

PROPHETIC TRUTHS FOR TODAY

Unveiling the End-Time Events

by

John E. Dahlin

Copyright © 1961

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

DELUSIONS OF THE LATTER DAYS

THE SCRIPTURAL blueprint for the last days is clear. Fortunately we have the “**more sure word of prophecy**” which Peter says “**shines as a light in a dark place.**” We are led by the Word of God to believe that the latter days will be characterized by a universal anti-biblical way of life. Christendom itself will be led off the path of evangelism into spurious ways. Perilous times will not only come as predicted; they are now here. Only sheer unrealism could lead anyone to deny that we have entered into perilous, twisting and even vexing times.

CONFLICT BETWEEN GOD AND SATAN

This conflict has been going on ever since the fall of Satan and his legions. The first recorded account of this conflict on earth is found in the Book of Genesis. And Genesis 3:15 records the first promise of God concerning the plan of redemption. It was provided after our first parents had fallen victims to Satan’s cunningly devised trap.

But the first human delusion set forth is the account of Cain’s sacrifice. His theological concept was defective; that is, in relation to man’s approach to God. He rationalized the matter as to the kind of offering to be presented, and he was repudiated by God for bypassing the plan which pointed to Calvary.

Several decades ago Samuel Andrews wrote a great book, entitled, “*Christianity and Anti-Christianity in their Final Conflict.*” It is a remarkable book and sets forth this age-long conflict between God and the forces of Satan.

The conflict will be intensified as we approach the period which is designated as the latter days. In other words, there will be a capstone to the entire historical rebellion against God. Paul verifies this in the statement, “**For that day will not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition**” (II Thessalonians 2:3). The appearance of Antichrist will culminate with the satanic program involving the whole earth.

The delusions of the latter days are many, of course, and we shall be able to identify only the major ones involving three important areas of human activity.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES AND DELUSIONS

These delusions in the political area have appeared with great satanic craftiness in recent decades. A little more than a hundred years ago Karl Marx, a brilliant political philosopher, came out with the famous Communist Manifesto. It laid the groundwork for the later Utopian dreamers and materialistic-minded men who envisioned a state completely detached from a belief in God and a hereafter. It took considerable time for such a low materialistic pattern to break into a capitalistic society which gave at least lip service to God and Christianity. Broadly speaking, western society has maintained some God-consciousness in its concept of government. Marx, on the other hand, regarded religion as an opiate designed to keep the people stupefied while the capitalistic robber barons went ahead to enslave the masses.

In our generation we have seen the breakthrough of the Marxian philosophy to the extent that over one-third of the world has come completely under the tyranny of this antichristian, atheistic, and diabolical system. By propaganda, lies, distortions, treachery and violence, the devotees of Marx have achieved control over all of Russia and a number of states bordering the Soviet Union. Moreover, all of China, with its teeming millions, has come under the same political tyranny. The communistic system, wherever it operates, completely dethrones all spiritual values and promotes earthly interests exclusively. In China the regimentation is complete. Nearly all traces of family life have been destroyed. Millions of Chinese have been concentrated in communes, and ruthless taskmasters are set over the people, who are made abject slaves of the state. Remember, Marx and his disciples have promised the people an ideal state. In China these deceivers first posed as agrarian reformers who were dedicated to provide land, security, and physical plenty for the landless peasants. Instead of this, the Chinese have come under a slave-system unequalled in the history of the world.

This atheistic system has driven out practically every foreign missionary from China. In fact, several thousand missionaries had to leave immediately after the Communists invaded the mainland. China had been one of the greatest mission fields of the world. There is no room for Christian missions in a communist state, however. Chinese Christians have faced extraordinary hardships since these heartless innovators have taken control of their native land.

The delusions pertaining to an ideal state, where all human needs are met, have caused millions of people to be misled and bewildered. Illiterate and poverty-stricken masses easily become victims of these political delusions. Not only the illiterate, but often the intellectuals, even in America, are swept into this godless system. Jesus warned about the tares which Satan sowed among the wheat. These tares at first resembled the wheat, and it required discernment to distinguish between the genuine and the spurious.

THE DELUSION OF CULTISTS AND “ISMS”

Another wide area of delusions is manifest by the numerous cults and “isms” of our day. These charlatans and quacks are actually flourishing in our time and are expanding with a phenomenal speed and are spreading their unscriptural teachings throughout the entire world. In our own native land over six million people are already ensnared.

As the chairman of the board of Religion Analysis Service, and editor of its publication, *The Discerner*, I have come face to face with the herculean onslaught of present-day cults. Our work is designed to expose these false systems and alert people regarding their tactics and deceptions. But new cults are hatching out so rapidly that we scarcely are able to keep abreast of their spurious activities. In Scripture they are designated as “**doctrines of demons.**” Not a single one of these cults is sound on the deity of our Lord and the doctrine of redemption.

Take Christian Science, e.g., which is neither Christian nor scientific, and you will find it is a complete misnomer. It cannot properly be called Christian because it denies all the tenets of Christianity. And it is well also to point out that it is not scientific because no scientist of national reputation believes in the absurd pantheistic concoctions of Mary Baker Eddy. She had the audacity to say that the Holy Spirit is Christian Science, and that the blood of Christ was no more efficacious when shed on the cross than when it flowed through His veins. Christ’s deity is completely misconstrued and explained away in Christian Science.

It is not possible to examine each cult separately in this message, yet it is absolutely true that the cults on the whole have this in common, namely, *a distortion of the Scriptures*. It might be well to point out that less than a century ago “Pastor” Russell and Mary Baker Eddy were rather lonely figures. Actually cults had not made any serious inroads in America before the turn of the century. In recent decades, however, new ones have emerged on a wide front and the older ones have come under new and more resourceful leaders. Jesus said prophetically, “**Many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many**” (Matthew 24:11).

Christians should never minimize the potency of modern cultists. The Jehovah’s Witnesses are not puny, anemic, or weak; in fact, they are manifesting a driving force that is astonishing. A few years ago they packed into New York’s two largest stadiums over 180,000 people. The U.S. Supreme Court has given them a favorable verdict repeatedly on the theory of freedom of religion and separation of church and state. Their emissaries often stand on the street corners making available *the Watchtower*. Over 4,000,000 copies are published of each issue. The Jehovah’s Witnesses are the most persistent of all cultists and actually thrive on persecution. Paul warns that “**Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**” (II Corinthians 11:14).

The cultists try to present something plausible and a road to God which requires no repentance, no confession of sin and no implicit trust in Christ alone for salvation.

The extraordinary expansion of cults and “isms” demonstrates that the latter days are here.

THE DELUSION OF SUPERINTELLECTUALISM AND SCHOLARSHIP

No one can deny that modern scholarship and philosophy are being used to lead people away from the truth of God. The apostle warns us against such philosophies and dialectical tricks masquerading under the banner of super-intellectualism (See Colossians 2:18).

In 1952 the *New York Times* published a fifty-page brochure of 113 well known books published between 1851 and 1951.

You may read the list, if you wish, and you will find that the best sellers were anti-Christian works, written by such men as Darwin, Nietzsche, Huxley, Marx, Renan, George Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell and men of that general rationalistic pattern. Despite their intellectualism, they fall into the Pauline category where the apostle speaks of being “**spoiled through philosophy**” and antichristian babblings.

Almost universally there is the parading of intellectualism. It covers not only the secular sphere but frequently enters the sphere of conservative Christianity. Many would have you believe that unless a person has a Doctor of Philosophy degree, he has no right to speak with authority or make any significant pronouncement. This is a day when men worship at the shrine of intellectualism.

The expansion of super-intellectualism has led to the rationalization of the Scriptures and the scoffing at verbal inspiration. The literal interpretation of the Holy Scriptures is pretty well discredited in the higher academic circles, and the prophetic areas of the Bible are spiritualized without any restraint whatsoever. Fifty years ago the Federal Council of Churches embraced the social gospel and formalized it into a fixed creed. The social destiny of man and the betterment of society through humanitarianism and education became the dominant points of emphasis. Even more recently the World Council of Churches was launched; that is, in the late 40's. It has repudiated the idea that civilization is facing the judgment. Rather, it believes that the church will build the kingdom through a great many united social and idealistic activities.

Moreover, neo-orthodoxy is sweeping ahead throughout Christendom. It is penetrating even the old citadels of evangelical strength in America and elsewhere. The leading theologians of our time are well known promoters of neo-orthodoxy. The most refined writing among these theological deviates has come from Karl Barth. In his so-called supra-history, he states that no prophecy is being fulfilled in the present age because the church is not moving toward a historical goal. Prophecy, he says, can only begin to be fulfilled in eternity. One wonders how much theological nonsense people can swallow from such famous theologians. Barth regards the Scriptures as only a small segment in God's sphere of revelation. Emil Brunner and Reinhold Niebuhr go even farther in the sphere of neo-orthodoxy.

Most of the seminaries in our time are embalming as rapidly as they can the prophetic and the dispensational areas of the Scriptures. Eschatology is largely pooh-poohed. In a recent volume by a famous professor, he makes the following statement, “No thinking man believes in the eschatology of Jesus.” And he goes on to say, “We must set aside not only the doctrine of the last things, but the doctrine of the grace of God as well. It has been preached for 1900 years and has not done the world any good.” And he says further, “The Church must go into every community and embrace all community projects and civic activities. Unhesitatingly the Church should get into local, national and international politics. In short, the Gospel must be translated in the terms of a social and economic panacea.”

SUMMARY

As we pull together these thoughts regarding delusions, we find first of all:

(1) The atheistic, materialistic and secular proponents who seek to center all interests in the earthly sphere and detaching themselves completely from any thought of a life after this. Secularism is on the march these days. Henry Steele Commager, one of our country's most notable historians, says, "The average college graduate today is thoroughly a secular person." Unfortunately he is correct in his analysis.

(2) Secondly, we have these many counterfeit systems of religion and "isms," all of which bypass Calvary. They build their systems by wrenching from the Bible whatever seems to fit their warped schemes. In this group you have the fanatics who allow imaginations and perversions complete sway, and others, of course, the more cultured and refined, who emphasize idealism or rationalism as substitutes for scriptural truth.

(3) Thirdly are those who find a complete reliance in intellectual processes, and a dependence on human ingenuity and capability in charting the whole course for man. These delusions and counterfeit systems are so cunningly devised in their final onslaught that it became necessary for Jesus to warn men in these words, "**There shall arise false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect**" (Matthew 24:24).

The work of Satan from the beginning has been to make God's redemptive plan ineffective.

Every shade and hue of Satan's counterfeit program is arranged and designed to obscure and obliterate the cross. His gigantic fight against God will reach a climax in the person of Antichrist. Paul says of Antichrist, "**His coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders**" (II Thessalonians 2:9).

Our Lord also solemnly warns men of this climactic condition of delusions in these words: "**For as a snare it shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth**" (Luke 21:35).

As Christians we need to brace ourselves to meet the final onslaught of delusions by Satan. They will be climaxed, however, after the rapture of the church. See II Thessalonians 2:7-12. Only a thorough knowledge of the Word will fortify us in overcoming the pressures of these forces which are energized by Satan.

~ end of chapter 17 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
