth.

Europe and the United States of America have been the primary targets of anti-Christ while bringing this about.

THE KOREAN WAR

Also in 1950, America went to war with Korea, a scant five years after having endured the horrors of World War II. Again, this "Christian" nation was subjected to death and maiming of its youth. But the real evil was the determined policy of the Truman Administration not to fight to win, but merely to contain communism from invading South Korea. While America waged its no-win "police action" entered into unconstitutionally as a subject of its United Nations "peace-keeping" role, communism in America continued to wield influence upon the State Department and the president, urging "restraint" rather than risk the ire of a still impotent U.S.S.R. and Red China.

For the first time in history America suffered the indignity of defeat in warfare, not because of the incompetence of the brave men who fought or the military leaders in the field, but because the communist influences in our government pushed the correct political buttons to thwart every effort toward victory. The U.S. Government favored "containment," refusing to utterly defeat the North Korean communists. Today, North Korea is one of the greatest threats to the West, flexing its military muscle in the face of

an Obama administration that consistently displays weakness to the rest of the nations.

Most importantly, the Korean War (not "police action") was the first war engaged in unconstitutionally without a declaration of war by Congress. In order to circumvent the constitution (unlawfully) the Truman administration in cooperation with the United Nations denied the UN action was a war, and called it a "police action."



It was also the first time that the United States surrendered its military sovereignty to a foreign power largely administered by the Soviet Union and Red China. It had already surrendered much of its political sovereignty to that foreign power, making it ripe for the picking by anti-Christ's New World Order.

JOE McCARTHY

The name today evokes smirks and ridicule by ignorant people who think that the late Senator Joe McCarthy (R-Wisconsin) was engaged in a "witch hunt" to "find commies behind every bush." In truth—and I remember those days—Senator McCarthy was a true patriot who rightly contended that there were many communists and Soviet spies and sympathizers within the U.S. federal government, as well as in the mainstream media and the Hollywood movie industry—the latter two working to propagandize for sympathy toward the U.S.S.R. and the communist ideology.

He began his investigations in 1950, and was immediately vilified by the left-leaning press and members of Congress with left-leaning sympathies. Today, his name is synonymous with despotism and un-Americanism. In truth, he was a good man who fell victim to cowardly fools who themselves were victims of communist propaganda. His cause was not helped by his correctly diagnosed accusations of disloyalty and sex crimes (i.e., homosexuality) by a number of politicians and others within and without the government of the United States. The politicians, especially, wanted him discredited rather than themselves be exposed.

Anti-Christ used Joe McCarthy as a whipping boy for Satan's plan of destruction against the United States, and the faith of its people, which was overwhelmingly Christian, at least in the nominal sense.

Today, any truth about McCarthy has largely been relegated to the “memory hole,” as most historians approach his biographies from a biased, leftist standard. It is difficult to discern what they say is true, and what is false.

By destroying McCarthy’s reputation through the communist-sympathizing media, anti-Christ was able to continue working unabated through the U.S. government to accomplish his plans.



THE HYDROGEN BOMB

1950 was also the year that President Truman ordered the construction of the hydrogen bomb, which would release energy equivalent to 10,000,000 tons of TNT—500 times more than the first atomic bomb, which was equivalent to 20,000 tons of TNT. With the hydrogen bomb, anti-Christ would have the power to threaten far more devastation than man had ever experienced from a single weapon of mass destruction, creating fear that would facilitate a desire to surrender rather than die. What escapes people who give into that fear is that a single bullet will kill them as surely as (and probably more painfully than) any hydrogen bomb. But the idea of dying or being maimed by such a destructive weapon strikes fear in any unbelieving heart.

PLAYBOY

1953 marked the advent of pseudo-sophistication for pornography with the publication of the first *Playboy* magazine. Whereas prior to *Playboy*, men were somewhat embarrassed to be seen picking up a “girlie magazine,” the inclusion of the “Playboy philosophy” with articles addressing subjects of interest to men gave men an excuse: “I just get it for the articles.”

As time progressed, anti-Christ made “respectable” men’s magazines more graphic in content. Generations of married men would find their wives unable to compete with the airbrushed perfection of the *Playboy* “models.” Pornography would be one of anti-Christ’s best weapons to destroy families.

SPUTNIK

The Soviet Union gained an advantage over the United States in the space race with the launching of the U.S.S.R.’s first satellite. People were fascinated, and perhaps a bit frightened, to learn that a totalitarian government had taken the first steps to control the atmosphere over the entire globe. Soon, science fiction accounts of warfare in space would become a possibility, with the specter of destruction rained upon innocent humans from space platforms. So far this has not come to fruition, but we haven’t reached the end yet.

In addition to military applications, the most lucrative use of satellites has been by the mass media and entertainment industries, which have harnessed the technology to bring instant access to world events and a plethora of television channels through satellite and cable television providers. Anti-Christ now has an even stronger hold on people’s minds through these innovations. And the cost to be brainwashed is staggering.

FIDEL CASTRO

In 1959, communist revolutionary Fidel Castro, portrayed in the U.S. media as a harmless “agrarian reformer,” overthrew the regime of General Fulgencio Batista. In spite of numerous prior attempts to take over the Cuban government with support from the Soviet Union, the leftist media in America soothed the fears of people by assuring them that he was not a communist, but was being maligned by right-wing extremists. However, those in the know both inside and outside the government and the media tried to warn the nation that Castro would establish the first communist government in the Western Hemisphere. Their warnings proved accurate, and until the traitorous actions of the Marxist Barack Obama in 2016, Cuba suffered censure and boycott by the United States for no other reason than there have always been a large number of people who would oppose removing those sanctions. Acting unilaterally, without the consent of Congress, Obama has dealt the Castro regime under Fidel’s brother Raul, a tremendous economic favor, in spite of Cuba’s known ties to terrorism. It remains to be seen how anti-Christ will use this treason to his benefit, and against the benefit of Americans.

THE CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

Through the influence of the so-called healing evangelists, the acceptance of Pentecostal experiences outside the Pentecostal denominational structures began in the 1930s and ’40s. Eventually, this led to the first stirrings of Pentecostal experience-oriented religion within mainstream Protestant denominations, which came to be called the Charismatic Renewal, in the 1950s. Prior to this, those within mainstream Protestant churches who believed they had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (allegedly through the evidence of speaking in “tongues”) left their churches to join Pentecostal churches. The first significant case of an American Protestant minister remaining in his denomination after that experience was Harald Bredesen, a Lutheran, in 1946. Another was Tommy Tyson, a United Methodist pastor in North Carolina, who was allegedly baptized in the Holy Spirit in 1951, after a congregational study of Acts 2.¹

A major influence in spreading the Pentecostal experience to mainstream denominations was Agnes Sanford, who had several years in a “healing ministry.”

¹ *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Revised and Expanded Edition, Stanley M. Burgess, Ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002, 2003), s.v., Charismatic Movement.

Agnes Sanford

The late Agnes Sanford (1898? – 1982) is the fountainhead of the inner healing movement which, prior to her influence, was virtually unknown within Christian circles, being found primarily in the fields of psychology, mind-science churches, and the New Age Movement. The inner healing methodologies Sanford introduced into the churches include visualization and guided imagery. These techniques were learned by Sanford through her study of Jungian psychology. Carl Gustav Jung, in turn, learned his techniques from a spirit guide he called Philemon—a demonic entity.

Sanford also drew on Sigmund Freud’s theory of dream analysis, as well as the gestalt therapy of Frederick S. Perls, Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, Sidney Jourard, and Eric Berne to effect “spiritual healing.” Gestalt therapy employs such exercises as ventilation, primal screaming, and role playing.



In her books, still found in Christian bookstores, Sanford openly espouses a pantheistic philosophy and belief in Darwinian evolution, as well as confusion regarding the

possibility of reincarnation. (For a detailed treatise on Agnes Sanford and inner healing, see our special report, *Inner Healing: A Biblical Analysis*).

Sanford’s influence in the Charismatic Renewal set the stage for inner healing to spread not only to mainline denominations, but also to Pentecostal denominations and even Roman Catholicism.

In 1955, Sanford and her husband, Edgar L. Sanford, an Episcopal priest, founded the Schools of Pastoral Care—weeklong conferences for those involved in healing, such as ministers, doctors, and nurses. In these conferences the Sanfords spoke of “the power of the Holy Spirit working in men and women to the healing of their physical, mental and social ills.”

If it seems incongruous that an openly New Age devotee like Agnes Sanford would have such influence among evangelicals and the Charismatic Renewal, one should know that the New Age Movement has been making inroads into Christianity through many avenues ever since the late 19th century. Is it any wonder that the most popular and widespread “Christian” books filling the shelves of Christian bookstores are infected with New Age philosophy and psychology? The New Age Movement long ago determined to use Christian language and jargon to worm its way into mainstream Christianity. Today, there are very few Christians

who are not infected by the New Age Movement. Most who identify as Christians, particularly in the West, have abandoned the core tenets of biblical faith for psychologized, mystical religious experimentation. This was introduced primarily through the Charismatic Renewal, infecting movements like the Vineyard, Word-Faith, Pentecostalism, healing “ministries,” etc. This has been done through teachings focusing on the alleged work of the Holy Spirit, which transcends the written Scriptures. Experience has largely replaced reasoned understanding of the plain texts of the Bible. How often we hear today, “I know the Bible says that, but we must be led by the Holy Spirit; the letter of the Law kills.”

That may sound reasonable, but we cannot separate the Holy Spirit from the Word of Yahweh. The Holy Spirit does not give experiences contrary to God’s Word.

It is a true statement that “the Word without the Spirit leads to legalism, and the Spirit without the Word leads to craziness.” Just witness all the mayhem in the name of the Holy Spirit within the Charismatic Movement today. That mayhem has infected the Pentecostal denominations as well as many mainline churches.

Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International

The first organized expression spreading the alleged baptism in the Holy Spirit beyond Pentecostal circles into mainstream Christianity was the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI), founded by millionaire dairy magnate, Demos Shakarian. From the start, FGBMFI associated itself with the alleged “healing evangelists.” Oral Roberts was the guest speaker at the first FGBMFI meeting which convened in Los Angeles in October, 1951. FGBMFI’s method was to hold prayer breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, as well as larger regional and national conventions. Its monthly magazine *Voice*, added to FGBMFI’s outreach beyond Pentecostal circles.

FGBMFI did not set an agenda to bring mainline denominational Christians into Pentecostal churches, but rather sought to extend the Pentecostal experience into mainstream Christianity.

Camps Farthest Out

Another organization through which mainstream Christians learned of the alleged baptism in the Holy Spirit was Camps Farthest Out (CFO), founded by Glenn Clark in 1930. Clark’s purpose was to help Christians become “athletes of the Spirit.” CFO gatherings were usually week-long meetings facilitated by camp leaders who, over the years, included Agnes Sanford, Harald Bredesen, Derek Prince, and other questionable characters.¹

CFO’s founder, Glenn Clark, was infected with New Age philosophy. One indication is his endorsement of A.K. Mozumdar, an Indian mystic, as quoted by David H. Howard in *The Universal Message*:

¹ Ibid.

“I do not know of any spiritual teacher that I consider so close to the spirit of Christ as Mr. Mozumdar,” wrote the late Glenn Clark, famous author, lecturer and college professor. “He has that perfect transparency that is a combination of what they say are the outstanding qualities of Gandhi, humility and confidence — humility in the outer and perfect confidence in the inner. I feel that anyone who perfectly comprehends his teachings and puts them into expression in his life will possess the secret of the ages.”¹

The website dedicated to Mozumdar states: “Not only was Mozumdar a dynamic teacher, lecturer and writer, but in his daily life he exhibited a true love for and deep knowledge of God—which he called the ‘Cosmic Creative Principle.’ His overriding desire was to help lead spiritual searchers to inner harmony and peace—the natural outcome of the life in communion with God, the Superconscious Power.”



Glenn Clark

In his book, *Key to the New Messianic World Message*, Mozumdar states:

The Messianic Message is a message of human freedom. It has given many a man and woman the inspiration to think and write daringly and fearlessly. It maintains that man is not apart from Providence (The Creative Principle of the Universe), but that he is together with It. It reasons that man must have come from something that contained the possibility or potentiality of man. That something could not have been apart from man. In fact, it must have been the potential man himself, not as a mere form but as a thinking, reasoning, individual being. If we take it for granted that there was a time when man was not in existence, we are compelled to admit that there must have been a final something which was the cause of his manifestation.

Mozumdar believed that man, as the manifestation of “God” will ultimately be united with his source of origin (universal consciousness). His “messiah” is the New Age “Jesus,” although He quotes the true Jesus from Scripture, convoluting His words to fit the New Age paradigm.

Says Mozumdar:

Every state of human consciousness is personified. We are all personifying our respective states of consciousness. In this sense the Eternal Christ was personified in Jesus. Christ is that state of knowing

which recognizes that God is the one and only Life. Therefore Christ is the only way, life, and truth. We are becoming Christed in the measure that we realize the Truth of Christ.

To be “Christed” means to be anointed with the same fullness of Messiahship that Jesus is. It’s a New Age buzzword.

Such is the person that Glenn Clark, founder of CFO, presented as the closest to the spirit of Christ of any spiritual teacher he knew.

CONCLUSION

The interconnectedness of false teachers, New Age philosophers, and occult teachings forms the basis for the Charismatic Renewal. Jesus said, “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit” (Matthew 7:17).

The apostle Paul said similarly, “If the first fruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches”(Romans 11:16).

Conversely, if the root (the origins; the beginnings) are evil, the fruit will be evil. The beginnings of the Charismatic Renewal were evil; it was, and is, a counterfeit of the work of the Holy Spirit. Anti-Christ has used the Charismatic Renewal to deceive millions of Christians of all persuasions to prepare them for the false christ who will deceive the nations of the world. The consequential evilness of the fruit will become more apparent as we continue in our next installment.

This is not to indict all who are involved in the Charismatic Renewal—not even all the leaders. Rather, it is hoped that many who are involved will see it for what it is, and will come out and be separate.

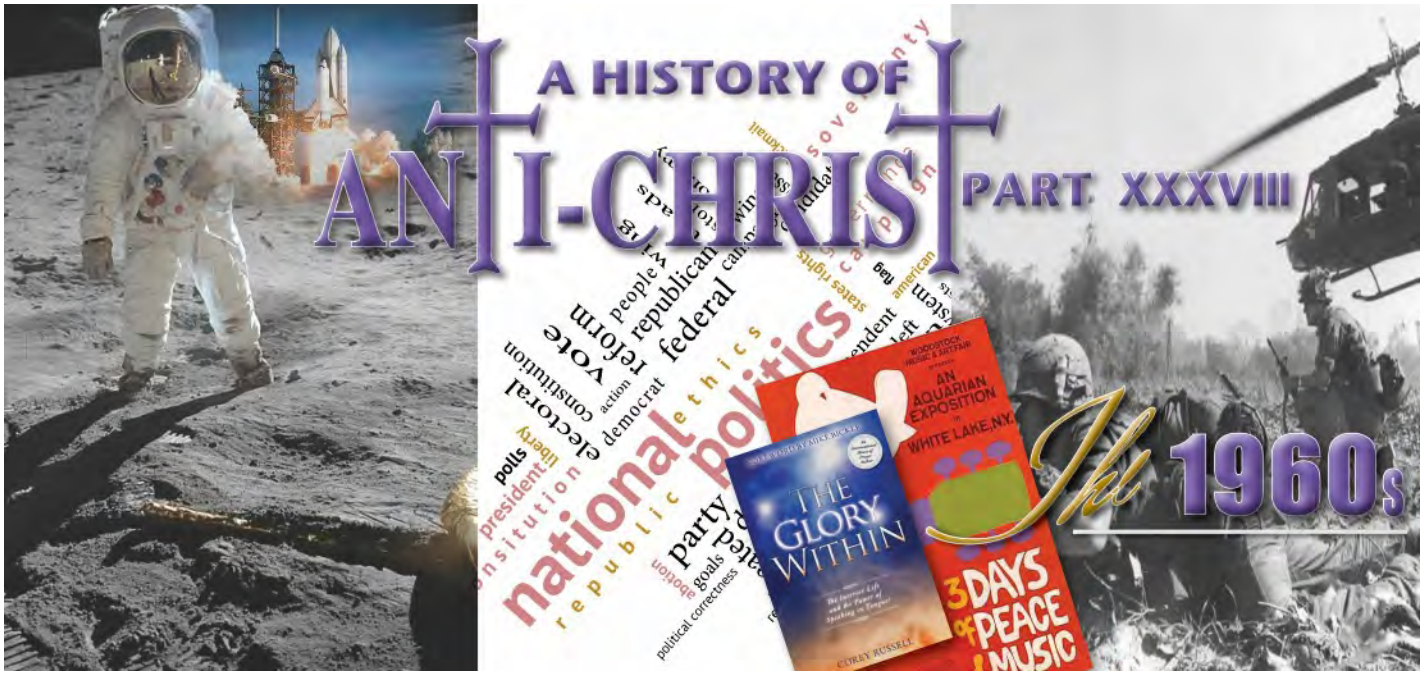
The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements sums up the Charismatic Movement through the decade of the 1950s:

By the end of the 1950s there was a considerable pentecostal stirring reaching beyond the pentecostal churches. Much of it was not congregationally based or congregationally organized, though there were the beginnings of pentecostal groups in mainline church traditions at Parkesburg, PA; Mount Vernon, NY; and the Lutheran Bethany Fellowship in Minneapolis, MN; as well as less openly at Wheaton, IL. As the only organ for this expansion was *Voice* magazine, the overall perspective was one of pentecostal expansion beyond pentecostal boundaries, with little sense of unity and cohesion among those in the historic churches who had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.²

The Charismatic Renewal (which was really New Age Renewal) actually emerged within mainstream denominations in the early to mid-1960s, which is the decade for our next installment.❖

¹ A.K. Mozumdar: *Yesterday’s Evangelist From India*, <http://mozumdar.org/yesterdaysevanglist.html>.

² *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Op. Cit.



THE DECADE OF the 1960s saw a drastic departure from the cultural norm in the West based on the biblical ethic which had held sway for centuries. Especially in the United States, anti-Christ laid the foundation for the most diabolical aspects of his attack against Yahweh and His people in the following decades.

POLITICS

On the political front, the stability of western governments began to crumble against the onslaught of movements that would defy authority, allowing anarchy to emerge as a formidable force against civilized society. Many of those movements were based on legitimate protests against injustices committed by governments for centuries. Most began peacefully, but were quickly usurped by violent minorities prodded into action by subversive agencies. The Civil Rights Movement, the Anti-War Movement, the Anti-Capitalist Movement, and the Environmental Movement were the most prevalent in America—the last one propagating a New Age neo-paganism that sees man as merely one element within nature wherein all species of animals and the very planet earth itself are considered equally “sacred.” The New Age aspects of environmentalism began to permeate the religious structures of Christianity where, coupled with Jungian and Freudian psychological theory, they gradually pushed out much critical biblical truth.

All these movements addressed legitimate concerns, but their answers to those concerns were too often unbiblical and even irrational, leading to abuses of different kinds not only by government but by the movements themselves.

In the United States, constitutional government had long before given way to fiat legislation by both the administrative and judicial branches of the government. An atmosphere of empirical status had been lodged within the office of the

presidency, and from the time of Franklin D. Roosevelt on, most presidents saw themselves not so much dictators as heads of an oligarchy enshrined within their cabinets and bureaucracies. The government was looking less and less like that established by the founders and more and more like the Soviet Politburo.

The first televised presidential debates took place in 1960 between Republican Richard Nixon and Democrat John F. Kennedy. Television brought the office of President of the United States (POTUS) into the entertainment arena, and many Americans found it difficult to distinguish between reality and fiction, finding that the candidates would become more concerned with image than with substance. It has only gotten worse since then, and anti-Christ has managed to blur the distinction between lawful and ethical reason and pandering to the emotions of voters. Thus he has used the medium of mass communications to sway many citizens from their former opinions based on what is right according to the biblical ethic upon which Western Civilization was founded, to opinions based on emotion according to the most convincing and/or attractive candidates.

People invariably lean toward the more attractive and psychologically impressive candidate. Consider the outcomes of the races for POTUS ever since those first debates between Kennedy and Nixon. According to polls among those who saw the debates on television, the majority said Kennedy won; among those who heard it on the radio, Nixon won. On television, Kennedy—the more handsome of the two—had greater appeal, while on radio people judged according to what they heard—the content.

As television came more and more into its own, radio became a virtual non-factor in political debates. With few

exceptions, later debates largely proved that appearance is paramount.

This should be no surprise when we look at biblical truth. Was not Satan (the spiritual principal over Tyus) the most beautiful of the angels (Ezekiel 28:12-19)? Did not Israel choose Saul as king because of his handsome appearance, and his physical height above the other Israelites (1 Samuel 9:2)?

Conversely, Jesus had no comeliness that anyone would desire Him (Isaiah 53:2).

Just as it is difficult for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, so, too, it is difficult for the most physically attractive to enter. Most of the former desire wealth above God's Word; most of the latter are vain and desire fleshly pleasure over God's Word.

Naturally there are many exceptions, and those exceptions are to be admired for their humility.

The point is, however, that anti-Christ knows well how to exploit the lust and vanity of men, as well as the penchant in mankind to esteem those things above humility and godliness. Unfortunately, men are also the most lustful power. That lust for power was reflected in President Lyndon B. Johnson's 1964 "Great Society" proposition—the first major step toward one of anti-Christ's preferred political systems, fascism/socialism, since FDR's New Deal.

Racial Strife

On August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his famous *I Have a Dream* speech during the March on Washington. The Civil Rights Movement, headed by King, ultimately led to the adoption of the *Voting Rights Act* in 1965, signed into law by President Lyndon Baines Johnson.

Although, with all his faults and communist associations, Martin Luther King, Jr., contributed to the betterment of blacks in America, other, not so peaceful black power groups were emboldened by his successes to foment a great racial divide among Americans. This contributed to the first major race riot in the nation when, on August 11, 1965, a black motorist was arrested for driving while drunk. When he resisted arrest, a scuffle broke out which escalated into a fight. Many in the black community in the Watts suburb of Los Angeles reacted with charges of police brutality, and went on a rampage that lasted for five days, burning businesses and turning a 46-square-mile area of southwest Los Angeles into a combat zone that required National Guard intervention.

At the time, I was living with my mother near 76th Street and Vermont Avenue, having just recently been discharged from the Army. Hearing the news, I went out to check on what was happening. I quickly returned and took her to my sister's house in Gardena to stay until calm was restored.

Although startled by the riots, they were not unexpected by me. Aware of how communist and other subversives were stoking the fires of discontent and sowing seeds of discord

among the races, I told a friend in 1960 that there would one day be race riots in the streets of America.

He told me I was prejudiced. But when the Watts riots broke out, he was confounded as to how it could happen. Two years later, in the summer of 1967, race riots erupted in major cities across the U.S. in what came to be known as "the long, hot summer." Today we are seeing similar eruptions of violence along race lines through the Black Lives Matter Movement, backed and given impetus by the Communist Party USA.

Sowing seeds of discord is perhaps anti-Christ's most effective means to bring about the destruction of societies and prepare them for infusion into his globalist scheme to turn mankind against Yahweh. And minorities are all too often the victims of that scheme. That discord was further exacerbated by organizations such as the Black Panther Party, formed in 1966, which threatened violence against white people, and particularly police officers. Party members carried weapons, ostensibly to defend themselves against "police brutality." The party did much good for blacks with financial aid and social work among the poor, but there were radical elements whose actions led then FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to call the party "The greatest threat to the internal security of the country."

I recall driving down south Figueroa Street near Manchester Boulevard when a black man on the sidewalk pointed a gun at me and tracked his aim as I drove by. I waited for the puff of smoke, but it didn't come, fortunately.

Assassination

On November 22, 1963, the nation was shocked and saddened to learn of the assassination by gunshot of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. I was no fan of Kennedy, but I was skeptical that an less-than-marksman like Lee Harvey Oswald could have carried out the dirty deed on his own. I was especially incensed that U.S. Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren, before any suspect had been apprehended, declared publicly that a "right-wing radical" was probably responsible for the killing.

What, exactly, was Oswald's motive? If, in fact, he was a lone gunman, we will never know because he was shot dead by nightclub owner Jack Ruby while being transferred from the Dallas City Jail to the Dallas County Jail by police. Ruby was known to have connections with the Mob, and wasn't a fan of Kennedy.

There has been much speculation that Kennedy, although a Democrat, was seriously considering taking down the Federal Reserve System—an act that would severely hinder the anti-Christ globalist ambitions of the international banking cabal. JFK's Attorney General, his brother Robert, was determined to go after the syndicated crime families in the U.S. As chief counsel of the Senate Labor Rackets Committee from 1957 to 1959, he exposed the corrupt

practices of the Teamsters Union and its president, Jimmy Hoffa. Robert had also been an assistant counsel to the Senate committee chaired by Senator Joseph McCarthy. On the campaign trail as a candidate for the office of President, Robert Kennedy was gunned down on June 5, 1968, by a 24-year-old Palestinian named Sirhan Sirhan, and died the next day.

Assassination is a tool of anti-Christ to keep those who would expose his evil plans among nations and nefarious organizations—plans that would cause misery and chaos within populations to subject them to his plans for world conquest. This may well have been anti-Christ’s motive in the April 4, 1968, assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. With King out of the way, the Civil Rights Movement was taken over principally by the “Rev.” Jesse Jackson and the “Rev.” Al Sharpton, and became more anti-white and antagonistic toward established government, in spite of those men’s rhetoric to the contrary. Anti-Christ’s racial divide has since grown worse by the decade.

WARFARE

Vietnam

The greatest divide among Americans (and other nations) over warfare began in the 1960s over U.S. involvement in the Second Indochina War (Vietnam). As early as 1950 the U.S. had sent military advisors to what at the time was known as French Indochina to help the French and South Vietnamese resist communist encroachment from North Vietnam. In 1961 U.S. troop levels were tripled, and tripled again in 1962. The 1964 falsified Gulf of Tonkin incident, in which a U.S. destroyer and a North Vietnamese fast attack craft allegedly engaged in combat (proven a “false flag” incident), led to the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. This gave President Johnson authorization to further increase military involvement. In 1965 U.S. combat units were deployed.

Communist influences in the West seized upon these incidents to incite demonstrations against the war, mainly among college students and other young people, some turning violent. Mainstream media reports of public demonstrations of draft card burnings fueled the fire of anti-war sentiments. U.S. troops returning from the war in Vietnam were spat upon and denigrated by many Americans incited to anger by the media, academia, and even many church leaders.

Although those actions directed against military personnel were despicable, there was some truth to the idea that the U.S. was engaging in warfare unconstitutionally, i.e., without a declaration of war by Congress. In spite of the fact that the last Congressional declaration of war was to enter World War II, the U.S. has been embroiled in war after war through fiat declarations by virtually every president since then with little protest from Congress and, in most cases, supportive resolutions by Congress. But Congress doesn’t

have the constitutional power to abrogate its responsibilities to the president.

The globalist powers that control governments (including the U.S. government) on many levels has been responsible for fomenting such wars and draining the lifeblood of American youth to achieve their purposes. U.S. involvement in Vietnam was predetermined years before Johnson sent combat units there in 1965.

Again, I turn to personal experience to prove my point. As a member of the U.S. Army, in December, 1962, I was sent from radio school at Fort Gordon, Georgia, to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. We did nothing but wait, for what we didn’t know. We were kept busy marching from company grounds to the motor pool, one day removing coverings from the vehicles, and the next day putting them back on. This continued for about a month.

In early January, 1963, we were flown in a severely overloaded Lockheed Constellation to Fort Benning, Georgia, there to activate ancient facilities for what would be the 11th Air Assault Division (Test). The facilities had been winterized, so when we got there we had no heat for the first week or two. In the middle of winter we had to sleep in full clothing with our fatigue jackets and overcoats on. There was no hot water so we showered and shaved as quickly as we could in the coldest water. (Thanks, Uncle Sam, for caring for your troops so well.)

Our division was created to test the equipment and tactics for a new kind of helicopter-borne warfare in the steaming environment of Vietnam, although at the time we didn’t have a clue. I relate this personal experience to show that governments plan far in advance for the things they do while hiding those plans from the general population until it’s too late to do anything about them. This is especially true for warfare. The choppers and other new equipment used in Vietnam at the time had been designed and built years in advance of U.S. deployment of regular troops. The Lord spared my involvement in the war, allowing me to be honorably discharged at the end of my two-year commitment in June, 1964. But several of my friends remained and were part of the buildup, being melded into the First Air Cavalry. Some didn’t return home.

Now here is something we must understand: the same forces that created that war, and subsequent wars in which the U.S. has taken the lead, have also fomented the protests against those wars. Divide and conquer has always been anti-Christ’s tactic, and it is played well by the globalists who have the major movers and shakers in all governments, including ours, in their pockets.

The Six-Day War

Perhaps the only wars in which the globalists have not found the outcome to their liking have been those in which the tiny nation of Israel has been involved. From the first

attempts to destroy that nation at its birth in 1948 until the present, no weapon formed against it has succeeded. The Six-Day War of 1967 was no exception. In fact, that attempt by its neighboring Arab nations to destroy Israel resulted in further land gained by Israel and lost by its enemies. From that time until today the world has been united against Israel, and the hatred for Jews has increased.

We can't turn a blind eye to Israel's faults. It is a godless, Zionist state that is anti-Christ at its core, being influenced by Rabbinic Judaism and secularism at the same time. It's quite amazing to realize that even as anti-Christ uses those elements in Israel to allow for persecution of Jewish believers in Jesus, he is bent on destroying Israel, knowing that it exists by Yahweh's pleasure.

When, in 1969, Yasser Arafat became the president of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), a new kind of propaganda warfare against Israel was born. Since then, the nations of the world have increasingly been bombarded with the idea that Israel is an illegitimate nation that wages terrorist warfare against innocent Palestinians. Although Israel has committed some nefarious deeds (as do all governments), its approach has been reactive rather than proactive in its warfare. And it has done its best to warn people of impending attacks so they can vacate areas in which Israel's enemies use them for shields, then as propaganda pieces to convince the world that Israel murders innocent women and children.

Space doesn't allow for the prophecies related to the deliverance of Israel (the people) in the last days after the Lord returns to receive His saints in the air. Suffice it to say that our Father will be vindicated through His chosen people when they look upon Him whom they have pierced and they mourn for having rejected Him (Zechariah 12:10). They will also mourn for an additional three-and-one-half years as anti-Christ persecutes them out of his hatred and wrath against Elohiym Yahweh and His Son.

Other Events

Another event contributing to anti-Christ's use of warfare was the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961. Cuban patriots were betrayed by the Kennedy administration which had promised air support that never came. Many fine men were killed by Fidel Castro's troops who had advance warning of their attempt to overthrow his communist regime.

The Cuban Missile Crisis that took place in 1962 was, in my opinion, a contrived event to further alarm Americans into thinking the USSR was a legitimate threat to our peace and safety. Just a distraction from our real enemy, globalism (one-world government), and its covert agents working behind the scenes in virtually every government.

Anti-Christ has used threats of nuclear annihilation ever since World War II to cause people to distrust the One in whom they should be placing their trust for true peace and

security. The USSR's detonation of Tsar-Bomba—the largest nuclear weapon ever detonated—and Red China's announcement in 1967 that it had developed its first H-bomb, contributed further to the ever-growing fear anti-Christ wants to instill in mankind.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The Space Race

On April 12, 1961, the United States was stunned to find out that USSR cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, aboard the Vostok 1 spacecraft, became the first man to orbit the earth. The USSR had already beaten the U.S. into space with the launch of its Sputnik satellite in 1957, and it became evident that, unless the U.S. took space science more seriously, we would be at a technological disadvantage. This prompted President Kennedy to challenge the U.S. to put a man on the moon by the end of the decade. The challenge was met successfully on July 20, 1969, with the landing of Apollo 11's *Eagle* lunar module on the moon's surface. Shortly after, astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first man on the moon when he exited *Eagle* with the words, "That's one small step for [a] man; one giant leap for mankind." No other nation has landed a man on the moon, and NASA has opted to engage in international cooperation with its space program rather than further enhance America's edge in the space race.

Even so, anti-Christ has had his hand in the mix, prompting the militarization of space with the "superpowers" launching weapons platforms into space, which remain an ever-present nuclear threat to peace and safety.

Medicine

In 1961 the first letter of the DNA code was deciphered by a little-known scientist, Marshall Nirenberg. His breakthrough research led to further research which, in 1965, resulted in chemist Robert Holley working out the exact structure of a nucleic acid that was biologically active. Since then, DNA science has offered many medical benefits, and contributed to forensic science in solving crimes. But it has also been used by anti-Christ to prompt ungodly experimentation in the field of eugenics and cloning, as well as in transhumanism (see our special report, *Transhumanism: Recreating Humanity*).

Associated with eugenics is birth control. Although Scripture has nothing to say about it, and people are free to decide for themselves whether or not to have children, the philosophical push for birth control and abortion are rooted in the attempts to reduce the human population and rid it of "undesirables," identified as non-white peoples. Margaret Sanger set the stage in the early 20th century with the founding of Planned Parenthood. Her objective was to thin out the population among black Americans. An associate of the Ku Klux Klan, Sanger's racist philosophy has been downplayed by the multi-billion dollar abortion industry. Her cause was enhanced when the FDA approved the first

birth-control pill in 1960. Sanger died not long after, on September 6, 1966. She was one of anti-Christ's foremost instruments in the deaths of millions of innocent children. Yet abortionists are a protected class in western society.

The Internet

In April, 1963, the idea for a computer network for the purpose of communications among computer users was formulated by computer scientist J.C.R. Licklider of BBN Technologies. His idea would become the basis for the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), funded by the U.S. Department of Defense. This would later develop into the Internet. The history of the Internet and how it works is too long and detailed to address here. Our concern is how the Internet, though offering many benefits for mankind, and without which we would have no access to much critical information—much of it withheld by the mainstream media, particularly regarding politics—anti-Christ has used it to seduce billions of people into pornography, violence, and many anti-Christ philosophies.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Movies

Motion pictures entered a new phase of shock as entertainment with the release of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* in 1960. Whereas previously, mayhem was largely hinted at in horror films, *Psycho's* graphic depiction of bloody violence set the stage for even more graphic images that would in time desensitize people to such violence. Anti-Christ knows how to play with man's psychological makeup to his advantage, and although *Psycho* was in itself not responsible for the increase of violence in western society, it did set a precedent for what came after. It was a fitting representation of the anti-social mentality of the youth of the 60s, which became inflamed through the gradual increase in the use of psychosis-inducing drugs such as LSD, crack cocaine, and heroin.

Music

The drug-fueled rebellion of the sixties was personified in the rise of rock 'n' roll music that went beyond the relative innocence of Elvis Presley and his 1950s contemporaries. The first stirrings of songs laced with sometimes veiled but evident graphic sexual lyrics started to come to the fore. Groups such as the Rolling Stones (1962) and the Beatles (1963) gained popularity, first in England, then in the United States. It wasn't long before the glorification of mind-altering drugs became *de rigueur* for the music of the "flower children" of the 60s.

By the end of the decade, the generation was ready for the Woodstock Music & Art Fair which took place on Max Yasgur's dairy farm in the Catskills of New York state from August 15 to 17, 1969. Billed as "An Aquarian Explosion," Woodstock was attended by 400,000 people, and the New Age became melded with the music industry. This would

become one of anti-Christ's most potent implements for removing western society from its biblical roots to adopt anti-Christ philosophies that would affect even the manner in which churches conducted their services, as well as what they stressed in their messages. That was easy enough to attain inasmuch as Beatle John Lennon's claim, "We're more popular than Jesus now," was met with little concern three years earlier in 1966.

When the musical production *Hair* opened on Broadway amidst critical acclaim, live theater sank to a new low. Audiences were not shocked by the nude performances they witnessed on the Broadway stage, and the dam broke on any attempts to censor content regardless of the age of audience members. After all, this was "legitimate" theater.

RELIGION

Satanism

The departure from truth in the secular West continued in the realm of religion, particularly with the founding of the Church of Satan by Anton Szandor LaVey on April 30, 1966. Satanists—at least those publicly disposed to call themselves as such—do not claim to believe in a literal Devil. They claim that God and Satan, or the Devil, are inventions of religion—particularly Christianity. They have adopted the symbolism of Satan in defiance of all that Christianity stands for, believing that Christianity stifles the nature of man to be who he evolved to become. According to the Church of Satan website:

To us, Satan is the symbol that best suits the nature of we who are carnal by birth—people who feel no battles raging between our thoughts and feelings, we who do not embrace the concept of a soul imprisoned in a body. He represents pride, liberty, and individualism—qualities often defined as Evil by those who worship external deities, who feel there is a war between their minds and emotions.

Although the Church of Satan claims no belief in a literal Devil, much of the occult symbolism that permeates all it produces can be historically linked to actual worship of devils in ancient western pagan societies. By stating that they have no battles raging between their thoughts and feelings, they reveal themselves as hedonists operating under an unconventional religious system. In other words, they revel in their sins, with religion as a covering that gives them a sense of legitimacy with a government that claims neutrality toward religious affiliation.

Interestingly, the Church of Satan has no church structures, nor are their central offices open to visitation by the public. Members operate on the "cabal" concept, secretly in autonomous groups with no central oversight other than the provision of Anton LaVey's teachings.

Is that not the way the first-century believers in Jesus gathered? While followers of Jesus have over the centuries founded many institutions—all at odds with one another to varying degrees—His enemies have taken the biblical model for gathering together and have perverted it for the use of sinful pleasures. This has to be one of anti-Christ’s greatest achievements in mocking our heavenly Father.

Black Theology

At the time that the Civil Rights Movement came upon the political scene, on July 31, 1966, a group of 51 clergy from predominantly black congregations formed the National Committee of Negro Churchmen (NCNC). They bought a full-page ad in the *New York Times* in which they proposed an aggressive approach to combating racism by melding the Bible with the Black Power philosophy

James H. Cone, a black American theologian, was a proponent of Black Theology patterned after Nation of Islam leader Malcolm X (nee Malcolm Little) who proclaimed in the 1950s that Christianity was “a white man’s religion.” According to Black religion expert Jonathan Walton:

James Cone believed that the New Testament revealed Jesus as one who identified with those suffering under oppression, the socially marginalized and the cultural outcasts. And since the socially constructed categories of race in America (i.e., whiteness and blackness) had come to culturally signify dominance (whiteness) and oppression (blackness), from a theological perspective, Cone argued that Jesus reveals himself as Black in order to disrupt and dismantle white oppression.

In much Black Theology, biblical concepts and views of God are sublimated in preference to concerns for social justice regarding what Black theologians consider “the oppressed.”

Certainly there were legitimate concerns, especially during this time when segregation was still practiced in the South. I was a witness to segregation while stationed in Georgia during my military service in the early 1960s. When I and some black friends went into Columbia, Georgia (near Fort Benning), on pass, I would go into a restaurant to order food, then bring it to my car and we would eat it there. It bothered me, but that’s how things were at that time.

The problem with Black Theology isn’t its concern for the oppressed; the problem is its disregard for biblical truth for the sake of social concerns. Concern for the oppressed is not incompatible with biblical truth. But anti-Christ has seduced many black people into activism, even violent activism, under the leadership of black clergy, and even some white clergy.

Had the movement adopted the biblical approach of love toward their oppressors rather than rage and violence that has often attended their demonstrations, Yahweh would have

been honored. Perhaps the goal of equality may have been delayed some, but true believers would leave that in the Father’s hands, recognizing that vengeance is His, and that the Lord’s Kingdom is not of this world, and that’s why His followers don’t fight (John 18:36).

I realize that for some, it’s easy for me to speak, not being black myself. But as a young American of Lebanese descent, I can tell you that I faced ridicule and discrimination myself. Perhaps it wasn’t as serious as some of my black friends have faced, but even as a Catholic at the time it laid the groundwork for my future life in Christ, which would teach me to trust our Lord for vindication rather than strike back in anger.

Anti-Christ has used the Black Theology Movement to create further dissension among people through class warfare promulgated by anti-Christ elements such as communism. This is why a Southern Baptist minister such as Martin Luther King, Jr., could affiliate with known communists. He, and those who have followed him in the Black Theology Movement, have joined hands with God’s enemies while claiming to serve Him.

YWAM

Founded in 1960 by 24-year-old Assemblies of God College student Loren Cunningham, Youth With A Mission (YWAM) started out with a noble goal: to train young people to take the Gospel into all the nations of the world. The organization’s first mission trip was to send two men in their early twenties to Liberia to build a road through the jungle to a leper colony. By 1970, YWAM had 40 full-time staff, and was on its way to becoming a large international institution. The phenomenal growth of YWAM was believed to be a testimony of God’s blessing.

Over time, however, YWAM became entangled in unbiblical and even ungodly activities, adopting much secular wisdom to guide its expanding influence. Adopting the mission strategy of C. Peter Wagner, Ralph D. Winter and the World Christian Movement, YWAM converts in some areas began making “converts” by melding indigenous pagan practices and beliefs with biblical teaching. (See my book, *The World Christian Movement: A Great Delusion Leading to the Religio-Political State of the Anti-Christ* [Sword Publishers, 2001.]) This is even true among Muslim “converts” where “Messianic Muslims” remain in their Islamic community, attend mosque gatherings, read their Qur’ans, pray to Allah, but “accept Christ [as Muslims understand Him] as their Savior.”

YWAM has joined forces with questionable leaders within Christianity, such as Benny Hinn, John Dawson, and several among the New Apostolic Reformation. (See our special report, *The New Apostolic Reformation: New Move or Old Deception?*)

Again, space does not allow us to address all of YWAM's aberrations, except to say that the organization's ecumenical nature encompasses not only Roman Catholicism but teachings and practices that incorporate New Age occultism, psychology, and other aberrant, unbiblical elements.

As most Christian institutions begun by men with noble aims, YWAM has fallen victim to anti-Christ's seduction by surrendering to human wisdom, thinking that man can accomplish Yahweh's work on earth through human effort. Sadly, they will insist that they are led by the Holy Spirit. Yet the Holy Spirit does not lead contrary to God's Word.

Catholic Charismatic Renewal

One of anti-Christ's more subtle deceptions transpired with what was believed to be a move of the Holy Spirit among Roman Catholics. In January, 1967, two professors of the Catholic Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Ralph Keifer and Patrick Bourgeois, attended the Congress of the Cursillo movement (a Catholic "apostolic" movement founded in Spain in 1944). There they were introduced to David Wilkerson's book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, and were intrigued by the book's emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They began practicing laying hands on people to receive the Holy Spirit, and people allegedly began "speaking in tongues" and being healed of various ills. The movement spread to become international. Today the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is found in over 230 countries, with over 160 million adherents.

The problem with the Catholic Charismatic Renewal is that it did not remove Catholics from the aberrant dogmas and practices of their church. They began praying to Mary and other "saints" "in the Spirit," receiving the Eucharist "in the Spirit" for spiritual and physical healing, and practiced mystical contemplative and meditative exercises "in the Spirit."

Because of the exhibition of speaking (read babbling) in "tongues," the Renewal was accepted by non-Catholic Pentecostals and charismatics willing to overlook the serious errors of Roman Catholicism, unconcerned that unbiblical practices were being attributed to the Holy Spirit. The Renewal contributed greatly to the ecumenical plot of the Vatican, desirous of bringing the "separated brethren" back to "Mother Church." Now, Pentecostal, charismatic, and even evangelical "evangelists" will not conduct their services without Catholic priests present. Catholics who come forward to give their lives to Christ are shuttled to the priests and Catholic laymen to make sure they return to the Catholic Church.

At the same time the Catholic Charismatic Renewal was working in the Catholic Church, other "high churches" such as the Episcopal/Anglican and Lutheran institutions were experiencing the same deception. Many books written by Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, and other institutional celebrities began to line the shelves of Christian bookstores, and continue to proliferate.

Women's Aglow

Women's Aglow is a female-led Bible teaching and ministering organization that also grew out of the charismatic movement. It began in 1967 with four women who were wives of members of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International. The initial name of the organization was Full Gospel Women's Fellowship, which spread rapidly among charismatic and Pentecostal women. In 1972 the organization became Women's Aglow Fellowship International, and in 1995, Aglow International. Its members now number men and women, although the name hasn't changed to reflect that.

One objective that grew out of Aglow is the "restoration of women according to the significance of their created role as outlined in the Bible."

Unfortunately, besides their unbiblical teachings and practices, Aglow has elevated women above men through its leadership role and Bible teaching contrary to Scripture.

Kenneth Copeland

In 1968, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland founded an evangelistic association, beginning with meetings in their home. The Copelands now command a multimillion dollar organization based on their Word of Faith teachings copied from Kenneth Hagin. The Word of Faith heresy has been one of anti-Christ's most widespread, useful, and profitable deceptions to turn people away from the purity of God's Word.

CONCLUSION

The 1960s was a decade of which it can be said, "If ever there was a turning point in Satan's unleashing of sheer evil upon the world and upon Christianity, this was that time." The world of innocence among youth and within society in general was transformed into a satanic cauldron of licentiousness, both physical and spiritual. Atheism, agnosticism, homosexuality, false religious experiences under the guise of "a move of the Holy Spirit," Roman Catholic ecumenism's invasion of evangelicalism, and other false teachings spread like wildfire.

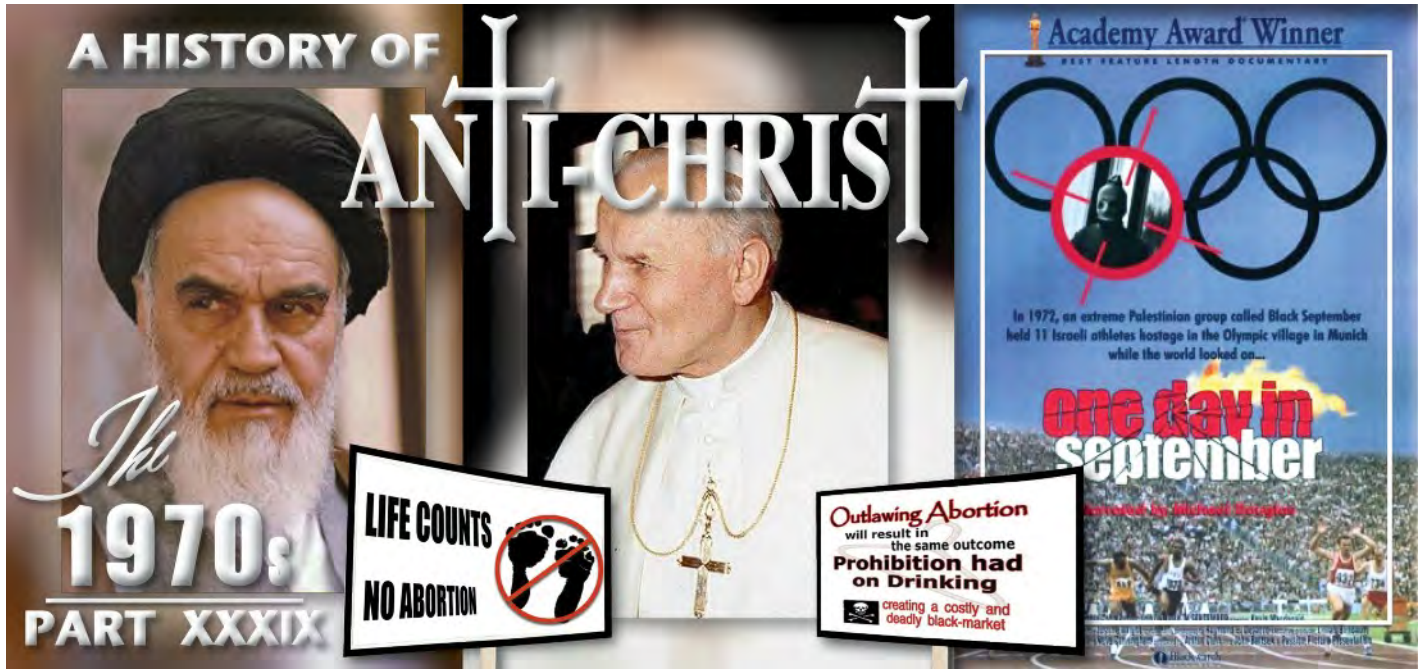
But it was only the tinder being ignited. The full holocaust of ungodliness would be unleashed in the coming decades. ❖

NEXT

THE 1970s

Nothing happens in this world that does not have spiritual implications. At one time in America's history it was shameful to be found in ungodliness. Now God's people are made to feel embarrassed standing for righteousness.

But there will be sorrow for those who call good "evil," and evil "good" (Isaiah 5:20).



THE 1970S WAS a decade in which large segments of western populations became so self-absorbed and focused on personal needs and desires with disregard for others, that American author Tom Wolfe was inspired to label it the “Me’ Decade.” The term first appeared in an essay titled “The ‘Me’ Decade and the Third Great Awakening,” first published as the cover story for the August 23, 1976, issue of *New York* magazine. Wolfe’s term described a self-serving attitude in contrast to the social norms of prior decades.

With the prosperity that developed in the West following World War II, the materialistic nature of the West’s citizens came to full bloom during the ensuing decades, gradually culminating in a sense of entitlement. This was largely the result of an increasing lack of discipline on the part of parents who wanted their children to have all the advantages that an industrialized society provides but without instilling the necessary moral and ethical foundation needed to handle it properly. This was exacerbated by popular parenting instructions foisted upon society by the likes of pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock, who we addressed in a previous chapter. Spock’s instructions on permissiveness had been gaining ever-growing acceptance since the publication in 1946 of his infamous book, *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*. The decade of the ’60s began to see the results of his satanic advice with the rebelliousness of youth on the rise.

1968 is generally regarded by historians as the highpoint of the protest wave that swept the West. The years 1974-1976 marked its end. This was largely because governments (particularly the United States) began to become more passive by scaling back military encounters and downsizing national law enforcement agencies which appeased the radical leftist anarchists. But that was only a temporary lull. Although the 1970s were less violent overall than the 1960s, the

rebelliousness merely took a more benign direction, expressing itself in the music venues of the time rather than out in the streets. Disco, Hip Hop, Crip Walk, and Punk dancing arose, the latter three forms leading to even more violence in the following decades.

As we look at the influence of anti-Christ in the world during the 1970s, we will perceive an even greater departure from the biblical ethic that guided Western Civilization for almost 2000 years, and a return to the barbarianism that characterized the entire world prior to the spreading of the Gospel.

ENTERTAINMENT

The music industry has always been on the cutting-edge of societal change. A nation’s mores can be solidly linked to the popular musical messages that come out of the multi-billion dollar music industry. Some of the most anti-social forms of music were spawned during the 1970s, including Hip Hop (including Rap), Crip Walk, and Punk.

Hip Hop

There is no specific starting point for hip hop; it evolved when block parties in New York City became popular among Black youths, particularly in the Bronx. Disc Jockeys played percussive breaks of popular songs by utilizing two turntables in order to extend the breaks. A subgenre to come out of hip hop is gangsta rap which focuses on violence, misogyny, and the impoverished lives of inner-city youths, incorporating political and social commentary. Various forms of hip hop have developed over time, but its roots in Black American inner-city gang culture remains evident.

Crip Walk

Also known as the C-Walk, Crip Walk originated among the Crip gang members of South Central Los Angeles. It emerged out of the rivalry between the Crips and Bloods

when that rivalry was capitalized upon by rappers on the West Coast of the United States who gave it the name Crip Walk. The unique Crip Walk dance steps to hip hop “music” were used by Crip gang members at parties as a testament to their affiliation. It was also used as a “Crip signature” after a gang member killed someone.

Although originally a strictly Crip symbolic dance, it has spread to become a popular hip hop dance for youth around the world.

Punk Rock

This genre of “music” is rooted in the 1960s garage band phenomenon whereby youths often uneducated in the science and art of music utilized guitars, drums, and other percussive instruments to make noise while pretending to be musicians. It was a phenomenon that developed primarily in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. The term “punk” was applied by critics to describe garage bands and their followers.

Out of this genre emerged a punk subculture that expresses youthful rebellion characterized by distinctive clothing that includes deliberately offensive, vulgar, and profane T-shirts, spiked arm- and neck-bands, spiked jewelry, and bondage and S&M clothes. Punk is especially popular among anarchists and other anti-authoritarian miscreants.

Disco

Although Disco is not among the anti-authoritarian, violence-prone genres addressed above, it nevertheless has an anti-social element to it. A combination of funk, pop, and salsa, disco appeals to sensuality with popular dances that are sexually suggestive. For this reason disco clubs became associated with promiscuity. They were popularized in movies such as *Saturday Night Fever*, *Thank God It's Friday*, *Car Wash*, and others with sexually-charged themes. There also developed among discotheque-goers a strong drug subculture.



The 1970s saw a continuation of anti-Christ’s use of music to mesmerize and seduce youth to an even greater extent than the preceding popularity of rock ‘n’ roll. With the exception of disco, the other named genres sacrificed even more musicality to appeal to the baser instincts of ungodly people. Sadly, even many Christians have succumbed to that appeal. These genres can be found in churches and Christian musical venues, only “Christianized” with words that, though often unintelligible, are said to “glorify God.”



Movies

1977 saw the release of *Star Wars*—the first in a long series of science-fiction/fantasy movies based on a single narrative. To date, the *Star Wars* enterprise, including prequels and sequels, has totaled \$3.376+ billion, not including re-releases. The special effects and compelling plot line of *Star Wars* combined to offer a unique entertainment experience for its time. Even Christians were enthralled with the movie to the point they were not only willing to overlook its occult theme centered on The Force, but some Christian leaders even tried to equate The Force with God and the theme of “good vs. evil” with the Gospel.

All of the *Star Wars* stories reinforce the idea of The Force—a mysterious, impersonal entity that permeates all things and holds the universe together. The spectacular special effects keep people’s (including Christians’) minds numbed to the obvious eastern mysticism that grips their consciousness as they proclaim, one to another, “May The Force be with you.”

To believers in Christ who understand eastern mysticism, it is apparent that The Force is not God, but an energy field latent within everyone. Through the practice of meditation it is said one can release it to bring one to one’s full human potential. In short, The Force is the power of witchcraft. In *Star Wars* the story is of white witchcraft versus black witchcraft—the light side vs. the dark side of the same Force.

For some time after the initial *Star Wars* was released, there could be seen books and bumper stickers that naively claimed “Jesus is The Force.” But Jesus is not The Force, nor is The Force Jesus. He is the Word of God who has existed throughout eternity. Whereas The Force is said to be “created by all living things,” Jesus was not created. Rather, He is the creator of all living things—in truth, of the entire physical universe (John 1).

Nor is there any dark side to Jesus as there is in The Force. In 1 John 1:5 we are told, “God is light, and there is no darkness at all in Him.”

Paul the apostle further reveals this truth in 2 Corinthians 6:14 when he asks, “What communion has light with darkness?”

For Christians to rationalize the identity of The Force and claim it is Jesus is a dangerous step toward synthesizing paganism with biblical truth—a problem that has plagued Christianity for almost two millennia.

Through even a cursory examination it can be found that The Force is nothing more than the eastern religious concept of a universal life force that is alleged to reside within all things. This life force is at once “god” and creature. Hence it is to be worshiped on the one hand and kept under control on the other. It is the same “god” worshipped by the Nazis.

Consider this statement by Martin Bormann, head of the Nazi Party Organization, as reported in the February 21, 1942, edition of the *London Daily Telegraph*:

If we National Socialists [Nazis] speak about “faith in God” we do not mean the same God as the naïve Christians....The natural Force which maintains these innumerable planets in the universe we call the Almighty or God.¹

Is this not identical to Obi Wan Kenobi’s definition of The Force?

Dr. Robert Ley, head of the Nazi labor front, left a message for future Germany before committing suicide in his prison cell:

We have forsaken God, and therefore we were forsaken by God. We put our human volition in place of His Godly grace.

Anti-Christ has used the dark philosophy of The Force to draw Christians away from their roots in the Gospel to a New Age gospel of human potential—a potential that may be realized for those who succumb to the deception of The Force. (See our special report, *The Force Behind The Force*.)

POLITICS

Women’s Rights

The battle for equal rights for women progressed through the decades since suffrage was granted to women in the late 19th century. On August 26, 1970, a more aggressive move toward an Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was spawned when the National Organization for Women (NOW) organized the first Strike for Equality Parade in New York City. The strike was primarily concerned with equal opportunity in the workplace, political rights for women, social equality in marriage and other relationships (lesbianism), abortion, and “free” childcare.

The protest included chanting and speeches by prominent feminists such as Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique*, who had originally proposed the strike to NOW.

¹ G.H. Lang, *World Chaos: Its Root and Remedy* (London: The Paternoster Press, 1948), p. 16.

Although the protests were met with opposition by the mainstream media at the time (how times have changed), and by conservative women’s groups, it did have an impact on the political scene, and would lead to a groundswell of support for the Equal Rights Amendment that would pass the Senate and be proposed to the states in 1972.

The Equal Rights Amendment failed to garner enough states for a super majority as required by the Constitution, largely because of the efforts of Phyllis Schlafly, founder and chairman of Eagle Forum, who mobilized large protests by Christian women and others who saw the amendment as a threat to the already protected status of women, particularly in the home. Yet in spite of the amendment’s failure to pass, many of its provisions have been incorporated into law through judicial and governmental bureaucratic fiat, as well as congressional law. Some of these provisions include unfettered access to abortion (*Roe v. Wade*), affirmative action in employment, particularly in government jobs (Equal Employment Opportunities Commission), affirmative action in education (Title IX of the Education Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965), even as other provisions continue to be promoted by feminist organizations. These protections for women were later broadened to prohibit discrimination due to sexual orientation and now, sexual identity (Barack Obama’s executive orders).

Ever since Eve was seduced by anti-Christ in the Garden, women have struggled to overcome the role assigned to them by Yahweh while they remain in their mortal condition during this present age. For millennia women used their feminine charms and wiles to get their way with men. Not content that in many ways they possess greater control than men over many aspects of life, ungodly women have sought to assert themselves as equal to men in roles granted exclusively to men by Yahweh.

This mirrors Satan’s desire to make himself equal to Yahweh.

It isn’t that women are inferior to men except in overall physical strength that our Father has assigned to them the position of helper to men, but because the woman was deceived (1 Timothy 2:13-14), and because the man was created before the woman:

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head inasmuch as he is the image and glory of God, and the woman is the glory of the man.

For the man is not [originally] from the woman; but the woman from the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have mastery over her head because of the angels.

Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord.

For as the woman is from the man, even so is the man also [born] by the woman, but all things by God. (1 Corinthians 11:7-12)

It is only in the Lord (that is, for those who are redeemed and born again by the Spirit of God) that there is equality in the eyes of Yahweh.

There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

Yet even then, in this age the woman is to be under the headship of the man. This can only be accomplished to any consistent degree within the Body of Christ, provided both men and women understand the reason and purpose for this. The only way it can work in the world is among men and women who, although not born again, are influenced by the Gospel through the biblical ethic that has influenced much of the world since the first century AD.

Anti-Christ is fully aware of this, and is fomenting discord between men and women in the world as he works to draw them further away from that biblical ethic. His control of the world system leads to the promotion of “women’s rights” that in truth will enslave women to their base nature as fallen creatures.

Roe v. Wade

The most nefarious of these special “rights” granted to women by the state is the right to abortion. This is not among the rights granted to mankind by our Creator as delineated in the U.S. Declaration of Independence; it is in truth nothing but a privilege granted to women by the state. It falls into the category of “civil rights,” an invention of the left gleaned from the 1936 Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The idea of civil rights, granted not by God but by the state, was later adopted by the United Nations as stated in its Charter, primarily authored by American communist aide to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Alger Hiss. Although there were Civil Rights Acts in 19th-century America, these were to assure that black people were not denied the same political and social rights enjoyed by whites. There were no broad attempts to adopt civil rights as granted by the state until the Soviet Union Constitution enumerated them, even as the state often violated them. Civil rights then made its way into U.S. politics as a further attempt to right certain wrongs experienced by blacks in America into the 1960s and ’70s. In all cases, there were never attempts to define abortion as a civil right until Planned Parenthood came on the scene early in the 20th century and proposed abortion and birth control as a way to commit genocide on Blacks and other non-white people. Planned Parenthood’s nefarious plot was given legal status through the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling declaring abortion a civil right in its Roe v. Wade decision on January 22, 1973. With that

decision, all state laws limiting access to abortion to the first trimester of pregnancy were abrogated for the entire United States of America. This legislation by fiat has stood against attempts by religious and other right-thinking groups to curtail the easy access to abortion.

It is a fact that Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, crusaded for abortion and birth control as a means to cut down the non-white population of America and other western nations. But anti-Christ has used those strategies to cut down the population of whites as well, especially Christians, many of whom seem to believe that a woman has the right to kill her baby, even up to the moment of birth.

Since Roe v. Wade, easy access to abortion has spread to other nations also, including during this decade to Italy (1977).

TECHNOLOGY

Bar Codes

In 1970, the National Association of Food Chains (NAFC) established the Ad-Hoc Committee for U.S. Supermarkets on a Uniform Grocery-Product Code. The purpose was to set guidelines for barcode development. There came from this a standardized 11-digit code to identify products through a barcode system using scanners. Several companies were approached to come up with the best system. Ultimately, IBM’s process was adopted and, in time, was implemented for grocery chains.

Today, barcodes are used extensively to identify not only groceries, but virtually every product sold, as well as pets, employees, hospital patients, prisoners, and you name it.

The creation of the barcode has given rise to concerns among many Christians that it may one day be used as an identifying mark of the anti-Christ. Some therefore consider the use of barcodes an evil in itself.

Be that as it may, even if the barcode were never invented, God’s Word is sure. The man, Anti-Christ, will come to power one day, and barcode or not, he will hold sway over a significant portion of mankind.

TERRORISM

Highjackings

In July, 1970, Israel, Jordan, and Egypt agreed to a cease-fire to end the Six-Day War. This sparked outrage among many Muslim anti-Israel factions, among them the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) whose leader George Habash had vowed, “If a settlement is made with Israel, we will turn the Middle East into a hell.” Habash and his lieutenant, Wadi Haddad, planned a series of airplane hijackings by which they issued a series of formal demands that called for the release of some 3,000 Palestinian and Arab prisoners held in Israeli and European jails.

On September 6, 1970, the PFLP almost simultaneously hijacked three jetliners shortly after they had taken off from

European airports en route to the United States. The hijackers on one of the airplanes were foiled, so others seized a fourth jet, diverting it to Cairo, Egypt. The other two were flown to Dawson Field in Jordan. Yet another jet was hijacked three days later.

Over time, all the hostages were released as were many Palestinian and Arab prisoners.

These high-profile hijackings were four of 29 attempted or carried out by Palestinian factions between 1968 and 1977, and they triggered the Jordanian civil war. The PFLP and PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) sought to depose King Hussein of Jordan. When they failed in their coup, the hostage crisis came to an end with the release by the PFLP of the last six hostages in exchange for the release of several Palestinian and Arab prisoners.

Munich Olympics

At 4:30 AM on September 5, 1972, eight members of the Black September faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization climbed a two meter chain-link fence into the Olympic Village that housed athletes from all the competing nations. They were assisted by other, unsuspecting athletes (it's not clear if they were Americans or Canadians). Once inside, they used stolen keys to enter the two apartments housing the Israeli team. There they met resistance, and after a struggle in which two Israelis and two terrorists were killed, the intruders managed to capture nine hostages, and demanded the release of 234 Palestinians and non-Arabs jailed in Israel. But Israel's policy is never to negotiate with terrorists. Two botched attempts by German police to rescue the hostages resulted in the Palestinians killing the hostages. All but three of the terrorists died from police gunfire; those three were captured.

The Islamic terrorism that sparked these hijackings and kidnappings is at its root anti-Christ. Ever since the establishment of the state of Israel, Islamic terrorism has held the world hostage even while Islam continues to wage war against Christians and Jews. Anti-Christ has used terrorism to contrast with and hide his even more nefarious design to subvert the West through immigration and procreation, further destroying the biblical ethic that has guided the West for centuries.

Toward the end of the '70s terrorism gained a foothold among nation states in the Middle East.

Iran

On January 16, 1979, the deposed, cancer-ridden, dying Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza, boarded a plane to take him out of Iran to exile in Egypt. His departure brought to power the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini who would institute a strong Islamic religious state. Mohammad Reza's abdication marked the end of over 2,500 years of continuous Iranian monarchy since the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great. During his reign, the Shah oversaw a secular

government with ties to Israel. With his departure came a religious tyranny and a nation bent on Israel's destruction. To this day, Iran remains Israel's greatest enemy and an enemy of the United States, giving anti-Christ considerable clout in his design to turn the world against Israel and her allies, which we see coming to fruition more every day.

WAR

Yom Kippur War

Having never recovered from their humiliating defeat in the Six-day War of 1967, Egyptian and Syrian forces chose Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish year, to launch a coordinated surprise attack against Israel. The date was October 6, 1973, and as Egyptian troops moved deep into the Sinai Peninsula, Syrian troops tried desperately to throw Israeli troops out of the Golan Heights. Iraqi and Jordanian forces joined the siege shortly after.

Israel's counterattack overthrew the Syrians and recaptured the Golan Heights. This new attempt by anti-Christ to remove Israel's buffer of protection met with such resistance that his armies had to settle for a cease-fire on October 25, just three weeks later. Israel suffered tremendous losses, having been unprepared with many of its soldiers on leave for the holiday. Although Egypt again suffered defeat at the hands of Israel, in 1974, Egypt's Premier Anwar Sadat was able to negotiate the first of two Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreements which provided for the return of portions of the Sinai to Egypt. A 1979 peace treaty between Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin allowed for the return of the last segment of the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt. This was realized in 1982.

Again, anti-Christ had sought to destroy Israel, but God's Word is sure. Israel will remain, and Jerusalem will be inhabited by the Jews at the time the Lord Jesus returns to establish His millennial Kingdom.

ENVIRONMENTALISM

Earth Day

In October, 1969, John McConnell, the son of an itinerant Pentecostal preacher, addressed the National UNESCO Conference in San Francisco with



the proposal for a global holiday to celebrate the earth's life and beauty, and to advance the cause of peace on earth. His desire was to alert mankind to the need for preserving the ecological balances of nature. His proposal garnered strong support and led to an Earth Day Proclamation by the City of San Francisco. The first celebration of Earth Day took place on March 21, 1970, in conjunction with the spring equinox. It has been celebrated around the world every year since then on the day of the spring equinox.

In June, 1970, McConnell created the Earth Day Proclamation for worldwide use and awareness. It was signed by 36 world leaders, including UN Secretary General U Thant.

The next year one of the largest environmental groups in the world was founded. Greenpeace has been a mixed bag of good and bad activism for environmental concern. But many of its tactics have been illegal and dangerous.

Due to the sometimes radical left's efforts to "save the earth," Congress in 1973 passed the Endangered Species Act which, on occasion, has been misused to place the welfare of animals and even insects above the welfare of humans.

There is certainly nothing wrong with caring for the earth. In truth, that is what our Father expects of His children. True believers in Jesus do not purposely create conditions that will damage the environment (Genesis 1:26). However, Earth Day has become more of a pagan celebration of "Mother Earth," drawing people's attention to bacchanalian festivals and orgies in the wildernesses of the world. Anti-Christ has demonstrated his proclivity for turning a commendable if not godly expression of concern for nature into a celebration of the earth as a goddess (Romans 1:22-25).

SCIENCE

Genetic Engineering

As mankind's audacity led him to ever-increasing attempts to manipulate God's natural order, experiments in eugenics were given a boost with the first successful freezing of mouse embryos in 1972. This was a significant step in the process of developing Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART). This culminated in the birth of the first "test tube baby," Louise Brown, on July 25, 1978.

There is no doubt that *in vitro* fertilization has been a boon to many women who could not otherwise bear children. Yet whenever man tampers with nature, there remains a de facto affront to the role of God in determining the outcome. Also, there are no moral guidelines to the use of *in vitro* that would ensure that only married couples (men and women) would have access to the process.

Anti-Christ has always been on the attack against marriage and the family as designed by God. Eugenics and its results have been one of his greatest tools.

In 1976 the first artificial gene was created, leading to genetic engineering breakthroughs that have commonplace applications today. This is most notable in Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) utilized in the agriculture industry. Where genetic engineering will take mankind—should the Lord not return anytime soon—can only be imagined. Genetic engineering is being considered for animal and plant breeding, and is closely related to cloning and stem cell research.

When one specie's genetic material is added to a host specie, a new transgenic organism may be created.

There are no set international standards to regulate genetic engineering involving humans and other animals, and some technocrats surmise the possibility of creating a "master race" that would be superior to naturally born humans.

This is exactly what Hitler envisioned, but today the science is almost to the point of realizing his dream. And what greater anti-Christ was there than Adolf Hitler for his time?

When man is inspired by anti-Christ to tamper with nature, he is waving his fist at his Creator, daring Him to do something about man's inordinate desire to be like God.

Wait until God's fist returns the salute.

TECHNOLOGY

Home Computers

In 1975, Altair, the first home computer, was marketed, providing new technology for the home. At first, the computer was useful for educational purposes and for various means of personal financial and home management. It wasn't long before it became a primary source of entertainment, not all of it wholesome. The home computer has opened the door for sexual content and contact that has allowed anti-Christ's attack on marriage and the family stupendous success.

Need I say more?

Not only is illicit sex pervasive on home computers, video games have captured the minds of millions of adults and children. Although the first commercially successful video game, Pong, mesmerized people with its simple "tennis game" approach, technological advances in gaming have given free rein to human imagination which, according to God's Word, is only evil continually (Genesis 6:5). Young children are, if not carefully monitored by godly parents (who are few today), exposed to sexual and violent content that can sear their consciences (1 Timothy 4:1-2). Not to mention chat rooms, social media, and other dangerous, anti-Christ content.

RELIGION

First Female Priests

The '70s saw a breakthrough in feminism when the first female priests were ordained in the Episcopal Church in the United States. On July 29, 1974, four Episcopal bishops ordained eleven women as priests, although the ordinations lacked "recommendation from the standing committee," a canonical prerequisite for ordination. Known as the "Philadelphia Eleven," the women's ordination was initially opposed by the House of Bishops, but in 1976 the General Convention of the Episcopal Church granted its approval. Since then, several denominations have ordained women, and it has become commonplace within mainstream churches.

This breakthrough for feminism was possible because the mainstream Protestant churches involved had long before departed from the biblical expression of ministry in the

assembly. Having inherited the concept of priesthood from their former Roman Catholic roots, their clergy-laity foundation was anti-Christ. How could it not devolve further into a female dominant role?

Not to be outdone, even Pentecostal and charismatic as well as some fundamental churches have taken to ordaining not priests, but female pastors and teachers, also contrary to the Scriptures they claim are their sole source of doctrine and practice.

The subjective nature of the religious spirit serves anti-Christ by compromising God's Word with the rationale that, if the Holy Spirit leads, then the letter of the Word must yield. What the religious spirit fails to understand is that the Holy Spirit never leads contrary to the Word of God.

Pope John Paul II

The world was shocked in 1978 when the Roman Catholic College of Cardinals chose a non-Italian pope for the first time since 1503. Born Karol Jozef Wojtyla in the Polish town of Wądrowice, Pope John Paul II became an immediate sensation. His coronation sparked unheard of praise from world leaders and even many leaders within evangelical Christianity. I recall Pat Robertson gleefully exclaiming, "We have a new pope!"



My internal reaction was, "What do you mean 'we,' white eyes?"

The Catholic Church may have had a new pope, but where did an alleged leader within non-Catholic Christianity get off by claiming the pope for the rest of us?

Actually, I was not surprised by Wojtyla's election. When Pope Paul VI died on August 6, 1978, I recall telling my mother that I didn't believe the next pope would be Italian, but would come from a communist country, or have ties within communist circles. She was surprised, of course. There hadn't been a non-Italian pope since Giuliano della Rovere was elected as Julius II in 1503. What prompted my "prophecy" was my knowledge of world events coupled with my understanding of last-days prophecy.

I was surprised to be found wrong when the Italian Albino Luciani was elected John Paul I on August 26, 1978. In fact, I was pretty confused, and wondered if I didn't know what I knew.

When John Paul I died mysteriously just one month later on September 28, I again anticipated a non-Italian pope with the expected credentials.

Then came John Paul II, and the unprecedented joy and acclaim that accompanied his election not only among Catholics, but by the entire world. Surely, I believed, this man is special and there is a spiritual dimension to his election that is unique if not unprecedented.

History has shown how great an impact his papacy had on the world political scene, particularly with the downfall of the USSR through his efforts in conjunction with U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

John Paul II was a "progressive" pope, taking the influence of Roman Catholicism into world politics to formerly unheard of heights since the heyday of the Holy Roman Empire. His successors have built upon that influence, and have been even more "progressive" (i.e., leftist) than he.

Anti-Christ has used the papacy to foment intrigue and wars throughout history, as well as persecution of the saints. In these last days, the papacy is more supportive of "world peace" even at the expense of freedom. It moves in leftist circles and adopts leftist causes, even finding compromise with homosexuality and abortion, subjects that previous popes had always held a firm stance against.

It remains to be seen what role the papacy will play in the last-days anti-Christ's terrorism against all things righteous.

Charismatic Movement

The 1970s saw an explosion of activity within the Charismatic Movement, some not so bad, most terribly bad. The most positive elements centered around the Jesus Movement that began to stir in the late 1960s, coming to its peak in the 1970s. This was a major element that came out of the hippie counterculture to impact Protestantism. It began on the West Coast of the United States, primarily in the beach communities of Southern California. From there it spread rapidly throughout the U.S. to other parts of the world.

Calvary Chapel

Out of the Jesus Movement sprang a number of churches, some already in existence but dying out until the hippies began invading them looking for answers to their discontent that they couldn't find in drugs, sex, and rock 'n' roll. Responding to the Gospel in droves, they claimed that Jesus gave them the "high" they were looking for.

The largest church movement to grow as a result was Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California, pastored by Chuck Smith, a former pastor within the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel founded by Aimee Semple McPherson. Based on claimed prophecy by Smith and others close to him, he was to become a world-renowned pastor and teacher. When former hippie John Higgins Jr. introduced Smith to "hippie evangelist" Lonnie Frisbee, Frisbee became the catalyst for the growth of Calvary Chapel, leading evangelistic outreaches to hippies in Southern California. Frisbee co-founded the House of Miracles commune with John Higgins, Sr.

Frisbee would later be disowned by Calvary Chapel because of his homosexuality which caused a scandal within the community. Eventually, Frisbee contracted AIDS and died as a result. He was interred in the late Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral Memorial Gardens.

But Frisbee's influence on Calvary Chapel remained, and Chuck Smith's laid-back style coupled with his fatherly image captured the hearts and minds of the disenfranchised and homeless hippies. Without coercion, many of them began to become conformed to the norms of society, casting off their hippie clothing and trappings and getting jobs, wearing ties (or at least more conventional clothing), and quitting drugs and alcohol.

Late in his life, Smith would depart from his anti-Catholic stance to become somewhat ecumenical, even embracing Rick Warren, with whom he had previously expressed displeasure over doctrine.

As a former attendee at Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, where Jean and I met, it saddens me to see the direction in which the Calvary Chapels have gone of late, many embracing ecumenism, the emergent church movement, and some forms of mysticism that characterizes many churches within the Vineyard Movement that was born out of Calvary Chapel when John



Chuck Smith

Wimber and Chuck Smith parted ways. (See our special report, *The Vineyard: History, Teachings, & Practices*.)

As flawed as Calvary Chapel was and is, having been touched by anti-Christ in numerous ways, it was probably the most positive element of the Charismatic Movement for its day. Just about everything else has been corrupt, if not at its beginning, certainly as it progressed.

Space doesn't allow for in-depth analysis of every aspect of the explosion of popularity within charismatism. But it is important that I touch some significant highlights of how anti-Christ worked within that movement.

Christian Television

The early 1970s saw the rise of Christian Television, primarily within the United States. The largest network to come into existence was Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) founded by Paul and Jan Crouch along with Jim and Tammy Bakker in 1973. TBN was unique in that, although there were many Christian programs broadcasting on other established networks, TBN built its own facilities and owned its own licenses to broadcast independently of others. The

Bakkers had previously been working with Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), helping it to grow.

Parting ways with TBN about one year later, the Bakkers founded their own network, The PTL Television Network, with their flagship program, *The PTL Club* airing on hundreds of stations.

Between TBN, PTL, and CBN, Christians were inundated with charismatic teachers who were little known, and even unknown prior. These include Latter-Rain proponents Earl Paulk and Larry Lea, shepherding founder Bob Mumford, church growth guru C. Peter Wagner, and flamboyant "fakirs" Benny Hinn and Rodney Howard-Browne, all of whom grew to prominence in the 1970s.

There is little within Christian television that can be regarded as even close to biblical; it is a virtual wasteland of false teaching and, at best, flaccid, lowest-common-denominator preaching. Christian television has been a great tool of anti-Christ to lead believers and non-believers alike away from the purity of God's Word into a morass of false teachings. Add to this the scandals that have made a laughing stock of the faith among non-believers, and it is evident that Christian television has served the enemy far more than it has served our Father in Heaven.

Even so, He has used Christian television on occasion to impart some truths, and to touch the lives of many who would not otherwise have had any access to those truths.

Shepherding-Discipleship Movement

The increasing subjectivity of the Charismatic Movement was bound to lead to serious error. As more and more Christians became disillusioned with their churches for various reasons (most legitimate), they found themselves foundering in a sea of confusion and uncertainty, looking for something or someone to give them spiritual direction.

Toward the late 1960s, two young Catholics, Steve Clark and Ralph Martin, who were on the secretariat of the Cursillo movement (a Roman Catholic advocacy group), became deeply involved in the Charismatic Renewal. These men formed The Word of God group which, by the mid-1970s had attained a membership of some 1,000. By 1990, through a subsidiary organization known as the Sword of the Spirit, they controlled an international network that affects the spiritual and social lives of millions of people.

In 1970, Clark and Martin began to introduce stringent structures within the Word of God group, creating coordinators and district subgroups called "subcommunities." They also began formal initiation into membership, requiring each member to make public commitments to the group through covenants.

Sometime in the 1970s, Clark and Martin began to make contacts with the leaders of Christian Growth Ministries in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Christian Growth Ministries was formed in 1970 by four popular charismatic Bible teachers. Don Basham (Disciples of Christ), Bernard (Bob) Mumford (Assemblies of God), Derek Prince (philosopher turned Pentecostal), and Charles Simpson (former Southern Baptist), were frequent contributors to *New Wine* magazine published by the Holy Spirit Teaching Mission (HSTM) in Fort Lauderdale Florida.

Under these men's leadership, HSTM changed its name to Christian Growth Ministries (CGM), and *New Wine* became the most widely circulated charismatic publication.

The four men began developing teachings on authority, submission, pastoral care, and discipleship, disseminating their teachings through *New Wine* and CGM-sponsored seminars and conferences. Three of these conferences in particular, called "Shepherds Conferences," would catalyze the Shepherding Movement (aka Discipleship Movement or Shepherding-Discipleship Movement). The first was a conference held in Leesburg, Florida, in March, 1973, drawing 450 charismatic pastors and lay leaders. The second, held in June, 1974, at Montreat, North Carolina, drew over 1,700 pastors and leaders. It was at this conference that a Canadian Pentecostal, W.J.E. (Ern) Baxter, joined the four. Together they became famously (or infamously) known as "The Fort Lauderdale Five."

These five, together with Clark and Martin, along with John Poole, formed a secret group called "the Council." The purpose of the Council was to coordinate efforts between the Word of God and Christian Growth Ministries in a common cause to convert the world through ecumenical cooperation in a tightly controlled spiritual environment.

The method of operation for the Council was to offer support and advice to major charismatic leaders. For example, Derek Prince was authorized to produce a curriculum for Morris Cerullo and to work on the board of one of Cerullo's institutes.

The Council's collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church is significant. It was largely the Council's work that put together the historic Kansas City Conference in 1977 and, subsequently, the Washington for Jesus Conference in 1980. The purpose was to demonstrate unity in the Spirit in an ecumenical environment.

Shepherding-Discipleship's modus operandi is to wield virtually total control over the lives of Christians they are able to seduce into their web of deceit. Abuses abound, where people are not allowed to do so much as go shopping without their "shepherd's" permission. They are told whom to marry, with whom they may associate, and even wives are more subject to the shepherds than to their own husbands.

Shepherding-Discipleship is not merely an aberration that affects individual personal lives. It is a broad-based ecumenical outreach designed to conform the entire Body of Christ to an authoritarian structure with the purpose of achieving dominion over the temporal world system. (See

Vengeance is Ours: The Church in Dominion [Sword Publishers, 1990])

The ecumenical approach disregards sound doctrine in favor of "unity." The real purpose is not to bring people to Christ (although by God's grace that does happen) as much as it is to bring them to unification under a religious hierarchy.

Shepherding-Discipleship exemplifies the authoritarianism needed to implement and sustain any attempt at establishing a theocratic or theonomic state. Although it is believed that Shepherding-Discipleship has died out, it still flourishes among dominionist groups.

Bob Mumford made public apologies for the abuses incurred under the Shepherding-Discipleship movement, but his apologies went only so far as to say that the abuses were the result of overzealousness on the part of some shepherds. The concept, he said, was still viable.

The Shepherding-Discipleship movement continues as one of anti-Christ's most potent means to deceive and enslave Christians.

Jonestown Massacre

We can't leave off the subject of anti-Christ's influence in religion without reminding ourselves of Jim Jones and the self-induced massacre of his cult in Jonestown, Guyana, on November 18, 1978. So infamous was that gruesome event, and so shocking to the world, that it remains the largest such event in modern history. In all, 918 people, including 304 minors, drank poisoned Flavor Aid, a Kool-Aid type beverage.

We need not delve any further than this to recognize anti-Christ's trademark hatred of all things called "Christian," even if far removed from biblical faith. ❖

NEXT

THE 1980s

Robertson, Robison endorse *The Shack*

Pat Robertson and James Robison have come out with praise for *The Shack*, the recently released movie based on the best-selling book by William P. Young.

Space doesn't permit a long dissertation on the novel's heretical storyline. Truly discerning believers know its ungodly premise is not suitable even if it is designed to draw the "unchurched" to "God." Our concern is with the lack of discernment on the part of Christian leaders today.

Or is it lack of discernment? I will not judge, but anyone who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit should be able to see through such obvious unscriptural stories as that within *The Shack*.

It's amazing how some leaders can be so right on in some things, but so off base on the obvious. ❖



ALTHOUGH THE WORLD is much larger than the United States, the fact remains that this nation is the driving force of the world's economy and social mores. By God's design, America is the benchmark for what all nations strive to be, if not in practice, certainly in terms of their citizens' personal aspirations. American culture—its music, art, politics, entertainment, and social progress—is carefully monitored and copied to varying degrees by the world. And although the pagan hedonism of the West's past prior to the spread of the Gospel seems to first make its comeback in Western Europe and spread to the United States, once the U.S. embraces it, the entire world becomes infected by it. To a large extent that may be attributed to the influence of the mass communications media.

The influence of America's mass media touches virtually every nation on earth via satellite communications. Americans are largely ignorant of other nations' politics and culture, but American politics and culture are well-known to a large part of the world's population. Thus, America's history forms the basis for much of the world's history, and that's why we find ourselves focusing so much on the U.S. in this study on the History of Anti-Christ.

As much as America has been blessed by God, so, too, it has come under the attack of anti-Christ. If America ultimately gives way to the anti-Christ agenda, the entire world will be further lost than it presently is.

With that in mind we continue our series with an eye to the coming day when all history will culminate in the final plan of the ages administered at the behest of our Creator.

And so we look at one of the most critical times in the nation's history—the 1980s.

The social and political upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s were characterized by radical leftist and counter-cultural

movements. The Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, and the turmoil that bubbled up in the Middle East, among other things, had caused much uncertainty in the West, particularly in the United States. By the end of President Jimmy Carter's time in office, the country was plagued by a stagnant economy, inflation, rising crime and foreign policy turmoil. Carter has been characterized by many as a well-meaning but incompetent buffoon who was a better peanut farmer than politician. I believe that is an unfair assessment of his legacy. Perhaps he was just too much of a "nice guy" to be effective in the office of the most powerful man in the world. His liberal policies were based more on a misguided understanding of the responsibility of government in a constitutional republic than they were a malicious intent to undermine the fabric of our nation's governing institutions and laws. Even so, his administration led the U.S. into near economic and political disaster.

With that came an even greater discontent among the people, many who had just entered adulthood from growing up as the Second Lost Generation, given over to a psychedelic drug culture

When Ronald Reagan came on the scene with a message of hope and revitalization of the American Dream, the disillusioned public rallied to his cry, providing a landslide victory that saw 49 of the 50 states' electoral votes going to the Republican contender.

Yet as much as Reagan managed to lift the hopes for a better future for America's citizens, there remained then, as always, an ignorance of man's fallen nature that provides no lasting or sure solution to the ills of mankind. The cycles of economic and political turmoil may have swung upward, but the sins of mankind prevented them from avoiding much woe during the decade of the 1980s.

POLITICS

First Woman Justice

In 1981 the feminist movement received a boost when, on September 21, Sandra Day O'Connor was affirmed by the U.S. Senate to become the first woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1992, O'Connor would reaffirm *Roe v. Wade* in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*,



along with justices David Souter, Anthony Kennedy, Harry Blackmun, and John Paul Stevens. Thus anti-Christ's onslaught against the innocent unborn was unimpeded. It should be noted that Blackmun was nominated by Richard Nixon, Souter by George H.W. Bush, O'Connor and Kennedy by Ronald Reagan, and Stevens by Gerald Ford—all Republican presidents. In fact, the only justice not nominated by a Republican president was Byron White, a John F. Kennedy pick, who dissented on the case, proving that anti-Christ's tentacles reach far deeper and wider than realized.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Personal Computers

The year 1981 saw a huge surge in the proliferation of personal home computers with the entrance into that market by IBM. Intending to base its system on Gary Kildall's CP/M-80 operating system, IBM approached Kildall's company, Digital Research, for a version of CP/M that would drive IBM's home computers. Unable to negotiate an agreement with Digital Research, IBM turned to Bill Gates, who had already been providing the ROM BASIC interpreter for PCs. Gates offered 896-DOS, developed by Tim Paterson of Seattle Computer Products, which IBM rebranded as PC DOS. With the combined success of the Apple II and the IBM PC, the home computer would attain unprecedented acclaim when it was named *Person of the Year* for 1982 by *Time* magazine—the first time in history that this award was given to an inanimate object.

Time was somewhat perceptive, considering the tremendous degree of sophistication attained by computer developers approaching the threshold of artificial intelligence, promising more human-like characteristics for computers in the near future. Anti-Christ's onward trek toward a Brave New World under his leadership will without a doubt require such technology to implement his regional dominance.

Internet Domains

Not long after the explosion of the home computer market, the first Internet domain name was created on January 1, 1985, for Nordu.net, the first root server (nic.nordu.net). The first Internet domain name ever registered, Symbolics.com, was granted to XF Investments on March 15, 1985.

The creation of the Internet has proven both a blessing and a curse—perhaps more a curse than a blessing considering that the vast majority of its use has followed the same pattern as all of technology—a miniscule amount used for the glory of God; the vast majority used for the glory of man and/or Satan's kingdom.

The home computer combined with the Internet has allowed anti-Christ into the homes of untold millions (perhaps billions) of people, giving vent to man's philosophies and ungodly content. Pornography has become the largest reason for using home computers, resulting in corrupted youth as well as adults, broken marriages, and criminal activity related to sexual abuse of minors. *Huffpost* reported in May, 2013, that 30 percent of all data transferred across the Internet is pornography. Some porn sites stream as much as six times the bandwidth as Hulu, an American subscription video-on-demand service in a joint venture with the Walt Disney Company (through Disney-ABC Television Group).

The Internet has replaced the sleazy porn theaters that had previously dotted the American urban landscape, making access less expensive and much broader.

Anti-Christ has used this delivery method to corrupt many Christians including large numbers of pastors and other ministers. Few homes have not been touched by the Internet and its ungodly content.

World Wide Web (www)

Contrary to the claims of Al Gore, the World Wide Web (aka "the Web") was invented by English scientist Tim Berners-Lee in 1989. Berners-Lee wrote the first Web browser computer program a year later while employed at the European Council for Nuclear Research (CERN—Fr.: Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire) in Switzerland. With the invention of the World Wide Web the Information Age grew by leaps and bounds as billions of people began to interact on the Internet across the globe. It also gave greater access to information for computer users all over the world, giving anti-Christ even more access to the minds of men.

MEDICINE

AIDS

In June, 1981, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) published a report on five young homosexuals in Los Angeles who were suffering from fatal or life-threatening Pneumocystis pneumonia (PCP), virtually never seen in people with healthy immune systems. On July 4 of the same year the CDC reported that an unusual skin cancer—Kaposi's sarcoma

(KS)—was killing young, previously healthy men in New York City and California. In 1982 the CDC named this new disease acquired immune deficiency syndrome or AIDS. Scientists came to realize that AIDS is spread by an infection in contaminated blood. Because AIDS became known widely to infect homosexual men in particular, the first AIDS advocacy groups were formed by homosexuals and sympathizers.

By 1983, AIDS was becoming epidemic among homosexual men, but the CDC warned that it may also be spread by heterosexual sex and by mother-to-child transmission. The stigma of homosexuality is dampened by this announcement because it is not widely reported that the only way a heterosexual could contract AIDS is if they have had sex with someone who had previously engaged in homosexual behavior with an infected man, or if they received a transfusion of blood from an AIDS-infected person. This latter risk prompted the U.S. Public Health Service to request that “members of groups at increased risk for AIDS stop donating blood.”

Also in 1983, Pasteur Institute researchers discovered a virus in the swollen lymph gland of an AIDS patient. They called it lymphadenopathy-associated virus (LAV). At the University of California at San Francisco the virus was found and called antiretroviral (ARV)—AIDS-related virus. In 1986, the virus was formally named HIV: human immunodeficiency virus.

In spite of the undeniable connection between AIDS and homosexuality, public health officials, the media, and government in general refuse to address the underlying cause of the epidemic. Yet they work to engender sympathy for homosexuals as if homosexuals are innocent victims. In 1985, following the death from AIDS of her dear friend, actor Rock Hudson, actress Elizabeth Taylor became the founding international chairman of AmFAR, the American Foundation for AIDS Research. That same year, the first International AIDS Conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia. Larry Kramer’s largely autobiographical stage play about AIDS, *The Normal Heart*, shocked New York audiences, and prompted outspoken and strong demands for the government to fund AIDS research.

In 1986, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop urged parents to have a “frank and open conversation” about AIDS with their children and teens. At the same time, work on the AIDS Memorial Quilt began with the purpose of educating the masses about the threat of AIDS. The idea for the AIDS Memorial Quilt was conceived by AIDS activist Cleve Jones in memory of assassinated homosexual San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk and Mayor George Moscone. The quilt is made of panels bearing the names of AIDS victims. Weighing some 54 tons, the quilt is today the largest piece of community folk art in the world.

In 1987, the year pianist Liberace died of AIDS, the U.S. government adopted an immigration policy barring people with HIV; it was reversed in 2010 by Barack Obama.

The first World AIDS Day was observed on December 1, 1988, following huge protests demanding and receiving a “fast-track” policy from the FDA to allow public access to drugs still in clinical trial—a policy seldom invoked by the FDA.

By 1992, AIDS was the leading cause of death in the U.S. among men aged 25-44, taking the lives of many entertainment celebrities. This continues to spur the anti-AIDS movement among big-name entertainers. When Los Angeles Lakers basketball star Magic Johnson announced in 1991 that he was HIV positive, he was proclaimed a “hero” in the media for his openness. Because Johnson denied having contracted the disease through homosexual acts, the stigma of homosexuality was lessened, and sympathy for the homosexual community increased.

In 1996-1997 the AIDS drug cocktail—highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART)—was developed, but it had serious side effects. Since then, newer, more powerful drugs have been approved. Yet the medical profession has not been able to remove HIV from the body. The best accepted treatments today mask the disease and extend life, but they do not cure AIDS. By 2002, AIDS had become the leading cause of death worldwide for people aged 15-59. As late as 2008, the CDC declared HIV in America worse than thought with 1.1 million infected—an 11% increase since 2003, while new HIV infection rates continue to soar among homosexuals. Even so, society continues to live in denial of this homosexual plague. Yet even as HIV continues to increase, deaths have declined due to treatment.

The decline in deaths due to AIDS has contributed to polls that show Americans no longer consider AIDS a major problem, even as new infections, particularly among homosexuals and bisexuals, continue to soar. Some 45% of new infections in the U.S. are among blacks, who constitute only 12% of the population.

Anti-Christ has scored a double victory through the AIDS epidemic, snuffing out the lives of millions of people on the one hand, and contributing to the sympathy for homosexuality and its anti-Christ agenda on the other.

ENTERTAINMENT

MTV

One need not say too much about the ungodliness and worldly-wise content of Music Television (MTV) which debuted on August 1, 1981. Its initial appeal was to young adults, but today its primary audience is teenagers and college-age youth. Its original focus on music videos has also given way largely to reality, comedy, and drama programming, much of it dealing with social activism. MTV’s content has always been unsuitable for Christians, but that doesn’t

prevent Christian youth from watching, further giving way to anti-Christ's corrupting influences.

E.T. – The Extraterrestrial



Moviegoers were enchanted in 1982 when the science-fiction/fantasy movie *E.T. – The Extraterrestrial* was released. Of all the science-fiction/fantasy films made before or since *E.T.*, none have portrayed the alien in such strong messianic terms. I recognized this when I reviewed the movie when it was first released. So I was not surprised to find that some movie critics found religious parallels between E.T. and Jesus, although that intent was denied by producer Stephen Spielberg.

Stanley Kauffmann, writing a pre-release piece for the July 5, 1979, *The New Republic*, called *E.T.* “The Gospel According to St. Steven” [Spielberg].

In the *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, Anton Karl Kozlovic included *E.T.* In his writing, “The Structural Characteristics of the Cinematic Christ-figure.”

Andrew Nigels described the story of *E.T.* as as “crucifixion by military science” and “resurrection by love and faith.”



Although Spielberg denied any intent to frame E.T. as a messianic figure, he admitted that this scene triggered speculation as to whether the film was a spiritual parable

It is reported in Wikipedia that, “According to Spielberg biographer Joseph McBride, Universal Pictures appealed directly to the Christian market, with a poster reminiscent of Michelangelo’s *The Creation of Adam* and a logo reading ‘Peace.’”

The messianic qualities of *E.T.*, coupled with mankind’s desire for a savior who comes without judgment, enamored this squat, million-year-old being to the hearts of even Christians. The obscene language and the use of the Lord’s name as an expletive in this film is overlooked by Christians for the sake of its entertainment value. Such films are among anti-Christ’s most subtle means to condition people’s hearts and minds to receive false messiahs in real life while neglecting to honor the name of the true Messiah they claim to revere.

PG-13 Movie Rating Created

As motion pictures increasingly incorporated obscene language and perverse content, by 1984 there arose a demand from the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) which determines how movies should be rated. Prior to the PG-13 rating films were rated G for general audiences, with the next category being M for mature audiences but all ages admitted. The M category was eventually changed to PG for “parental guidance suggested.” In 1984, the MPAA added the PG-13 rating for films that “may be inappropriate for children under 13-years-old.” According to the MPAA, PG-13 films “may contain very strong language, nudity (non-explicit), strong, mildly bloody violence or mild drug content.” In essence, the MPAA determined that such content is suitable for 14-year-olds and older teens, but not for children under 14 unless a parent deems it appropriate. So today we have young children spouting language that would make a sailor blush, engaging in sexting on their smart phones, and becoming more violent at earlier ages.

Can this all be attributed to the PG-13 rating? No, but much of it can be. Parents are often more desirous of watching movies with their children even if it means overlooking the evils they contain.

We expect the world to go in that direction, but Christians are no less culpable. And they forget that some things are unsuited for any child of God regardless of age—even adults.

Oprah Winfrey

In 1983, a little-known TV anchor moved to Chicago to host WLS-TV’s half-hour morning talk-show, *AM Chicago*. Within months her show bested *Donahue* as the highest-rated talk show in the Windy City. Following her meteoric rise to fame after being nominated for Best Supporting Actress as Sofia in the 1985 movie *The Color Purple*, her TV show was renamed *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and expanded to a full hour, as a nationally-syndicated program.

Today, Oprah Winfrey is one of the most influential people in the world. Her TV show, books, and other enterprises have amassed billions of dollars in wealth. More important, she is considered a guru of sorts among millions of devotees, men and women, including millions of Christians. This in spite of the fact that she has openly denied Jesus as the Son of God, denigrates His sacrifice on the cross, and has thrown off virtually every biblical doctrine of salvation in favor of New Age philosophies.

As nice a person as she appears to be, Oprah Winfrey is one of anti-Christ's most influential spokespersons for his end-time agenda, albeit she is most likely unaware it.

TERRORISM

Anti-Christ's use of Islamic terrorism to kill Christians and instill fear in society with the aim of overtaking the world for Islam increased during the 1980s. Two of the more significant events that showcased Islamic terrorism were the 1985 hijacking of TWA Flight 847 while en route from Cairo to San Diego, and the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. It isn't necessary to go into details about these terrorist acts. Suffice it to say that they represent the essence of anti-Christ's "religion of peace."

RELIGION

National Gay Pentecostal Alliance

The sexual revolution that grew out of the 1960s and 70s had already infiltrated the churches by the time the National Gay Pentecostal Alliance (NGPA) was formed in 1980. The Alliance was formed after people who identified as "Gay Apostolic Pentecostals" split from mainline Apostolic churches that year in Schenectady, NY. The founder of the movement, William H. Carey, wanted to establish a network of Apostolic (Oneness) Pentecostal churches. However, because of the lack of "affirming" Trinitarian Pentecostal churches, the NGPA welcomed all affirming Pentecostals into their churches. Later, as Trinitarian Pentecostals began to form their own churches, NGPA reverted to incorporating only Oneness churches.

The NGPA opened the floodgates for homosexuality and lesbianism to inundate fundamentalist churches. Prior to the NGPA, liberality toward sexual perversion was largely confined to mainstream Protestantism. Now anti-Christ would have inroads into churches that would affirm both the fundamentalist doctrines of the faith and sexual perversion.

Sun Moon Stars

If the wedding of sexual perversion with fundamentalist Christianity seemed alarming, it should have come as no surprise. Fundamentalist Christianity had already flirted with ungodly associations of a religious nature, compromising with purveyors of unbiblical beliefs. That perversion came to a head when Unification Church founder Sun Myung Moon was indicted in 1981 on charges of tax fraud for having falsified tax return statements, and perjury. Rallying to his

defense were prominent fundamentalist and other religious leaders who were convinced by Moon's public relations team that he was a victim of religious persecution—the kind that might one day be foisted upon those other religious leaders.

Moon was convicted in May, 1982, but remained free until his appeal was refused a hearing by the U.S. Supreme Court in May, 1984. He entered prison on July 20, 1984, and served 11 months of his 18-month sentence.

When Moon was released from prison for "good behavior" his God and Freedom Committee spent over \$100,000 on a public relations gala held on August 20, 1985, at the Regency Ballroom of the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. There, a purported 1,700 religious leaders feasted before listening to several speakers praise Moon, and to Moon himself.

Earlier that day, some twenty religious leaders led by the Moral Majority's Jerry Falwell, held a press conference to call on President Reagan to pardon Moon. Later, in 1995, Falwell would receive a three-million-dollar bailout from financial difficulties from Moon to Falwell's Liberty University.

Among the speakers at the banquet were Dr. Milton Reid, pastor of Gideon Missionary Baptist Fellowship, Dr. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Dr. Cleon Skousen, Mormon and founder-director of the National Center for Constitutional Studies, and Dr. Donald N. Sills, Baptist minister and then-president of the Coalition for Religious Freedom. All these Christian leaders lauded Moon from the podium.

Dr. Sills appeared on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) on March 11, 1985, to rally support from viewers and other religious leaders on behalf of Moon. When speaking with Sills, Hal Lindsay named the Coalition for Religious Freedom's board members as follows: Tim LaHaye, Paul Crouch, Van Armstrong, Robert Grant, Jimmy Swaggart, D. James Kennedy, Joseph Lowery, Don Wildmon, E.V. Hill, Rex Humbard, Marlin Maddoux, Everett Sileven, and James Robison. As it turned out, Dr. Kennedy had withdrawn his name from the board back in mid-1984. As for the others, we have not heard of any of them protesting Sills's support for Sun Myung Moon.

The invocation for Moon's banquet was given by Dr. Joseph Paige of Shaw Divinity School who prayed:

Father God, we are here tonight on this very special occasion, to welcome home one of Your sons. A person, Lord, who has slaved and worked hard, who has labored in the vineyard; who has had the courage to stand tall and to accept both criticism and rejection, and yet who has had the courage to still continue his labor, to continue his mission. Lord, we ask you to bless this occasion; likewise those who had the courage to come here tonight and witness Your Presence among men. Bless those, Lord, who have labored, prayed, and

made sacrifices, and talked, and preached, and have been ridiculed for supporting this great man that we honor here tonight. Lord, we ask You to give him more vision; to give him, Lord, the strength he needs to continue this great mission of uniting world Christianity.

When Moon ascended to the podium he was greeted by a prolonged standing ovation. He disseminated his theology and religious philosophy as his audience read his statements from handouts given them to follow along.

After Moon's speech, Dr. Sills said, "The Word of God says, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.' Before I take time to criticize Rev. Moon and his theology, I must be willing to pay the price that he has paid in prayer."

To understand the victory that anti-Christ achieved through this event and others that followed where evangelical Christian leaders continued to praise Moon, I must offer a brief synopsis of Moon's aberrant beliefs and practices summed up in his *Divine Principle*.

Essentially, Moon taught that Adam and Eve were meant to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth by having sinless children. They were not to have sexual relations until they themselves were perfected. After Satan seduced Eve, and she in turn seduced Adam, Eve's sexual encounter with Satan produced Cain. After Adam's "unlawful" intercourse with Eve, Abel was born.

Moon also taught that, until Jesus, no one obeyed God perfectly, although Buddha, Confucius, and Socrates prepared His way with their teachings.

According to Moon, it was God's plan for Jesus to find a perfect mate and produce sinless children, which would bring about the world's physical and spiritual salvation. But Jesus failed because He couldn't get the Jews to accept Him as Messiah. His crucifixion was a "mistake" that thwarted God's plans. And (because Moon denies Jesus' resurrection) this made it necessary for a new messiah to come. This new "messiah," called "Lord of the Advent" by Moon, was born in Korea in 1920 (which coincidentally is the place and time of Moon's birth). Although vague in his personal claim to be that messiah, Moon did nothing to dissuade his followers from proclaiming him such.

Moon claimed that the new messiah would be revealed in the year 2000. But he didn't want people to think of the Second Coming in terms of a literal interpretation of Scripture. Rather, Moon insisted that the second messiah would be a Korean man born in the flesh, and those who did not receive him would face God's wrath.

Accordingly, everyone must be born again by new parents in order to fulfill God's original plan of redemption. That meant acceptance of Moon and his wife as spiritual parents in order to be saved. Thus, Moon and his wife were regarded as "True Parents" by his followers.

According to Moon, "This ultimate culmination is prophesied in the book of Revelation as the marriage supper of the Lamb. And the Lord of the Second Advent is that Lamb, that perfect Adam. The Lord is coming as perfected Adam, and he will restore perfected Eve. Then they will be lifted up and become the first True Parents of mankind. At last, God's joy will be complete."

Moon has also stated:

He [God] is living in me and I am the incarnation of Himself. The whole world is in my hand, and I will conquer and subjugate the world.

God is now throwing Christianity away and is now establishing a new religion, and this new religion is the Unification Church.

All the Christians in the world are destined to be absorbed by our movement.

There have been saints, prophets, many religious leaders...in past human history....Master here [Moon] is more than any of those people and greater than Jesus himself.

This is the man that several of the evangelical leaders called "brother" and who caused them to swoon in reverential admiration at his courage for suffering "injustice" at the hands of the federal government. This is the man whose work they prayed would be blessed by God. This is the man to whom Jerry Falwell looked for financial salvation.

At the heart of this travesty was the fear of these religious leaders that their tax-exempt status for their organizations might someday be in jeopardy if they didn't support Moon. By their actions they consigned all they received from that time onward as filthy lucre, no matter from where it came.

And now that Moon has died without fulfilling his "prophecies," as the new messiah, nor has any other Korean born in 1920 come to the forefront, we see how anti-Christ can delude so many who continue to promote the Unification Church's goal of world domination.

Charismania

The 1980s also saw a significant rise in aberrant charismania with the popularity of the Kansas City Fellowship (1982) and their false prophets, John Wimber's Vineyard Movement (1983) with its aberrant psychology-laced healing methodologies, and Rick Joyner (1985), an alleged "apostle" and "prophet" who would become a central figure in the New Apostolic Reformation.

Thorough information on all these is available through our various special reports available on our website, mediaspotlight.org. Just enter your requests into our Search Box there.



SOME SIX THOUSAND years of human history has brought us to where we are today—a world population that in April of this year exceeded 7.5 billion souls. That is an increase of some 40% since only 1990 when the population stood at around 5.1 billion people. It is expected to rise another billion within the next 13 years, to 8.5 billion!

With the population explosion, concern over how to feed and otherwise sustain so many people has increased to the point of alarm. World leaders are predicting dire consequences for not only the human race, but for the entire planet. And as more and more agriculture falls into the hands of giant multi-national corporations, there has been growing concern over the safety of our food supply. Toxic farming techniques poison much of the food that makes its way into the market. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are incorporated with the promise that they will promote resistance to pests and blight. But at what cost to human health? There are too many unanswered questions, but once man begins to tamper with God's design for nature we cannot expect optimal outcomes.

We live in a fallen world. We can expect less than optimal outcomes for virtually everything man touches. And as history winds down to the culmination of all that is ordained to occur before our Lord returns, we can expect anti-Christ to wreak as much havoc as possible before his end comes.

The vast majority of humanity have no relationship with God, even as they are religious, worshiping they know not what. The gods of mankind are not only fickle, they are downright dangerous. Adherents to false religious systems live in fear of their gods, believing they are subject to the caprice of forces beyond their control. Superstition still reigns in all religion, including Christianity. Superstition breeds uncertainty, and uncertainty leads to despair. Despair leads

to a desire to escape one's circumstances by any means possible.

If this seems an overly dramatic analysis of the human condition, consider the violence that is filling the earth as never before. Although violence has been a staple of mankind's dealing with itself since the time Cain slew Abel, the sheer increase in the world's population engenders a commensurate increase in the incidents of violence.

Man's violence filled the earth during the time of Noah, so God determined to destroy all of mankind with a flood. Only Noah found favor in His eyes because he was a righteous man and perfect in his generations (Genesis 6:8-9); his ancestry was not polluted with ungodly relations.

Today the entire world lives in fear of Islamic terrorism—a fear that didn't exist as late as thirty years ago.

The angst that characterizes the human condition without Christ has resulted in a despair that saw a marked increase in the drug trade during the decade of the 1990s. At the beginning of the decade it seemed that drug use by the general populace in America was on the decline from the previous decade. Yet the use of methamphetamines (aka "crystal meth" or "meth") among high schoolers more than doubled between 1990 and 1996.

For the most part, as people seek escape from reality they do not turn to the only source of personal peace—the Lord Jesus Christ. They turn to synthetic means of finding peace. In the process, they too often find death. And death, after all, is anti-Christ's final weapon against the mankind he hates.

As we look at the decade of the 90s we'll see much death, both physical and spiritual. We'll see Islamic terrorism become one of the more prominent means to death as it begins to raise its ugly head over the landscape of human despair.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Hubble Telescope

Ever reaching for greater knowledge about the universe in which we live, man has devised ingenious means to probe the night sky. From the earliest known telescope—a refractor type made by eyeglass maker Hans Lippershey in the Netherlands in 1608—and Galileo’s improvement a year later, ever more powerful telescopes have been developed over the centuries. Isaac Newton is said to have built the first reflector telescope in 1668, making it possible to collect more light from the stars in a smaller instrument. The early 1900s saw the advent of large astronomical research telescopes, including the Mount Wilson 60-inch (1908), the 100-inch Hooker Telescope (1917), and the 200-inch Hale Telescope at Mount Palomar Observatory in California (1948). In 1931 came the advent of radio telescopes that do not gather light, but radio waves. The 1960s saw development of space observatories that allowed access to radio bands unattainable from ground observatories, including x-rays and infrared bands.

And let’s not forget LUCIFER, the Vatican’s research telescope searching for extraterrestrial life: LUCIFER is an acronym for the instruments lengthy title, “Large Binocular Telescope Near-infrared Utility with Camera and Integral Field Unit for Extragalactic Research.” Why the Vatican had to stretch so hard to come up with the name of God’s archenemy for its instrument is curious.

The pride of astronomical research, however, is NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope with a 7.9-ft mirror, launched into low earth orbit in 1990. Unhindered by the distortion of light that filters through earth’s atmosphere to ground-based telescopes, Hubble can take extremely high-resolution images with considerably less background light. It has recorded some of the most detailed light images, and is said to allow a deep view into space and time.

Ever since man was created he has looked to the stars for guidance, not only in keeping his bearings during travel on land and sea, but spiritually. From early observations he developed the pseudoscience of astrology, attempting to divine the future and the fate that may lie ahead for the observer. This is another place where anti-Christ has influenced mankind in the discipline of science. Like all science, most astronomy is used not to glorify God (although early Christian astronomers did do so), but to glorify the human spirit—to help man rise above the stars to be equal with God. Man’s quest is little different than Satan’s quest for equality with God.

So today scientists are not looking for God in the majesty of the cosmos; they are looking for signs of intelligent life, hoping that some advanced alien civilization can come teach us how to live in peace and harmony.

Like most things perverted through the lens of satanic deception, science—in this case astronomy—ignores the truth that we already have the teachings necessary to bring us to

peace and harmony. It is God’s Word, given “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished for all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

But mankind, repulsed by the demand for holiness in the lives of those who would be saved, seeks for alien life forms to cure his self-inflicted horrors. He may well find himself in contact with alien life forms, but they won’t be what he expects. Or maybe the Vatican does expect to find Lucifer and his devils masquerading as aliens in UFOs.

Dolly the Sheep

Having meddled in nature among inanimate elements such as our food supply, scientists had to take it a step further and begin meddling with animals. In 1996, the first cloned mammal was born. Dolly the sheep was an international sensation.

Before Dolly, several clones had been produced in laboratories, including cows, mice, and frogs. These had been cloned from the DNA taken from embryos. Dolly was the first mammal to be cloned from an adult cell. This was a major scientific achievement, demonstrating that the DNA from adult cells, despite having specialized as one particular type of cell, can be used to create an entire organism.

What does this portend for the future? Almost immediately speculation began whether humans could be cloned in a similar way. Thus far (as much as we know) no attempt to clone humans has gone forward due to challenges pertaining to the ethics of such an attempt. But given the ungodly direction in which humanity is hurdling itself, can we be too far away from cloning humans?

Add to this that scientists are already combining human genes with animal genes for various “beneficial” purposes such as developing medicines.

If cloning humans becomes reality, what would we end up with—a race of soulless entities programmed to serve humanity like automatons? Perhaps an army of warriors to do the anti-Christ’s bidding?

Sure it’s farfetched. For now. But considering how far mankind has come in his godless approach to science, who can say what may come of it?

Y2K

As the Second Millennium (Y2K) approached, there was a sudden concern expressed that, because computer programmers had reduced the four-digit year to two digits, computers would not be able to distinguish between the years 1900 and 2000. There was almost universal certainty that a whole class of electronic bugs would manifest related to the formatting and storage of calendar data for dates beginning in 2000. Computer systems were checked for possible problems, fixes and upgrades were installed, and the world waited to see what would happen.

As it turned out, nothing of any great significance occurred. But the Y2K experience proved again how fearful mankind can be when faced with the unknown. Perhaps we are stretching things a bit to suggest that such fear plays into the hands of anti-Christ. It will be through much fear that the anti-Christ will expand his empire when he comes on the scene. Considering how, even today, we fear a simple crash of our computer systems, and how we are so dependent upon technology, how will mankind as a whole react when anti-Christ's technology is holding it ransom, unable to buy or sell without taking his mark?

TERRORISM

As familiar as the word terrorism is to us today, there remains no commonly accepted definition. It comes from the Latin verb *terrere*—"to frighten." The word had its origins in the French Revolution, and applied to an adherent or supporter of the Jacobins, the most influential political club during the period. From May, 1793, until July, 1794, the French government came under the control of Maximilien de Robespierre's Mountain Faction, and was responsible for high degrees of political violence. The period came to be called by some historians the "Reign of Terror."

Many opponents of the Mountain Faction were guillotined or executed in some other manner to the tune of some 17,000. Today, the term Jacobin is used in Britain as a pejorative term for radical, left-wing revolutionaries.

Over the centuries the term terrorism came to be applied to any act of violence emanating from a revolutionary political base, especially Marxist and Islamic bases, although it has also been used to describe any act of violence, even by individuals.

It is also applied retroactively to terrorist acts committed for any reason, including religious, from any period in history. Terrorists may be individuals, groups, or states.

Islamic Terrorism

Today, fundamentalist Islam has become the foremost propagator of terrorism in the world. Prior to 1993 the United States remained immune from Islamic terrorism. But on January 25 of that year, a Pakistani national, Mir Qazi, killed two CIA employees and wounded three others as they waited for a stoplight in their cars. Qazi fled the country and became the subject of an international manhunt. He was captured in Pakistan in 1997 and extradited to the United States for trial where he was found guilty of capital and first-degree murder. He was executed by lethal injection in 2002.

Also in 1993, the World Trade Center in New York City came under a terrorist attack when a truck bomb containing 1,336 pounds of urea nitrate-hydrogen gas detonated below the North Tower. The terrorist group intended to have the North Tower fall into the South Tower, bringing both down and killing tens of thousands of people. Although the plot failed, six people were killed and over a thousand injured.

In March, 1994, four men were convicted of various charges related to the bombing. In November, 1997, two others were convicted. All are serving some form of life sentence at the ADX Florence, Colorado, supermax prison. One terrorist, Abdul Rahman Yasin, remains at large, his whereabouts unknown.

Hutu Terrorism

Perhaps the most vicious terrorism incidents in recent history were the 1993 Burundian Genocide and the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. Burundi's first democratically-elected president, Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, was assassinated by Tutsi officers. This sparked a violent response in which some 25,000 Tutsis were slaughtered by the Hutu political structure, and as many Hutus were murdered by the Tutsi military.

In Rwanda the Hutus had come to power in 1962 and oppressed the Tutsis who fled the country. The exiled Tutsis formed a rebel movement and attacked Rwanda in 1990, hoping to liberate the country from the Hutus. With strife festering over the ensuing years it was only a matter of time before this would result in the Hutus carrying out mass killings of Tutsis in which an estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 people were put to death in a 100-day period.

These genocidal attacks were primarily class warfare. Both tribes speak the same Bantu language and generally practice Christianity, although there are Muslims among the Tutsis.

Conflicts such as this call into question the genuineness of faith among any who call themselves by Christ's name. And they play into anti-Christ's hatred for that name.

Oklahoma City Bombing

The worst domestic terrorism act in the United States prior to the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001, was committed by Timothy McVeigh on April 19, 1995, when he detonated a truck bomb outside the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. McVeigh acted in retaliation for the U.S. federal agents' killing of survivalist Randy Weaver's wife in August, 1992, and for the federal government's attack against the Branch Davidian cult in Waco, Texas, on April 19, 1993, in which 75 members of the cult died. McVeigh targeted the Murrah Building because it housed regional offices of the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Secret Service, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives—the agency that had launched the initial raid on the Branch Davidian compound. Questions still unanswered surround McVeigh's possible working underground for the CIA, but there is no empirical evidence to support those suspicions.

Compared to certain other areas in the world, even today, the United States has had nowhere near the incidents of Islamic terrorism. One of the most targeted nations is Israel, which is not a surprise. Anti-Christ especially hates Jews and Christians, but there is a hatred for all mankind made in the image of Elohiym.

WAR

The Persian Gulf War

If there is a single greatest contribution to the rise of anti-Christ's power in the Middle East it has to be the 1991 Persian Gulf War that saw a U.N. military coalition led by the United States under President George H.W. Bush to force Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. Hussein's army had invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, over several factors, not the least of which was Kuwait's slant-drilling for oil in Iraq's territory, costing Iraq an estimated \$10 billion in lost oil revenues. Although the U.N. coalition was successful in driving out the Iraqi forces, there remained a lingering antagonism between the United States and Iraq which would later lead President George W. Bush to again engage in war against Iraq in retaliation for the 2001 World Trade Center attack. The excuse given was that Iraq was somehow responsible for the attack and had amassed "weapons of mass destruction."

The result was the deposition of Saddam Hussein and his eventual execution for "war crimes." This effectively destabilized other Middle East factions which had been somewhat beholden to Hussein's military strength, creating a vacuum which would be filled by radical Islamic terrorists such as ISIS.

This is admittedly an abbreviated version of what happened, and there were many difficult and questionable factors involved in the decision to depose Hussein. But his absence certainly affected the stability of the entire region, giving anti-Christ opportunity to employ forces of demonic character that the West has been hard pressed to deal with.

One of those forces has been the Taliban who seized control of Afghanistan in 1996. The United States has now been embroiled in a conflict against the Taliban for over 16 years.

POLITICS

End of the Cold War

One bright spot in the world of foreign conflicts came in 1991 with the collapse of the USSR, ending the longstanding Cold War. The incredible events that led to the demise of the Soviet Union involved collaboration between U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II, building on the unrest among Polish workers led by labor activist Lech Walesa. Walesa had co-founded and headed Solidarity (*Solidarność*), the Soviet bloc's first independent trade union. At the same time, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of Glasnost and Perestroika were having an impact on the communist regime in the Soviet Union, weakening its resolve against western ideas and culture. Glasnost (openness) instilled a greater willingness to allow western goods into the Soviet Union; perestroika (restructuring) introduced market reforms that allowed for private ownership of businesses in the services, manufacturing, and

foreign trade sectors. These policies emboldened the constituent republics to move toward nationalism.

The first to act was Poland which, in 1989, elected a noncommunist opposition government to its legislature. When Gorbachev took no action to bring Poland into line, other Eastern European communist dictatorships followed suit. Gorbachev did not interfere with Eastern European defections, but he drew the line at the Soviet republics such as Ukraine, the Caucasus, and the Central Asian states. In December of 1991, Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Russia itself declared independence. The Soviet Union was dissolved.

Yet with the dissolution of the Soviet Union there has never come a dissolution of the Marxist revolution. Communism is alive and well, now in the West more than in the East. Anti-Christ continues to foment revolution among the youth of the West through indoctrination into Marxism in our educational institutions and the mass communications media.

Bill Clinton's Election

When Bill Clinton took the office of President of the United States in 1992, and was subsequently reelected in 1995, the United States entered an era of prosperity, largely because a Republican Congress stifled many of his socialist objectives. But it also entered an era of loose moral ambiguity. Clinton's womanizing led to what would have been scandals in earlier days. When he was caught lying to Congress about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky in 1999 (among other, earlier dalliances) European leaders scoffed at the idea that there would be moral outrage over a political leader having such affairs. To them, Clinton was just one of the boys. The media in the United States likewise attempted to downplay the significance of moral turpitude which, according to the U.S. Constitution, was grounds for removal from office.

With even the Republican members of Congress reticent to convict Clinton during his impeachment process, the matter became little more than an amusing distraction. Perhaps there are just too many members of Congress who could be found in the same unsavory situation to risk carrying out their duty. In any event, the Clinton scandal opened the door for sexual sin to be deemed of no consequence even if practiced at the highest level of government. This may have emboldened Bill Clinton to sign the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy toward sexual deviants in the U.S. military in 1993. This, in turn, opened the door for more liberal attitudes toward sexual deviancy in all areas of American society, which would come to full fruition under the future presidency of Barack Obama.

LITERATURE

Sword-and-sorcery, a subgenre of fantasy stories incorporating elements of exciting and violent adventure coupled with magic and the supernatural, can be traced as far back as the myths surrounding the legendary King Arthur and the Knights

of the Round Table. As a modern construct it goes back to 1961 when the term sword-and-sorcery was coined by American author Fritz Leiber in response to a request by British Author Michael Moorcock in the fanzine *Amra* for a name for such stories. Sword-and-sorcery gained great notoriety with the works of T.R.R. Tolkien (*Lord of the Rings* epics), and C.S. Lewis (*Chronicles of Narnia*). Out of such literature grew role playing games such as *Dungeons and Dragons* and later versions.

Harry Potter

The most popular and bestselling of all sword-and-sorcery literature has been the Harry Potter series of books by British authoress J.K. Rowling. Having sold over 400 million copies, Rowling's books have become the best selling book series in history. Her first book in the series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was published in 1997, followed by six sequels, the last being *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* published in 2007. Rowling's books moved her from living on state benefits to multi-millionaire status within five years. In October, 2010, Rowling was named the "Most Influential Woman in Britain" by leading magazine editors.

Amazingly, the sword-and-sorcery genre is among the easiest to write. A fertile imagination and even a limited ability to write are all that are required. Because there are no firm parameters such as science, truth, or facts on which one must rely, the success of a fantasy fiction writer rests primarily on how well he tells his story, and whether or not his story gets read by a publisher.

Admittedly there's more to it, but it isn't nearly as difficult to write fantasy as it is to write say, an historical novel or one based on science (such as science fiction).

Man's imagination being corrupted by his sin nature, it is a tool easily used by anti-Christ to lure the masses into his web of deceit. Occultism in fantasy literature often provides the opening for readers to assuage their curiosity by taking the next step—delving into occult practices.

Although this may not be true of the vast majority of Harry Potter devotees, the overwhelming popularity of occult-themed literature, games, and movies has moved many in that direction. Coupled with the use of hallucinogenic drugs, occultism has produced some pretty scary elements, such as Charles Manson and other serial killers.

CHRISTIANITY

New Apostolic Reformation

"Back in the 1990s," said C. Peter Wagner (late head of Global Harvest Ministries), "we began hearing the Holy Spirit speaking about restoring apostles and prophets as the foundation of the church as God originally designed."

The idea is that God is going to bring about revival throughout the world as the Body of Christ submits itself to these latter-day apostles and prophets. And—prior to his death in 2016—Wagner was allegedly the particular apostle God was going to use to implement that restoration.

The New Apostolic Reformation is really nothing new; it is a rehash of the Latter Rain Movement of the mid-twentieth century. That was Pentecostalism on steroids which was led by such notorious men as Franklin Hall, William Branham, and, lately, Paul Cain, recently exposed as a homosexual by some in his own ranks. (For an in-depth study of the Latter Rain Movement see my book, *Vengeance is Ours: The Church in Dominion*, Sword Publishers, 1990.)

The impact of this movement in North America has been observed in the Kansas City Prophets, "the Toronto Blessing," "the Pensacola Revival" (aka "Brownsville Revival") and other similar charismatic foolishness. The unscriptural nature of these movements is a clue to their ungodliness.

The Toronto Blessing

On January 20, 1994, what was intended to be the start of several "revival" meetings was held at Toronto Airport Vineyard, a small church located in an industrial complex near Pearson International Airport in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Within one year it had become what Daina Doucet, writing for *Charisma*, called, "a mecca of sorts." Huge crowds were seeking a "sign from God," and because of certain phenomena occurring at the meetings, even the secular media focused on what was happening. According to Doucet:

...Worshippers are overcome by laughing, weeping, groaning, shaking, falling and, to the chagrin of some, noise-making that has been described as "a cross between a jungle and a farmyard."

These experiences became known as "holy laughter," this particular outbreak being called "the Toronto Blessing," which Doucet attributed to Vineyard pastor Randy Clark of St. Louis, Missouri, who had been influenced by former South African evangelist Rodney Howard-Browne in late 1993. Howard-Browne popularized "holy laughter" through worldwide appearances at charismatic events and television exposure on Trinity Broadcasting Network. (See our special report, *Holy Laughter: Rodney Howard-Browne and the Toronto Blessing*.)

A year later a similar outbreak took place during the so-called "Brownsville Revival" (aka "the Pensacola Revival") at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. That church became a hub for the phenomenon, not only among other Assembly of God churches, but among many outside that organization. The movement made considerable inroads into the Assemblies of God, and several national officers endorsed it.

The phenomenon of holy laughter, like all alleged "moves of God" within Pentecostalism/charismaticism, has died out or been severely curtailed within the churches that succumbed to it. But to the delight of anti-Christ, the New Apostolic Reformation remains on the agenda of the self-professed "apostles" and "prophets" as they promote their deception through the Christian media.

Alliance of Christian Churches

What had been an informal networking of churches and ministries under the umbrella of ADVANCE Christian Ministries, Dallas, Texas, became officially chartered in 1996 as Alliance of Christian Churches (ACC)—an international Christian fellowship of churches originally founded by homosexuals for evangelism in the homosexual community. Begun with 27 member churches, the ACC grew to 50 affiliate congregations including both homosexual and heterosexual communities, and 10 parachurch ministries. The greater majority of congregations are said to be full-gospel or Spirit-filled, and all are evangelical.

We could not find any such organization today, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist. There is just no Internet presence under the ACC name. However, we have found other organizations, such as Celebration of Faith, that are associated with the founder of ADVANCE Christian Ministries, Thomas Hirsch. Celebration of Faith's objectives fit those of ACC.

As much as we love people caught in the sins of sexual deviancy, we cannot abide the idea that they should be welcomed into fellowship in Christ until they have repented of their sins.

But now I have written to you not to keep company if any man who is called a brother is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or abuser, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—with such a one not even to eat. (1 Corinthians 5:11)

Anti-Christ has successfully deluded many well-meaning believers into thinking that the mere confession of belief in Jesus qualifies one for unquestioned standing within the Body of Christ. It was one thing for traditional churches to adopt that thinking—most have long ago abandoned the purity of biblical faith. But for self-professed “evangelical,” “full-gospel,” and “Spirit-filled” churches to take that road demonstrates how far from biblical truth most of Christianity has strayed.

Jesus warned us that in the last days iniquity would abound and that it would be as it was in the days of Noah and Lot. He also said that because men would not receive the love of the truth so that they may be saved, God would send a strong delusion so that they would believe a lie, “so that they all might be damned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

More and more prominent Christians today are succumbing to the lie propagated by sexually deviant, rebellious “Christians,” believing that unrepentant sin won't disqualify anyone from entering the Kingdom of God. By doing so they are cooperating with anti-Christ in the destruction of the souls they should be ministering to in love with the hope of helping them escape the judgment that is to come.

Alpha Course

Out of Holy Trinity Brompton—the birthplace in England for the “holy laughter” movement—came the Alpha Course.

The Alpha Course was endorsed by such notables as Bill Bright, president of Campus Crusade for Christ, J.I. Packer, Professor of Theology at Regent College, Vancouver, BC, Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship Ministries, Luis Palau, ecumenical Latin American evangelist, Cardinal William H. Keeler, Catholic Archbishop of Baltimore, MD, and Jack Hayford, president of King's Seminary, among others. The Alpha Course continues to be used in many churches around the world.

Alpha “covers the basics of Christianity” for all churches regardless of their denominational structure, and can be found in Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Episcopal, charismatic, Pentecostal, Baptist, evangelical, non-denominational, you-name-it churches.

On the surface, Alpha seems benign. According to the course's information, “Each week people meet together for a meal, talk on topics such as ‘Who is Jesus?’, ‘Why Did Jesus Die?’, ‘How can I be Sure of My Faith?’, and ‘Does God Still Heal Today?’, followed by small group interaction. There is a day or weekend retreat midway through the course, which focuses on the person and work of the Holy Spirit.”

There are some subtle deviations from truth within the Alpha Course that make it particularly onerous. One subtlety leaves the question of Jesus' sinlessness open to question. For example, in one of the Talks, Hebrews 4:15 is quoted: “Jesus was tempted in every way.” But the suffix “yet without sin” is strangely omitted. It is stated that “Jesus was tempted in every way, just as we are. Jesus had evil thoughts.”

Earlier in the Talks it is explained from where evil thoughts come: “...from within, out of your hearts, come evil thoughts...they make you unclean.”

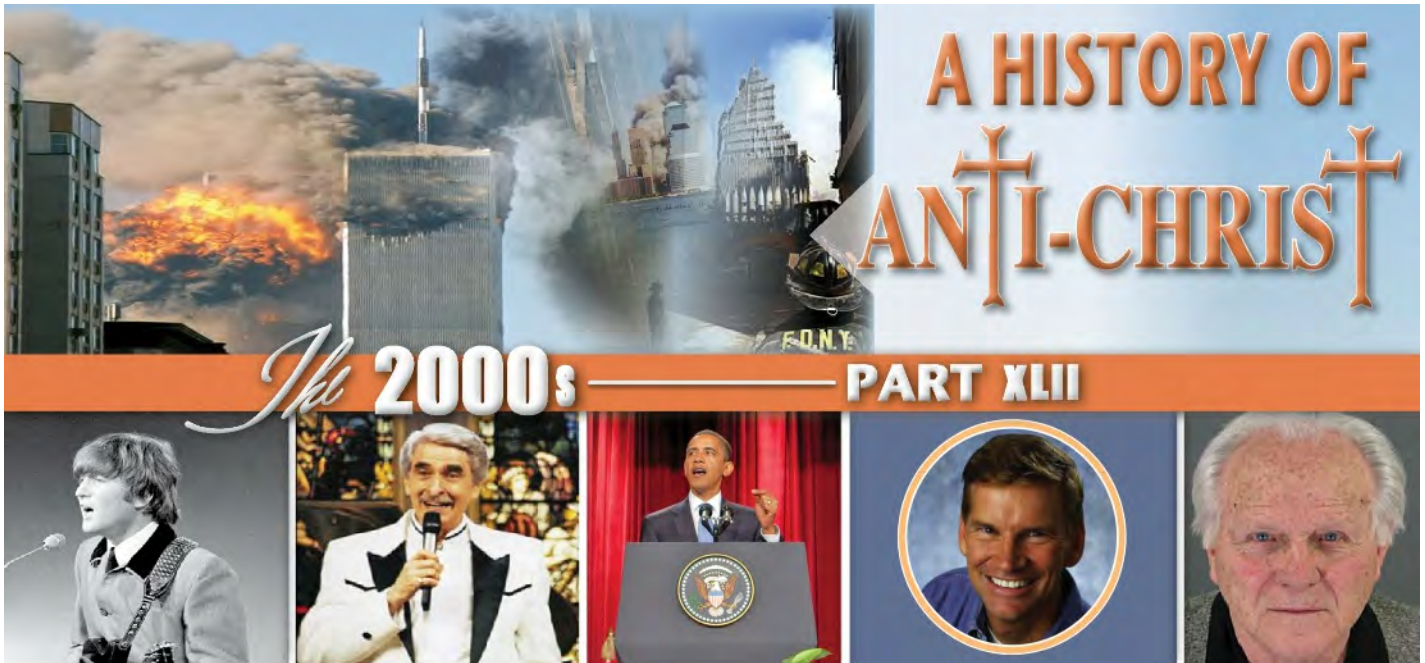
What conclusion might novices to the faith draw from this?

There are other aspects of the Alpha Talks that leave Jesus' sinlessness to ambiguity. There are also left questions as to Jesus' infallibility, His perfection, His righteousness and holiness, even His divinity. The Alpha Course doesn't deny the truths of Jesus' person and character; it merely leaves room for questions regarding them. (See our special report, *The Alpha Course: Chapter and Verse on Alpha's Jesus.*)

It is appalling that so many well-known leaders within Christianity lack the basic discernment necessary to protect themselves and other believers from anti-Christ's subtle lies.

CONCLUSION

With the close of 1999 came the close (one year later) of the second millennium of history since the Lord's presence on the earth. As the world entered a new millennium, it seemed reasonable to expect that the spiritual battle between the truth of Christ and the lies of anti-Christ would come into greater conflict. We haven't long to go before that conflict comes to its conclusion.



THE 2ND MILLENNIUM AD actually began on January 1, 2001, and is exceptional in the marked increase in sustained worldwide terrorism, the vast majority at the hands of Islamist militants. There have been so many, in fact, that it's impossible to enumerate all of them here. The most impactful event to date, of course, was the September 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. Aside from all the speculation and conspiracy theories (some asking reasonable questions), the fact remains that regardless of who initiated the attack, Islamic militants were a major part of it.

The remarkable increase in violence since the year 2000 has consumed a large portion of news reporting. Not all of it has been rooted in Islam, as we will see.

The continuing siege against Israel by Hamas in Gaza to the south and Hezbollah in Lebanon to the north has continued unabated, with occasional lulls as the United States and other nations have sought a means to lasting peace.

Sexual deviancy continues to proliferate, gaining official recognition among governments of more and more nations.

Human history is not a pretty picture, despite the efforts of well-meaning people to find ways to alter the nature of human behavior. For the most part, those efforts are grounded in humanistic means based primarily on psychological theories. The only true means of human transformation, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, is ignored, even by Christians, including many pastors and leaders within the churches. They, too, often opt for psychological methods, sometimes blending them with biblical admonitions.

As we look at the decade of the 2000s, we'll find that the human condition has become no better, and, in fact, has

reached a point where, increasingly, evil is called "good," and good is called "evil."

SEXUAL DEVIANCY

The influence of sexual deviants upon governments in the West continued to increase. Anti-Christ's agenda of confusion proliferated at the turn of the century and its acceptance as "normal" by more and more citizens begs God's judgment.

On June 21, 2000, the Scottish Parliament repealed Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988, a law preventing the promotion of homosexuality. The law stated that a local authority "shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship." The repeal in Scotland by the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. Act 2000 led eventually to the repeal in the rest of the United Kingdom via section 122 of the Local Government Act 2003. The repeals reflected the changing moral values of the UK, while at the same time a more tolerant attitude toward Muslim migration into the UK was beginning to take effect. The Qur'an's pronouncement of the death penalty for sexual deviancy is at odds with the UK's liberality toward it. This bespeaks a brewing conflict in the future when the Muslim populations in the West begin to assert their insistence upon sharia for the western nations.

The Netherlands faces the same conflict. On April 1, 2001, the Act on the Opening up of Marriage went into effect, allowing same-sex couples to legally marry for the first time in the world since the reign of Nero in ancient Rome.

Even South Africa's parliament passed a law legalizing same-sex marriage on November 18, 2003.

Although still largely Roman Catholic, Spain legalized same-sex marriage on June 30, 2005, the same date as did Belgium.

Although the United States is currently facing a major conflict between the Trump administration and the sexual deviancy elements, during the 2000s, some states acted to accept same-sex marriages as legal. This move toward legitimizing this element of sexual deviancy was given great impetus by Barack Obama when, during his second term, he expressed approval for same-sex marriage. Until he was re-elected, he deceived the American people by stating that he was against same-sex marriages. After his 2012 re-election he revealed his true rainbow colors via lights on the White House.

On April 25, 2000, the State of Vermont passed HB847, legalizing same-sex marriage. On November 18, 2003, The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that anti-same-sex-marriage laws in the state were unconstitutional. On May 15, 2008, the California Supreme Court also ruled that bans on same-sex marriage are unconstitutional.

The battle continues, and it appears as if anti-Christ is on the winning side. But the war won't be over until our Commander in Chief from on high has His final say.

ENTERTAINMENT

Video games greatly increased in sophistication and realism, with many focusing on violence and occultism. On March 4, 2000, Sony released the PlayStation 2 system in Japan. On the first weekend alone, one million units were sold.

People's fascination with the occult was satisfied to a large degree with the release of the Warner Bros.' movie, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The total world gross ticket sales were \$975 million, just short of one billion dollars. It was followed in order by *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002); *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004); *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005); *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007); *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009). All except *Azkaban* are among the 50 highest-grossing movies of all time. It is the second-highest grossing series of all time, behind only the *Star Wars* series, also highly occultic.

Not as lucrative, but very popular, has been *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, based on the fantasy writings of J.R.R. Tolkien. The first movie in the series was *The Fellowship of the Ring* (December 19, 2001), followed by *The Two Towers* (December 18, 2002), and *The Return of the King* (December 17, 2003). The total world gross in ticket sales for all three films to date is just under \$3 billion.

The Lord of the Rings trilogy has been popular among Christians because of the Roman Catholic Tolkien's close friendship with C.S. Lewis. Like Lewis's fantasy writings, Christians want to see biblical parallels in both authors' works. This has been no less with *The Lord of the Rings*. What most fail to perceive is that both Lewis's and Tolkien's writings are occult in nature, pitting white magic against black

magic. They are no different than the Walt Disney fantasies, all of which are based on magic and occultism.

Anti-Christ must take great delight in seeing Christians duped into cheering for at least one side of his deception; white magic is what is attempted by modern pagans (Wiccans, Satanists, etc.), who claim to use the powers of nature for "good."

SCIENCE

Anti-Christ is adept at using scientists to confuse nature as God created it. The field of robotics, and particularly artificial intelligence (AI), is one in which he is making great strides toward melding humans and computers to achieve a quantum leap in human evolution. An important step in that area was achieved when Kevin Warwick, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at Coventry University in the United Kingdom, carried out the first direct experiment in electronic communication between the nervous systems of two humans. Warwick, who has been given the nickname "Captain Cyborg," had a neural interface array connected to an external "gauntlet" that housed supporting electronics. It was interfaced directly into Warwick's nervous system. Later, a simpler array was implanted into the arm of Warwick's wife with the ultimate aim of creating a form of telepathy using the Internet to communicate from afar. On June 10, 2002, the experiment was deemed successful.

Among the more bizarre means by which anti-Christ seeks to confuse nature has been cloning. Not long after the groundbreaking research that resulted in Dolly the Sheep as the first cloned mammal, Dewey, the first cloned deer, was born on May 23, 2003, at Texas A&M University. Five days later, Prometea, the first horse cloned by Italian scientists, was born.

But anti-Christ doesn't want to stop at animals. On February 13, 2004, South Korean scientists announced the cloning of 30 human embryos. The embryos were then grown to produce stem cells that can be used for any tissue in the human body. The purpose was altruistic, with the hope of treating patients with problems such as Alzheimer's disease, yet there is no telling where future research into human cloning may lead. The prospects are chilling.

Following his ungodly instincts, Barack Obama on March 9, 2009, signed an executive order lifting restrictions on federal funding for research on embryonic stem cells. Some scientists had left the United States to continue their research because of the prior ban. Many returned after funding became more readily available from the U.S. government.

Also under Obama's watch, on April 23, 2009, the morning-after contraceptive pill was cleared for use by seventeen-year-olds by the Food and Drug Administration. The previous minimum age was eighteen. Under the guise of preventing teen pregnancies, the pill has been used to provide for more illicit sex at younger ages.

POLITICS

The United States took a significant turn from its philosophical roots in the biblical ethic that guided it from its beginning when, on November 4, 2008, Barack Hussein Obama defeated Republican candidate Senator John McCain to become the 44th President of the United States of America. Obama's victory came amidst, and in spite of, questions about his being a natural-born citizen of the US. Unable, or unwilling, to provide an official birth certificate during the campaign to prove his qualification to run for the office, his personal education history shrouded in secrecy, even to this day, he left his detractors feeling justified in questioning his viability as a candidate. Additionally, his personal history as recorded in his book, *Dreams From My Father*, as well as exposure of close communist affiliations by reliable sources, gave every indication that he is a Marxist. Add that he had never held a productive job in his life, but had been merely a "community activist" before being elected as Senator of Illinois, and there was good reason for alarm among conservatives. Yet in spite of all these "red flags" (no pun intended), he achieved a landslide victory with 365 out of 538 electoral votes and almost 53% of the popular vote.

According to a Gallup poll, McCain won among regular churchgoers and non-Hispanic white males. Women voted overwhelmingly for Obama, as did youth, 18 to 29 years old.

Obama's acceptance speech included overtures toward Republicans to work together to solve the nation's problems, and promises of "change."

Obama's election was greeted abroad with great cheer. A Saudi journalist claimed, "the US has won the war on terror," and "people here are starting to believe in the US again." President Sarkozy of France told Obama, "At a time when we must face huge challenges together, your election has raised enormous hope in France, in Europe, and beyond." Yet among Israelis and Palestinians there remained doubts as to how Obama would solve the problems between them.

Almost immediately upon taking office on January 20, 2009, Obama moved to restore funding for family planning clinics abroad, repealing a policy that was begun by President Ronald Reagan in 1984, rescinded by President Bill Clinton in 1993, and reinstated by President George W. Bush in 2001. The policy prohibited nongovernmental organizations that receive federal funds from performing abortions or referring abortion services by others. On January 25, 2009, the Vatican condemned Obama's move toward restoring abortion rights.

On April 21, 2009, at the Latin American summit conference in Trinidad, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, a fellow Marxist, gave Obama a book titled, *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. Doing so before TV cameras as Obama spoke from the podium created a large demand for the book, causing it to catapult to second place in Amazon's book sales.

Chavez's Marxist policies have devastated Venezuela to the point where, today, it has collapsed into anarchy and bloodshed. Yet that doesn't stop Marxists in the U.S., including Obama, from touting their ungodly political philosophy all the more. Obama's Marxist economics prompted the Heritage Foundation on the following May 8 to state, "[T]he debt-based Obama economic stimulus plan is about to become a major drag on the recovery, just as expected....There are two critical consequences to the economy stabilizing. The first is that the massive liquidity injected into credit markets by the Federal Reserve and central banks around the world transforms from economic medicine to inflationary heroin....The second dangerous consequence is that President Obama is on course to double the national debt in just four years."

That prognostication missed the mark by a few years, but eventually came true. When Obama took office the national debt hovered around \$10.6 trillion. By the time he left after his second term it was some \$20 trillion.

Of great concern to many was Obama's overture to Muslims. During the G20 summit in London on April, 2009, Obama met King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia by bowing down before him. The White House denied that Obama had bowed to Abdullah, an Obama aid telling Politico.com, "It wasn't a bow. He grasped his hand with two hands, and he's taller than King Abdullah."

Abdullah is 5'-11", Obama is 6'-1". The difference of two inches doesn't make it necessary to bow at all, let alone to the degree that Obama did, deeply bending his knee.

Lies, lies. That was the modus operandi for the Obama administration for all of its eight years.

Obama's consistent denigrating of America for its sins (as all nations possess), particularly before Muslim dignitaries at various speaking engagements, was a pattern that displayed his lack of love for the nation he was privileged to live in. As well, his smug touting of the (somewhat) truth that America is "no longer a Christian nation, at least not just," but also "a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, and a Buddhist nation, and a Hindu nation, and a nation of non-believers," revealed a lack of love for the faith he claims to have converted to from Islam. This is further revealed in his expressing to Nicholas Kristof of *The New York Times*, that the Muslim call to prayer is "one of the prettiest sounds on Earth at sunset."

What true believer in Jesus would say that? Once a person turns from a false religion to true faith in Christ that person will abhor the darkness from which he had escaped.

After less than nine months in office, on October 9, 2009, Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Yet the decision to confer the prize upon Obama took place just twelve days after he took office. It was given for "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples."

During Obama's first tenure in the Oval Office, anti-Christ accomplished much in the way of empowering Islam in America and around the world, increasing the acceptance of sexual deviancy, denigrating Christianity, and moving the nation further from its biblical ethic than under any other administration.

One thing that right-thinking people need to know—especially believers in Christ Jesus—is that Marxists lie as a matter of course to promote their agenda. So, too, do Muslims who are taught to lie for the benefit of the Islamist goal of world conquest through jihad, either violent or peaceful, the latter through immigration and procreation.

Obama's lying, obfuscation of truth, pandering to sexual deviants, promoting the killing of innocent babies, and treasonous policies toward America's enemies left the nation in a moral and ethical quagmire from which it may never recover. Because of Obama's second term, the next decade will see even more of the same, some to a greater degree.

TERRORISM

The World Trade Center

The decade of the 2000s saw Islamic terrorism continue to plague Israel on an increasing scale, primarily from Hamas and Hezbollah. Terrorism is nothing new to Israel; the nation has had to deal with it from the day it was born in 1948. But now it has been exported to other nations, and the single greatest impact was felt on September 11, 2001, when the World Trade Center's Twin Towers were struck by two aircraft. It was the darkest day for the United States since the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, which gave then President Franklin D. Roosevelt his excuse to bring America into World War II as an ally with Great Britain and, infamously, with the Soviet Union under Josef Stalin.

In a way, the two events paralleled one another in that they both led to war. Roosevelt pointed to Pearl Harbor as an excuse to wage war with Japan and its ally Germany; George W. Bush pointed to 9/11 as an excuse to wage war against his father's thorn-in-the-flesh, Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Although no evidence of Iraq's participation in the 9/11 attack has ever been established, Bush at the time sounded the alarm of alleged weapons of mass destruction in the hands of Hussein. No such weapons were ever found, but that didn't stop Bush from mobilizing against Iraq.

The outcome was the destabilizing of the Middle East, paving the way for a new terrorist organization to rise from the ashes of Iraq—ISIS.

There is no doubt that Hussein was a ruthless dictator, imposing his own form of terror on his enemies. But he was a protector of Christians and Jews in his nation, recognizing that they were no threat to his regime. With his removal, anti-Christ had a clear path to persecution of Christians and Jews, not only in Iraq, but in other areas of the Middle East that fell into anarchy with Hussein's absence.

There is much that can be said, pro and con, about the Iraq War and its repercussions, but our subject is terrorism as waged by nongovernmental organizations, often with the sanctions of some governments; some at the expense of some governments. In all cases, terrorism serves anti-Christ by creating instability wherever it strikes. It is especially militant against Christians and Jews, persecuting many to death through horrible means. Whereas some Middle East governments do not risk the ire of the United States and Israel by officially conducting such persecution, they do little or nothing to intervene against terrorist organizations that conduct it. Some, like Iran and Syria, openly support terrorism around the world.

Most of the named terrorists involved in the 9/11 attacks were from Saudi Arabia, ostensibly one of the United States' strongest allies in the Middle East.

As reported by government and media investigations into those attacks, we are led to believe that they were conducted by rogue Islamic jihadists with no government's involvement. It all seemed cut-and-dried. But there have been legitimate questions about the attacks, not all of which involve lunatic conspiracy theories.

For example, many eye-witnesses close to the collapse of the towers have said they heard a series of explosions as the buildings pancaked to the ground. Grainy pictures purport to show puffs of smoke at various elevations as story upon story fell upon the ones below.

In the case of the Pentagon attack, questions remain whether an aircraft or a missile struck it. There are no photos definitively showing an aircraft striking the building. The only surveillance photos released are from a camera mounted at a parking entrance some distance from the point of impact. The photos are also grainy, and it is impossible to discern anything approaching the building just before the fireball engulfs the point of impact. This, despite the fact that there were at least three surveillance cameras on the roof facing the approach angle which would have given much better photographic evidence of what struck the Pentagon.

Scientific analyses of both attacks have ranged from "official" to "unofficial." In both cases, it's impossible for us to know who is telling the truth. So we must content ourselves with the "official" narrative of what happened simply because anecdotal "evidence" is not evidence. The important thing is to realize that terrorism has indeed come to our nation and has reared its ugly head several times since then, albeit on a much smaller scale.

Anti-Christ knows that one way to enslave a people is to cause them to live in fear, eventually coming to the mindset that safety is more important than personal freedom. More important, safety becomes more precious than one's own beliefs and convictions. Silence in the face of tyranny takes hold. How many will lose their faith rather than jeopardize their lives or wellbeing?

Israel

Although terrorism has struck many nations of late, the vast majority of incidents have occurred in Israel. Wm. Roberts Johnston, a research physicist in the field of space physics, has also researched many topics of importance, including abortion and terrorism. According to his "Summary of Terrorist Attacks in Israel," based on data from the Israeli foreign ministry and the list of 1,221 attacks in "Chronology of Terrorist Attacks in Israel," since the birth of the nation in 1948 through 1999 there have been a total of 484 terrorist attacks with 1,427 killed and 4,782 injured. For that 52-year period the average number of terrorist attacks per year were 9.31 with 27.45 killed and 91.97 injured. In the ensuing ten years from 2000 through 2009 there were 524 terrorist attacks with 1,178 killed and 8,022 injured. The averages for the decade are 52.40 terrorist attacks with 117.8 killed and 802.2 injured per year. There have been more attacks and almost the same number of deaths in the decade of the 2000s as there had been in the preceding 52 years! The number injured approached twice as many in the ten years as in the preceding 52 years.

As ungodly as the Zionist nation is, it exists by God's plan for the last days. Among the nations, it is anti-Christ's primary target, as it has been since it came into existence. Although I do not favor shedding American blood for Israel's sake, it is incumbent upon the United States to continue to support the wellbeing of that nation. It is my belief that this is why God raised Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton. It wasn't because Donald Trump is better for America (although he is that), but that it is not yet within the Father's plan, at this time, to abandon Israel to her coming judgment—the day of Jacob's Trouble—the last three-and-a-half years of Daniel's prophecy concerning Israel's (the people's) eventual redemption. Until then, anti-Christ is held back from being revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:6-12).

In preparation for the day that anti-Christ will be allowed to drive Israel out of Jerusalem, there will most likely be many overtures for peace between Israel and her enemies. Those overtures will include the Vatican, and, in fact, already have included the papacy. It began when, on March 21, 2000, Pope John Paul II conducted the first official visit by a Roman Catholic pontiff to Israel, seemingly acting contrary to almost 1,700 years of Roman Catholic anti-Semitism. The ecumenical efforts of the papacy since Vatican II have promoted spiritual unity with not only Judaism (another false religious system), but with all the religions of the world, including Islam—Christianity's and Judaism's sworn enemy.

RELIGION

As always, anti-Christ perverts religion to turn hearts away from God's truth. Warring factions between diverse religious groups, and between members of the same religious group, create the impression that religion is an evil that, if eliminated, would allow for peace in the world. The Beatles'

John Lennon wrote and recorded that sentiment in his 1971 hit song, *Imagine*, in which he sang:

Imagine there's no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky

Imagine all the people
Living for today (ah ah ah)
Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do

Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion, too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace

You may say that I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one

Imagine no possessions
I wonder if you can
No need for greed or hunger
A brotherhood of man

Imagine all the people
Sharing all the world

You may say that I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will live as one

Imagine was the best-selling single of Lennon's solo career apart from the Beatles. What Lennon was pining for is the New Earth wherein will dwell only righteousness (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1). The difference is that in the New Earth there will be only the one true religion, and the nations will still exist within their borders. In the meantime, during this present age and through the Millennial Kingdom, evil will continue to exist as false religions continue to challenge the rule of Christ.

Lennon's hope is unattainable in this world. We must face the truth that religion—even most of Christianity—is truly evil. Religion will continue to be at odds with God's truth.

The decade of the 2000s saw a continuing warfare among religions. On March 17, 2002, two men walked into the Protestant International Church—a nondenominational assembly—in Islamabad, Pakistan, and threw several grenades, killing five and wounding 40, many critically. The congregation had just finished singing, *This is Holy Ground*.

On April 18, 2004, another horrific attack occurred in the eastern Turkey city of Malatya when five young Islamist men invaded a Christian publishing house that distributes Bibles, and killed three employees. The three victims—a

German and two Turks—were bound by their legs and hands, and their throats were slit. The five suspects were caught, and one claimed, “We didn’t do this for ourselves, but for our religion. Our religion is being destroyed. Let this be a lesson to enemies of our religion.”

These are not the only attacks against Christians during the decade; there were too many to report here. But they were two of the more high profile incidents reported in international news.

What some may think of as a different kind of attack occurred on February 10, 2004, when the French National Assembly passed a law banning religious items and clothing from public schools. The law expanded the principles in then existing French law based on the requirement of *laïcité*: the separation of state and religious activities. It was considered by many to specifically target the wearing of head scarves (khimars), as part of the hijab worn by Muslim schoolgirls. Thus it became known as the French headscarf ban.

We know anti-Christ isn’t against religion; it is one of his most effective tools to deceive. And religious articles should mean nothing to true believers in Christ. They, too, can be idols even if they depict “Christian” symbols of faith. So I would not consider this event a victory for anti-Christ as much as an act of human engineering to avoid conflicts of religion. However, the following might be construed as a victory for him.

An attack against Christianity in schools took place when on June 29, 2007, the European Court of Human Rights (at Strasbourg) ruled that mandatory Christian education classes in Norway’s elementary schools were in violation of Article 2 of the European Human Rights Convention.

We are all familiar with the onslaught against every vestige of faith in Jesus Christ within the United States. That battle continues to rage today. Western Europe is also in the throes of a life-and-death spiritual struggle. And it appears as if anti-Christ is going to win on all fronts—until his time comes to an end with the return of Christ.

Scandals

Christianity has been plagued with scandals from its beginning. In recent times, the child sexual abuse scandals exposed among Roman Catholic clergy have left the world wondering about the dichotomy between what the Vatican says and what it has tolerated for centuries.

The scandals have not been found only in Romanism. There have been plenty among non-Catholic leaders as well, particularly in the Pentecostal and charismatic communities.

I generally do not deal with the personal sins of individuals; it’s enough to judge myself. I prefer to deal with their false teachings. But inasmuch as we’re addressing anti-Christ’s opportunities to turn people from the truth, such public scandals cannot be avoided. Even so, it gives me no pleasure to resurrect them for this installment of our series.

John Paulk

In September, 2000, John Paulk (no relation to Earl Paulk) caused consternation within Focus on the Family when, as a leader of that organization’s Love Won Out conference, Paulk was photographed at a Washington, D.C. bar that caters to homosexuals. Paulk was a former chairman of the board for Exodus International North America, whose mission was to convert homosexuals from their sin to a “straight” lifestyle in Christ. Despite photographic proof, Paulk denied being there. Later, he admitted to being in the bar but claimed he was there for other than sexual pursuits. Paulk remained on Exodus’s board, but was put on probation and did not run again for the position once his term expired.

Paulk confessed to having been overcome from the publicity and demands for speaking engagements after his famous conversion to Christianity, and he “wanted to escape.” He decided to go to a gay bar, and there he was found out. “Well,” he said, “of course, because God loves me He is not going to let me go out on a leash too long and I was discovered in there.”

We can’t speak for John Paulk’s heart, but the resulting national exposé brought a reproach against the Lord Jesus and cast a pall of controversy over the claim that homosexuals can be changed through the power of God.

Paul Crouch

As co-founder, chairman, and president of Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), Paul Franklin Crouch, with his wife Jan, grew his enterprise into the United States’ largest Christian television network, boasting 47 satellite stations and 12,500 international affiliates. TBN’s programming reaches nearly 100 million households with Christian content, most of which is biblically questionable.

Paul Crouch’s reputation came under scrutiny when, in September 2004, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that in 1998 he had paid a former employee a settlement of \$425,000 in response to a sexual harassment lawsuit. The plaintiff, Enoch Lonnie Ford, alleged that he was forced into a homosexual encounter with Crouch under threat of losing his job.

TBN officials acknowledged the settlement but stated that there was no admission of guilt on Crouch’s part; the settlement was made “in order to avoid a lengthy and expensive lawsuit.”

Additionally, Crouch was sued for plagiarism by author Sylvia Fleener, who accused Crouch of taking from her novel *The Omega Syndrome* the plot for his own end-times novel and subsequent movie, *The Omega Code*. Crouch’s motion for summary judgment failed, and the case was settled out of court for an undisclosed amount.

There is no empirical evidence that Paul Crouch was guilty of either charge, but the fact that he settled for large sums of money with his adversaries casts suspicion on his character. Guilty or innocent, these circumstances gave anti-Christ additional ammunition for his weapons against the faith.

Douglas Goodman

In May, 2004, one of Britain's leading evangelists and pastor of Victory Christian Centre in London, was found guilty of sexual assaults against women in his congregation and was sentenced to prison. Goodman had turned the modest evangelical mission into a large church of up to 3,000 congregants, boasting an annual income of £3.5 million. In addition, the government's Charity Commission found that Goodman and his wife had "exerted an improper influence over those people responsible for the management of the charity's affairs." The commission closed Victory Christian Centre, but Goodman's wife started a new church called Victory to Victory in Wembley. On his release, Douglas resumed pastoral ministry alongside his wife.

Sexual improprieties are bad enough, but the anti-Christ media look for opportunities to show how Christians are money-grubbing, self-absorbed people. What is truly scandalous is that the fallen world's system of justice operating under anti-Christ's jurisdiction, has often had to bring public correction to Christian individuals and institutions.

Etc.

Space doesn't allow for a full rundown on all the scandals within Christianity that took place during this decade, but a brief outline may be sufficient:

Ted Haggard, 2006: Pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) from 2003 to 2006. Found to have been involved in illicit drugs and numerous homosexual encounters.

Paul Barnes, 2006: Senior minister of Grace Chapel in Douglas County, Colorado. Confessed to homosexual encounters and resigned on December 7.

Lonnie Latham, 2006: Senior pastor of South Tulsa Baptist Church and member of Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee: He was arrested for "offering to engage in an act of lewdness" with a male undercover policeman.

Earl Paulk, 2007: Founder and senior pastor of Chapel Hill Harvester Church in Decatur, Georgia. Several women from the congregation accused Paulk of sexual relations with them, many proven correct. A court-ordered DNA test in 2007 showed that Paulk's "nephew," Donnie Earl Paulk, was in fact Earl Paulk's son by his sister-in-law.

Richard Roberts, 2007: Son of the late Oral Roberts, and president of Oral Roberts University. Richard was forced to resign after being named in a lawsuit alleging improper use of university funds for political and personal purposes.

Coy Privette, 2007: A Baptist pastor and North Carolina political figure, Privette was also president of The Christian Action League and a moral crusader. He had to resign after being charged with six counts of aiding and abetting prostitution.

Todd Bentley, 2008: A prominent figure in the Lakeland Revival in Florida, Bentley made wild claims of healings. In August, 2008, he left the "revival" after separating from his wife, Shonnah. It was found that he had been in an extramarital affair with Jessa Hasbrook, a member of his staff. He has since been "restored" to ministry.

Tony Alamo, 2008: Co-founder with his now late wife Susan Alamo of the Tony and Susan Alamo Christian Ministry in Hollywood, California. Previously convicted of tax evasion in the 1990s, Tony Alamo was convicted on ten counts of transporting minors across state lines for sexual purposes, sexual assault, and other crimes. On November 13, 2009, he was sentenced to the maximum punishment, and is currently serving a 175-year prison term.

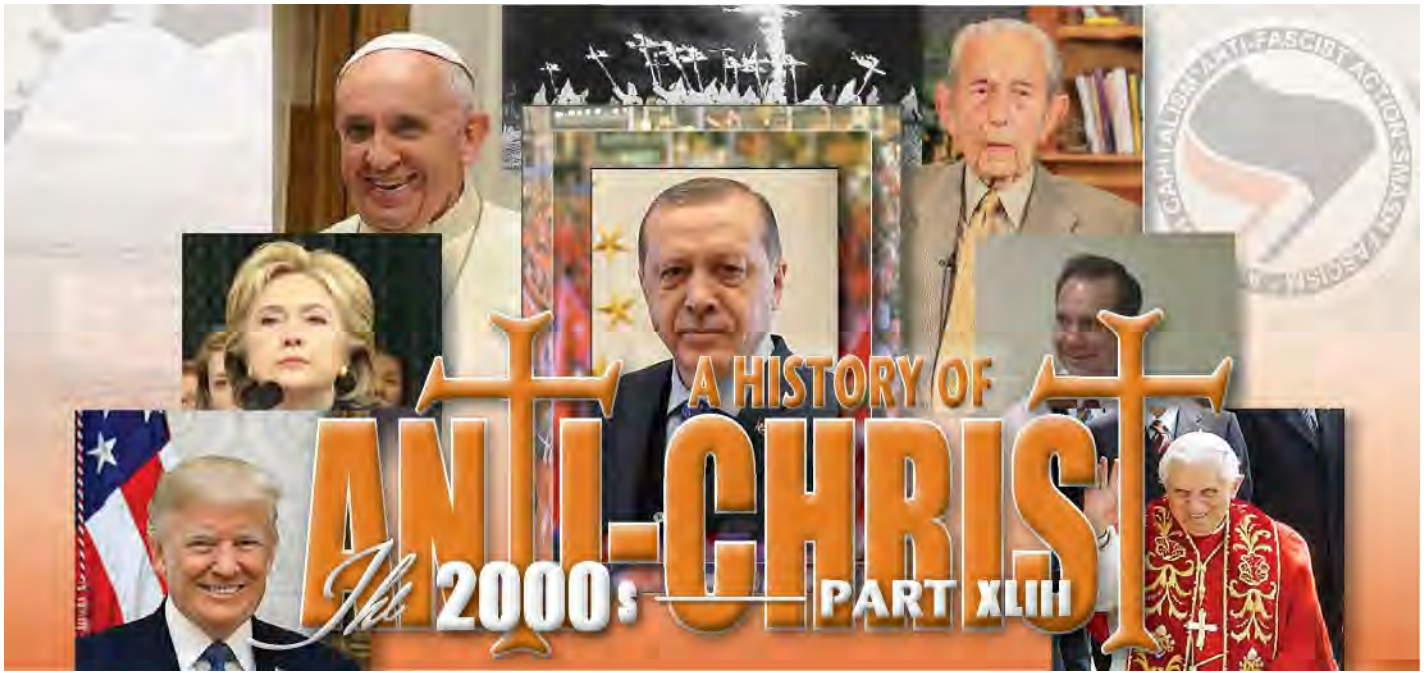
Senate Probe

These are just a few of the scandals associated with high-living "televangelists" and pastors of megachurches. A 2007 U.S. Senate investigation probed into the finances of six "prosperity gospel" preachers, and reported that they all engage in lavish lifestyles. They were found to have fleets of expensive cars, palatial mansions, private jets, and other extensive luxuries paid for by followers who donate due to requests for tithes. The six under investigation were Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Benny Hinn, Eddie L. Long, Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyer, and Paula White.

Although the investigation had no power to bring charges for misconduct, the revelations demonstrate how money is an integral element to such preachers' enterprises. This, too, is a boon to anti-Christ's propaganda against the truths that may or may not be part of these charlatans' teachings.

Beside the reproach these scandals engender against the Lord's name before the world, there are the many disillusioned believers who are adversely affected. Loss of faith, confusion, distrust of God's Word—these are some of the adverse effects that faithless people in leadership have on the Body of Christ. At the heart of the problem is the penchant for good people to trust those who come in the name of Jesus, promising good things for those who follow their dictates. The only place we can truly place our trust is in our Lord and His Word. It is up to each believer to diligently study God's Word in order to rightly divide His truth (2 Timothy 2:15). Strong food belongs to those who by reason of use have exercised their senses to be able to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).

We must not allow the failings of others, no matter how highly credentialed, to lead us into error.



AS WE APPROACH the end of this Age of the Gentiles, we are witnessing the fulfillment of biblical prophecy that points to the Lord’s Second Coming. In spite of so-called prophets who are predicting “breakthrough” blessings from God via encounters with angels—who “prophesy” that the nations are going to be turned to God and believers in Jesus are going to reap a windfall of health, wealth, and all things good, the truth is that as the end approaches, evil will grow worse. The Apostle Paul’s second letter to Timothy should serve as a warning:

Yes, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. (2 Timothy 3:12-13)

Granted, not all believers in Jesus suffer the same degree of persecution. But from the mildest form (shunning by family and/or friends who resent the Gospel), to the harshest form (physical torture and death), the spirit of anti-Christ is the same. The world, currently Satan’s domain, is enmity against Yahweh. So we cannot expect the world to embrace us or to decide that the Gospel is the truth worth following.

Jesus’ words are especially telling:

As it was in the days of Noah, so it shall also be in the days of the Son of Man [Jesus’ return]. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

Likewise, also, as it was in the days of Lot, they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from the heavens and destroyed them all.

Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. (Luke 17:28)

Until the Lord appears to receive His saints, it will be business as usual for the world system. Yet in the midst of it there will be increasing elements of destruction—wars; rumors of war, nations fighting against nations, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places (Matthew 24:6-8). But these are only the beginning of sorrows. Evil will grow worse—evil that will afflict the Body of Christ:

Then they will deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and you shall be hated by all nations for My name’s sake.

Then many will be offended, and will betray one another, and hate one another. And many false prophets will rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

That is the prophesied position of the Body of Christ from Pentecost to the end of this age. Apostasy will plague Christianity. Yet the Lord’s promises that he who endures to the end shall be saved (Matthew 24:9-13).

And the most telling of all prophecies is that of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 24:24:

For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

The last-days false christs and false prophets will be most deceptive. But today’s false christs and false prophets don’t have to perform great signs and wonders to deceive; all they need do is make claims of signs and wonders, of speaking with angels and/or with Jesus, purporting to convey direct

words of revelation from Heaven. The gullible among Christians are plentiful to keep them on the circuit, selling their “prophecies” that in truth are nothing more than obtuse utterings of biblically-sounding phrases and allegorical interpretations of God’s Word, promising nothing but good.

Such “prophecies” work in the United States and some other western nations, but one need only read of the plight of Christians in all other parts of the world to see the real face of anti-Christ. In non-Christian nations, anti-Christ works to kill and discourage believers through physical persecution; in “Christian” nations, he works to destroy the purity of the faith among the Christian masses. He drives believers to ruin through the use of government force to cause them to act contrary to their consciences. His onslaught in the “Christian” nations is primarily physical; his onslaught in the non-Christian nations is primarily spiritual and psychological.

Persecution of Christians is commonplace in non-Christian countries. But in some cases, there is persecution by Christians against non-believers and even other Christians. In all cases we can see anti-Christ at work.

RELIGION

At the start of this decade, on January 20, 2010, eight Muslims firebombed a Christian church in Malaysia. The Muslims objected to Christians referring to Yahweh as “Allah” although that is the misnomer applied to Him in Arabic Bibles influenced by the Muslim culture in which they live.

Conversely, four days later, in the north-central Nigerian city of Jos, Christians went on a rampage against Muslims, killing 364 and destroying some 1,000 homes and shops by fire. The local Catholic archbishop claimed that the real cause for the violence was not religion but “the struggle for ethnic and political superiority in the city.”

Two months later, on March 10, Muslims attacked a Christian community near Jos in revenge for the violence against Muslims in January, killing and displacing many.

On January 1, 2011, another clash between Muslims and Christians took place in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, sparked by a bomb that killed some 30 Christians attending their church service. In response, angry Christians attacked Muslims and wreaked havoc at a mosque.

These are merely a few of the ongoing incidences of warfare between Christians and others. In all these cases, anti-Christ gained victories by urging violence both against and by Christians. Those “Christians” who engaged in violence against Muslims—whether one considers them justified or not—were used by anti-Christ to bring a strong reproach against the name of Jesus.

It is one thing to defend oneself in the heat of the moment when attacked; it’s another thing to plot and carry out revenge. Vengeance is still the Lord’s; He will repay.

A different form of Christian persecution against others has been perpetrated by members of the Westboro Baptist

Church of Topeka, Kansas, who regularly stage pickets and angry demonstrations against average people stricken by bad circumstances. On January 13, 2011, they sought to picket the funeral for nine-year-old Christina Taylor Green, one of six people killed in Tucson, Arizona, when Jared Lee Loughner opened fire at a political rally for Democrat Representative Gabrielle Giffords. According to the religious philosophy of Westboro Baptist Church, led by “fundamentalist” pastor Fred Phelps, bad things happen to bad people as a result of their sins. They often picket funerals of American soldiers killed in combat, to express the idea that the soldiers deserved to die for their sins and lack of repentance.

They also picket “gay pride” parades and other activities with which they find offense, warning of God’s displeasure and coming judgment for the sins of the participants.

One may agree that judgment is coming upon the world for its sins, but picketing funerals in judgment against the deceased as individuals brings a reproach against the name of Jesus and serves anti-Christ’s agenda more than the Lord’s agenda. As Jesus said to those who were about to stone the woman caught in adultery, “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.”

Are the Westboro Baptist Church members without sin? Or are their sins just of a different nature than those against whom they protest?

Another reproach against the name of Jesus began with the publishing in the December, 2010, issue of Reader’s Digest, a prediction by Family Radio owner Harold Camping that “The Bible guarantees the end of the world will begin May 21, 2011.” Camping claimed in numerous follow-ups to the ads as well as billboards that May 21 would be the date of the “rapture,” and that the world would come to an end on October 21, 2011. Camping’s convoluted explanation of his prediction misrepresented Scripture. When his prediction failed to come to pass, he placed the blame on others and on God for changing His mind.

As much good as Family Radio had done in the past, much of it was nullified by Camping’s presumptuous “prophecy” that greatly aided anti-Christ in many ways. One way was the wholesale exploitation of Camping’s gullible followers who sold all they had and gave the proceeds to him to spread his false prophecy. Not to mention the laughing stock he made of the Body of Christ before the unbelieving of this world.

Roman Catholicism

On February 28, 2013, a rare occurrence took place when Pope Benedict XVI resigned, becoming the first to do so since Gregory XII in 1415. Prior to Gregory XII, the only pope to resign voluntarily was Celestine V in 1294. This presents a problem for Catholicism: how does one resign from a position in which he was presumably “anointed” by the Holy Spirit? Is the Catholic Church left with two popes?

Benedict's resignation opened the way for Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina to be elected the 266th pope, taking the name Francis I. Francis I made history as the first pope to come from the Americas and from the Southern Hemisphere, and most significantly, as the first Jesuit pope.

Some Catholic traditions suggest that this pope is to be the last before the end of the world. However, among those traditions the last pope is to be named Peter.

As a cardinal, Bergoglio demonstrated strong pro-Marxist sympathies, which are contrary to biblical truth in many ways. Since becoming pope, Bergoglio has exhibited sympathies antithetical to biblical truth, particularly toward homosexuality, the existence of "hell" or the Lake of Fire (what he and most Christianity mistakenly call "hell"), and a belief in universalism.

Roman Catholicism continues to exercise tremendous power as a religio-political movement, similar to Islam. Both claim jurisdiction over Jerusalem; both are anti-Semitic at their core; combined, both control the minds of one-fourth of the world's population—the perfect combination for anti-Christ to temporarily meld their ambitions to displace the Jews from Jerusalem as prophesied will happen before the Lord returns to the earth to establish His Millennial Kingdom.

Almost three years after his election as pope, on February 12, 2016, Francis I signed an Ecumenical Declaration with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill. It was the first meeting of the leaders of these two denominations since their split in 1054.

This ecumenical action is a continuation of the Vatican's attempt to eventually bring all Christendom under the papal umbrella, an important element to anti-Christ's unification plans that will prepare most Christians for the last-days deception that will eventually result in the prophesied "Mark of the Beast."

SEXUAL DEVIANCY

On December 23, 2010, Barack Obama signed into law Congress's repeal of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Law, paving the way for sexual deviants to serve openly in the U.S. military.

Acceptance of homosexuality, lesbianism, transgender-ism, and other forms of sexual deviancy have continued to increase worldwide. During this decade a number of countries and U.S. states have legalized same-gender marriage. On May 6, 2011, Brazil's Supreme Court ruled in favor of homosexual unions having the same rights as married heterosexuals. Four years later, on May 23, 2015, Ireland legalized same-gender marriage. It was the first country to legalize same-gender marriage by popular vote. On June 30, 2017, Germany legalized same-gender marriage. Austria and Australia legalized same-gender marriage in December, 2017. Sixty-one percent of Australians voted in favor.

On March 30, 2017, the state of North Carolina repealed its bathroom law that restricted use by transgender persons.

Prior to his election to his second term, Obama stated that he believed marriage is between one man and one woman. Shortly after his re-election in 2012, he betrayed that sentiment and pushed for same-gender marriage. When same-gender marriage was affirmed by the Supreme Court he had the White House lighted with rainbow colors in celebration.

The worldwide acceptance of sexual deviancy is evidence of anti-Christ's influence over the nations, affirming that Satan is the god of this world. Satan's purpose in promoting sexual deviancy is to mock and destroy God's order of creation as proclaimed in His Word.

POLITICS

With the election of Barack Obama to a second term, followed by Donald Trump as a Washington DC outsider, this decade has seen unprecedented political events, both positive and negative.

For the entire eight years of Obama's residency in the White House anti-Christ wreaked havoc in America. Obama's lies, Marxist philosophy, anti-American and anti-Christ sympathies, and promotion of sexual deviancy and abortion were displayed in speeches and actions not only in America, but abroad. The anti-Christ forces in America were certain that they would continue to advance their agenda with the election of Hillary Rodham-Clinton to succeed Obama.

But our Father in Heaven had a different plan. And although Clinton allegedly amassed a greater majority of the popular vote, Donald Trump won in a landslide electoral vote victory. Immediately upon his winning the presidency the darkest side of the anti-Christ elements in our nation expressed themselves with violence against Trump and his supporters. Vitriolic and hateful insults, false accusations of racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, misogyny, fascism, and even Nazism have been bandied about with impunity, again with impunity. No public figure has been so mercilessly attacked by anti-Christ through such a large segment of the population. Even before his inauguration the entire Democrat Party, 95% of the mass media, and huge masses of entertainment celebrities called for his impeachment and even his assassination. No public figure has been so mercilessly attacked by anti-Christ through such a large segment of the population. The spiritual dimension of these attacks is evident considering the anti-Christ sentiments held by these people.

It is questionable whether any American president has been so embattled in his attempts to govern according to his constitutionally-granted powers. Even common-sense actions have been met with spite and derision. Attempting to protect the nation from terrorist infiltration, he signed executive orders barring entry into the country by people from high-risk Islamic countries. His order was promptly challenged by Democrats using the Ninth District Court of Appeals to

block them. He has received virtually no cooperation from Democrats who, in turn, accuse him of refusing to cooperate with them. This, after they have accused him of being mentally incompetent and unfit for the office of president.

Whether or not he knows or understands it, President Trump has in many ways acted upon the biblical ethics that formed the basis for the founding of this nation.

When, on December 6, 2017, President Trump declared that the U.S. will recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, virtually the entire world erupted in outrage—further evidence of anti-Christ's control over the world system.

Trump's overturning of many of Obama's executive orders relating to the economy, international dealings, medical care, and terrorism are giving anti-Christ fits. The rage will continue unabated until Trump is out of office by one means or another.

Turkey

On April 16, 2017, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan won a referendum on an 18-article constitutional reform package granting him sweeping new powers. It is feared by many that Erdogan will work toward changing Turkey from a secular republic to an Islamic Ottoman-style authoritarian state.

Jesus told the assembly at Pergamus (in modern Turkey) that He knew it was situated where Satan's seat is (Revelation 2:13). Personally, I believe the last-days anti-Christ will arise from Turkey as a Muslim authoritarian. We'll have to wait to see.

Meanwhile, anti-Christ continues to stir the pot of fear and deception with the threat of North Korea's nuclear weapons program gaining speed and threatening the United States. President Trump's hardline response has been met with ridicule by his detractors who would prefer to follow the road of appeasement.

Although, apart from the military-industrial complex and some hawks in Congress, no one (ostensibly) wants war, history is replete with accounts of disastrous consequences for following that road. If anti-Christ manages to suck the U.S. into another conflict it could spell the end for both nations as well as our allies in the Asian Pacific area.

Roy Moore

On December 12, 2017, Republican Roy Moore was defeated by Democrat Doug Jones in a tightly contested race for the Alabama Senate seat. Moore enjoyed a large majority of voters in his favor until allegations of sexual misconduct against one Beverly Young Nelson were alleged by Democrat Gloria Allred (fitting name). Allred and Nelson contended that Moore sexually assaulted Nelson when she was 16 years old, offering as evidence Nelson's high school yearbook allegedly signed with sentiments by Moore. Moore's attorneys wanted the evidence submitted for forensic inspection, claiming that the writing was not Moore's, in addition to

other challenges. Allred and Nelson refused to submit it to them.

Although no allegations were proven against Moore, he lost to Jones by a slight margin. Curiously, Allred and Nelson stopped pursuing the accusations after his defeat. Wouldn't a legitimate grievance be pursued further? Curiously, I noticed that when Nelson was on camera recounting this traumatic event some 40 years after, that despite the dabbing of a handkerchief at her eyes, there were no tears. How do people cry without tears?

Whether or not Moore was guilty of the accusations only he and Nelson know. But anti-Christ gained a victory by besmirching the reputation of a man who has throughout his political and judicial careers championed the causes of morality and constitutional law.

And whether or not Moore was guilty of the accusations, would not his exemplary life after the alleged incident have at least demanded absolute proof before turning from supporting him? No matter, because anti-Christ, who hates Moore for his past decisions to protect constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of religion for Christians and biblical symbols, has made him a pariah in his own Republican Party.

TERRORISM

Islamic terrorism has continued to increase in the number of incidents worldwide. Space doesn't permit a full account of its growth.

On March 2, 2011, Pakistani Minister of Minorities, Shahbaz Bhatti, a Christian was assassinated by Islamists for having spoken in favor of reforming Pakistan's laws against blasphemy, which carry a death sentence.

On April 9, 2017, Islamic suicide bombers attacked two Egyptian Coptic churches in Tanta and Alexandria, killing 44.

On December 17, 2017, Islamist terrorists attacked a Methodist church in Quetta, Pakistan, killing nine Christians.

The United States has largely managed to avoid anything as huge as the September 11, 2001, attacks against the World Trade Center in New York, but there were incidents that hit home here. Besides the rise of Antifa, which has spread terror in several large cities in protest of President Trump and causes with which its followers disagree, a number of incidents by others took place.

On April 15, 2013, two Chechen Islamist brothers detonated two bombs near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three and injuring 264.

June 12, 2016, saw 49 people shot dead in the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. (Pulse caters to homosexuals.) The perpetrator, Omar Mir Seddique (aka Omar Mateen), was shot dead by police. Mir Seddique called 9-1-1 during the shooting, describing himself as "Mujahideen" (Islamic Soldier) or "Soldier of God").

Understandably, the incident stirred sympathy for sexual deviants, furthering anti-Christ's cause. As believers in Jesus, we, too, must bear sympathy for the dead and their loved

ones. It is not our place to rejoice when such things occur, but mourn the death of the lost whether or not they are in open sin. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Even so, such incidents of persecution against sexual deviants further anti-Christ's agenda to confuse God's creation (Leviticus 18:22-24).

On October 1, 2017, a puzzling terrorist attack took place in Las Vegas, Nevada, during a country-western concert. In the worst gun massacre in modern U.S. History, 58 people were shot dead and 489 were injured by gunfire from the Mandalay Bay Hotel. The official report from law enforcement, including the FBI, is that it was the act of a lone gunman, Stephen Craig Paddock, 64, of Mesquite, Nevada. Paddock is said to have amassed 23 semi-automatic rifles, some equipped with buttstocks to simulate automatic fire, with which he rained down a torrent of bullets upon attendees of the concert for some ten minutes.

Paddock was known to be a quiet, unassuming person with no particular interest in guns and no military training. Authorities say they have found no motive for the shooting.

However, many eyewitnesses have testified that the bullets were coming from several areas, principally below the windows on the 32nd floor from which Paddock is said to have fired. Few photos of the scene on the 32nd floor of the hotel have been released. The most prominently displayed photo shows the legs of a man lying next to an AR-15 with a 30-round magazine attached.

Only five days later, FBI special agent in charge, Aaron Rouse, said that investigators had found "no connection with an international terrorist group."

Really? In five days, with no motive for Paddock to do such a thing, plus numerous eyewitness accounts of additional shooters? Some even testified that they experienced shots reaching the Belagio Hotel, which is not in the line of sight from the Mandalay Bay Hotel room from which Paddock allegedly fired, and is hidden by a taller building between.

I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but some things just don't add up: the speed at which authorities determined Paddock acted alone; the media blackout of the incident with no additional information since that week; the sheer number of weapons found with Paddock's body and at his home; the difficulty controlling automatic rifles; the media and law enforcement disregard of many eyewitnesses caught in the gunfire.

In spite of the FBI denying that any other persons were involved, the Sheriff said Paddock "had to have help at some point" to kill 58 people and wound 489.

Before this incident I had never heard of buttstocks, nor have many gun owners I know. How someone unfamiliar with guns would know about them, secure them, and use them raises questions. Automatic rifles are particularly difficult to manage for someone inexperienced in guns.

May I offer my conjecture, seeing as how conjecture on the part of the FBI and other authorities seems to have ruled in this case?

Considering that ISIS claimed Paddock as a recent convert acting on behalf of ISIS, it seems that the FBI may have acted hastily in dismissing that possibility in such a short time as five days.

I suggest that Islamic terrorists either kidnapped or blackmailed Paddock into being their patsy. They forced him to purchase weapons and take them to the hotel where they would launch their reign of terror. They then shot him during the interim of some 55 minutes between the last shot and the police breaching the room.

The first shots were fired at 10:05 PM.

At 10:12 the first two police officers arrived on the 31st floor and announce hearing gunfire directly above them.

At 10:15 the last shots were fired.

It isn't until almost one hour later, at 11:20 that police entered the room to find Paddock dead on the floor.

Viewing footage of the carnage, I heard uninterrupted automatic gunfire that lasted as long as 10 seconds. An AR-15 automatic rifle fires thirteen rounds per second. A thirty-round magazine will be emptied in just over two seconds. A 100-round magazine will empty in about 7 seconds. For ten seconds of uninterrupted gunfire there would have to be a larger magazine or barrel magazine holding more than 100 rounds. Either that, or there would have to be more than one gunman firing together and consecutively.

But what do I know? Surely the government wouldn't lie to us or cover up a true terrorist attack.

Would they?

Anti-Christ uses governments to keep their citizens in the dark on many important issues concerning their lives, particularly in the sensitive area of Islam with its claim to be a "religion of peace." He wouldn't want his religion besmirched if he could help it.

I hope our readers will forgive this lengthy conjecture, but when one smells a rat, one feels compelled to air things out. It serves anti-Christ to hide any suggestion that Islam is anything other than a "religion of peace," which has been the claim from the first attacks in the modern era.

Just sayin'....

On August 4, 2017, the city of Charlottesville, North Carolina, was terrorized when a clash occurred between white supremacists and Antifa protestors. The supremacists had a permit to demonstrate for their misguided cause, but were blocked by Antifa, Black Lives Matter, communists, and other angry leftists. During the melee one of the supremacists, James Alex Fields, Jr., ran his Dodge Challenger at a crowd of Antifa and other protesters, killing Heather Heyer, 32, of Charlottesville injuring 19 others.

Clearly blame for the conflict was on both sides, and President Trump said as much. This caused the leftist media

to angrily challenge him, claiming he was sympathetic to Nazism. His denunciation of the white supremacists fell on deaf ears. But Anti-Christ works on both sides to achieve his agenda of hate.

Another Islamic terrorist attack took place in New York City on October 31, when an immigrant from Uzbek, Sayfullo Saipov, drove a rented van the wrong way down a pedestrian and cycle path at full speed. Police said Sayfullo screamed "Allahu Akbar" (Allah is great) as he exited the vehicle and ran from the scene. He was shot dead by police.

On November 5, 2017, 26 people were killed and 20 others injured when Devin Kelley, who had received a bad conduct discharge from the Air Force, opened fire during services at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas. Police found Kelley dead in his truck after he had run off the road near the county line while fleeing. He had been fired upon at the church by a neighboring resident, who was credited with killing him. Kelley at one time had taught Bible school, but there is evidence that he became an atheist.

CONCLUSION

As we conclude this series, we remind our readers that the future for anti-Christ is bleak, spelled out in Scripture. Revelation 19 reveals the Lord returning to the earth to establish His Kingdom. Anti-Christ will try to prevent this:

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse, and against His army. (Revelation 19:19)

This revelation tells of the anti-Christ's preparation for the battle of Armageddon. But here he will meet his end:

And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet who worked miracles before him, with which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast, and those who worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

And the remnant were slain with the sword by Him who sat on the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth. And all the fowls were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19:20-21)

That will be the end of the man of sin (the anti-Christ) who will do Satan's bidding. But the end of Satan, the anti-Christ spirit, will continue for a time.

When the man of sin is destroyed, the Lord will establish His Millennial Kingdom on the earth for one thousand years, during which Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit (abyss). At the end of the thousand years Satan will be loosed to test the hearts of all those who lived under the righteous but rigorous rule of Jesus. He will again attempt to dethrone the Lord, but will fail:

And when the thousand years are over, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison and shall go out to deceive

the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth—Gog and Magog "Gog and Magog"—to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

And they went up on the breadth of the earth and encircled the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of the heavens, and devoured them. (Revelation 20:7-9)

This is the final battle when Jerusalem will be surrounded, not by the armies of anti-Christ, but by the armies of Gog and Magog as prophesied in Ezekiel, chapters 38 and 39.

And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:10-13)

Once evil is forever banished from the earth, Yahweh will destroy the present cosmos by fire to purify it of all the material corruption that has accumulated over eons via the spiritual and physical warfare since the fall of Satan. He will then create New Heavens and a New Earth:

And I saw New Heavens and a New Earth, for the first heavens and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea.

And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Revelation 21:1-2)

It is after the Millennium, and upon the establishment of the New Earth, that the New Jerusalem will descend from Heaven as the Bride of Christ. The present-day "Church" is not the Bride of Christ. All believers will have a part in the Bride of Christ, which is the New Jerusalem, including the saints who have lived through all the ages since Adam.

And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, "Look! The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, or sorrow, or crying, nor shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away."

And He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:3-5)

Until the Lord puts an end to anti-Christ's machinations once and for all, we as His people must remain vigilant in our walk with Christ. His desire is that we be conformed to His image.

Although we will never be perfected and sinless in our corruptible flesh, we can be perfect in our hearts and minds toward Him. That alone will be a defeat for anti-Christ during this present age.