

LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE PERSONAL ANTICHRIST

(Lecture 13:11-18)

THE world is waiting for an authoritative religious leader. In an age of doubt and uncertainty men are longing for one who can speak a final word on all the ethical, religious, and political questions which to-day trouble so many.

Instructed Christians know that God has already spoken authoritatively in the person of His Son, and revealed His mind in His holy Word; but they, too, are looking for a coming One, even the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from glory to establish heaven's authority and power on the earth. He will descend from heaven, and with all His glorified saints will reign over the earth for a thousand years of peace and blessing.

“The coming man,” for whom unbelievers look, is one whom they expect to be born on the earth - a man of the earth, earthy, therefore not the Lord from heaven. This expectation is to have its fulfilment in “**the man of sin**,” the personal Antichrist, the false Messiah, who will soon be manifested. In fact, it is a very solemn consideration that he may already be in this world - perhaps a babe in arms - possibly a precocious youth - not improbably a man of affairs! But he will not be made known until after the church of the firstborn has been raptured at the presence of the Lord.

The remarkable thing is that many are waiting expectantly for the Antichrist who imagine they are looking for a reincarnation of Christ Himself.

They profess to wait for a saviour, and expect him to appear on earth, born after the course of nature. Theosophists and others are expectantly waiting for a great world-teacher, despite the disappointment of Mrs. Besant's Order of the Star of the East, whose puppet Krishnamurti has fallen so far short of their hopes. They are really preparing the world for the advent of the man of sin, the son of perdition.

To be forewarned is to be forearmed: God's holy Word has predicted the coming of this false one, and has clearly shown what will lead up to his manifestation. I desire to look into the Word with you on this subject to-night, in connection with the passage we have read.

No Spirit-taught Bible student can fail to observe the shadow of the Antichrist falling athwart many pages of prophecy. "**Ye have heard,**" writes the apostle of John, "**that Antichrist shall come.**"

The only question that troubles many has to do with the identification of the person or thing referred to. Is the Antichrist a person or a system? Many weighty names could be quoted in favor of either view, but, in order that our faith may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God in this matter, as in all else, we desire to be guided by the written Word. But before turning to a number of definite Scriptures, let me remind you of this blessed fact: Christ is a person - a glorified, holy, all-powerful person - one of the eternal Trinity, Who has taken humanity into union with Deity through being born on earth of a virgin, where He humbled Himself as man to the death of the cross. Logically one would expect that the Antichrist would also be a man, a definite personality, opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ, yet claiming to be all that He was - usurping the place of Christ.

But we would not forget that there is in the world a body united to Christ of which He is the glorified Head. There is also a great apostate system opposed to this divine one; falsely claiming to be the spouse of Christ, and the only authorized custodian of the mysteries of God. Is this system the Antichrist, or is it rather Babylon the Great, the antichurch? I think we shall see as we go on that the latter view is the correct one.

The prophetic Scriptures outline two great religious deceptions; a false Christ, and a false church: but the one is not to be confounded with the other. The Antichrist will be a man, as the Christ of God is a Man. Babylon is a vast organized system, even as the church of God is a divine organization. But the one is a Satanic counterfeit of the other.

When the voice of prophecy speaks of the Antichrist, the masculine pronoun "he" is used. When it speaks of the false church it uses either the neuter or the feminine, "it" or "she." There is good reason for this.

The Antichrist is the final head of the apostate system, which bears the same relationship to him, in an outward way, that the church does to Christ. Ever since the primeval promise of the Seed of the woman, who was to bruise the serpent's head, men have looked and longed for a deliverer to arise from among themselves. Such an expectation was grounded upon Scripture, and was fulfilled in the birth of Christ. But since He has been rejected, this expectation has become a perversion of the truth; for the God-sent deliverer, "**the woman's Seed,**" has been caught up to God, and to His throne. It is the serpent's seed who is coming (the Anti-Christ), and they who wait for him realize it not! The serpent has for millennia been the symbol of esoteric religion, which stands for wisdom, and the coming one will claim to be the wisdom of God.

Esoteric religion, I may say, is the religion par excellence of the Antichrist.

A man then is being waited for. His advent draws near. He will come when, at last, the restraining power, the Holy Spirit, has gone up to the heavens whence He came.

This coming one is the Grand Monarch of the New Humanity cult.

- He is the coming Imaum, or Mahdi, of the Mussulmans.
- He is the long-expected last incarnation of Vishnu waited for by the Brahmins;
- The coming Montezuma of the Aztecs;
- The false Messiah of the apostate Jews;
- The great Master of all sects of Yogis;
- The Ultimate Man of the evolutionists;
- The *Uebermensch* of Nietzsche, the Hun philosopher, whose ravings prepared the way for the world war.

He will be a Satan-controlled, God-defying, conscienceless, almost super-human, man - an individual whose manifestation will mean the consummation of the present apostasy, and the full deification of humanity to his bewildered dupes.

Thus the world will turn away from the Christ of God and stretch out eager hands to welcome the coming "**Man of Sin.**" And, depend upon it, he will be on time! God's Word has declared his advent as surely as it predicts the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ from glory.

Meantime the great antichurch (the evil system that is but a counterfeit of the true church for which Christ died) is casting overboard every truth of Scripture, and follows the lies that shall prepare them to receive "**the liar**" of whom I John 2 :22 speaks - the Antichrist.

"Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie shall have his part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," is the unalterable decree of the God of truth. That none here may be entangled in this awful iniquity is my sincere desire, and, in order to preserve from it, I earnestly ask your attention to a number of Scriptures.

The most complete description of Antichrist is found in Daniel 11:36-45.

"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over.

“He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall 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 tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.”

Notice that here it is predicted that a king will arise in Jerusalem who will be an utter atheist, and yet, evidently, a Jew; for it is distinctly predicted of him that **“he shall not regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women.”**

The expression **“the God of his fathers”** can mean nothing else than the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is frequently so used in Scripture; whereas the expression **“the desire of women”** is recognized by both Jewish and Christian expositors as referring to the Messiah.

This point is, I think, very important, for the Antichrist could not be the false Messiah if he were not a Jew, as otherwise he would have no claim upon the allegiance of Israel. He will, I take it, be a great Jewish leader, who will seem, at first, to be a wonderful lover of his people, and who will establish them in their own land. But he will soon throw off all restraint; and, exalting himself, will magnify himself against every god, and speak marvelous things against the God of gods during the last three and a half years of Daniel’s 70th week which we have had so constantly before us in our study of the book of Revelation.

This passage connects so intimately with the portion we have read to-night that I want you to notice the two in comparison.

In Revelation 13:11 we read: **“I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.”**

Observe he does not arise from the Gentile nations as does the first Beast, but he comes up out of the earth, or land, that is, the land of Palestine, the very same land in which the king, in Daniel chap. 11, is to be manifested. He had **“two horns like a lamb,”** for he seems, at first, to have both the meekness and strength of the Lamb of God, but his dragon-like speech betrays him. It is the speech of self-exaltation, which indicates that his condemnation is the same as that of his master, the devil, who fell through pride.

Now Daniel tells us that though the willful king will not regard any supernatural god, yet he will honor one who is called **“the god of forces”** - evidently a man, for he is one to whom he pays tribute: **“a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pleasant things.”**

This mighty one will be the backer, if I may say so, of the Antichrist, and, in return for his protection, he will cause Palestine to submit to his authority, and pay tribute to him.

Thus **“a strange god shall he acknowledge and increase with glory, and shall cause him to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.”**

Now this same thing is implied in the 12th verse of our chapter: **“And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”**

He is, you see, the vicegerent of the first Beast; and this first Beast, whom the world recognizes as a god (in the sense, of course, in which it recognized the Caesars of old as gods), is the master whom he enriches with Jewish wealth.

But he is not only an astute statesman, a crafty politician, but a wonder-worker as well, as the 13th and 14th verses tell us:

“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.”

With this agrees the striking account of **“the lawless one”** in 2nd Thessalonians 2:3-12:

“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God . . . even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders., and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Here is a prediction of the coming of the atheist king of Daniel II, and the wonder-worker of Revelation 13.

One of the signs of the times in our own days is the unhealthy craving for marvels and wonders, which is so prevalent in many quarters. It is a most dangerous condition of mind, and Christians might well beware of anything of the kind. We are too near the end of the dispensation to expect divine miracles in any number; but Satanic signs and wonders will increase, as we draw nearer the end, and, when the Antichrist himself appears, he will give men all the marvels for which they long - only to deceive them, and to lead them to accept his ungodly pretensions.

Just exactly what is meant by the **“image”** of the Beast, I do not pretend to say. I have no doubt it is linked with our Lord’s warning as to **“the abomination of desolation”** that is to be set up in the holy place.

At any rate, it will be the culmination of the apostasy, and will be the signal for all believing Jews, who in that day of great persecution cleave to the Lord, to flee from Jerusalem, and hide themselves in distant parts among the nations, until the appearing of the Messiah Himself. We are told that the lamblike Beast will give life to the image, and it will speak, and cause **“that as many that would not worship the image of the Beast should be killed.”**

A great society will be formed of apostate Jews and apostate Gentiles, which will be patterned somewhat after our present-day labor unions, and oath-bound organizations. This is intimated in verses 16 and 17: **“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.”**

It is well for Christians in this present time that they keep themselves from all such worldly associations and unequal yokes.

Our Lord Jesus told the Jews of His day, **“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his Own name, him ye will receive”** (John 5:43).

He was speaking of this awful person whom we have seen portrayed in these various Scriptures. With them we might also link Zechariah 11:16, 17: **“For, lo, I will raise up a shepherd in the land,”** (note this, he will arise in the land of Palestine) **“which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. Woe to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock! the sword shall be upon his arm, and upon his right eye: his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened.”**

This idol shepherd is put in contrast to the Good Shepherd whom Zechariah was to impersonate or represent, as described in the first part of the same chapter, who was sold for thirty pieces of silver. This part of the prophecy has been literally fulfilled, and we may be certain that the rest will all come to pass in due time.

For this idol shepherd the Jews are even now waiting, though they little realize it.

At a Zionist Congress, some years before the recent war, Max Nordau declared, according to the published reports, **“We are ready to welcome any man as our Messiah who will lead us back to our own land and establish us there in prosperity.”** Max Nordau is a so-called reformed Jew, who has given up the Messianic hope as set forth in the Holy Scriptures. But only recently, when Dr. Mosinsohn, of the Hebrew College of Jaffa, was touring America in the interests of the same Zionist movement, I had the privilege of hearing him give an address at the University of California. In the course of his remarks he said, **“Think of all the great religious leaders who have come out of the East. Moses arose in the East - Buddha, Confucius, Jesus and Mahomet all arose in the East. And we say to you people of the West, with confidence, that if you will restore the Jew to his ancestral home it will not be long until we will give you another great religious leader who will perhaps transcend all who have gone before.”**

A Christian physician and I, who had gone there together, looked at one another in amazement. We felt that we were listening to a John-the-Baptist of the Antichrist, so startling was the announcement. And with the light that the prophetic word throws upon the now very near future, who can doubt that this Hebrew leader's declaration will indeed seem to an unbelieving world to be fulfilled in the willful one who is to be raised up in the land of Palestine, and who will be acknowledged by apostate Judaism and apostate Christendom alike as the Christ - the coming man. Toward this awful end all modern cults and isms are tending, and when the personal presence of the Holy Spirit has been withdrawn from the earth, his manifestation will not long be withheld.

I know that the Reformers, and many moderns, have considered the papacy to be the fulfillment of the prophecies we have been considering; and I do not wonder at this, for that unholy system is one of the most amazing counterfeits of what is of God that the world has ever seen; but it certainly does not meet all the requirements of the case, though it is undoubtedly one of the "**many antichrists**" of which the apostle John writes, when forewarning us of "**the Antichrist**" whose coming is still future.

I would direct your attention to six things predicted of this false one which have never been true of the papacy, and, it seems to me, are never likely to be.

First: The Antichrist must be a Jew, otherwise he would not be owned by Israel as their Messiah.

Second: He is to rise up in the land of Palestine, not in Italy; in Jerusalem, not in Rome.

Third: He is to be subject to, and in league with, the civil power; not dominating it, as the papacy did for centuries.

Fourth: He is to be acknowledged by the mass of the Jews as their king and religious leader, and it is well-known that the Jews have never owned the pretensions of the popes.

Fifth: He is to be the patron of Israel, whereas the Romish church has ever been their persecutor.

Sixth: He is not to be manifested until after the hindering Holy Spirit shall be removed, and that will only be when He goes up with the church at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ for His people, before the hour of judgment strikes for this godless world where the Word of God, the Christ of God, the Spirit of God, and the church of God have all been rejected.

There are other systems equally antichristian with the papacy, but none of them answer to the above requirements; therefore none of them are to be confounded with the personal Antichrist who is yet to arise and delude for a time those "**who refused the love of the truth that they might be saved.**"

The many antichrists are but preparing the way for this incarnation of iniquity; and the avidity with which men and women drink in their evil teachings may give us some idea of how easy a thing it will be for the false Messiah to establish his claims.

Some would ridicule the thought of vast numbers responding to such monstrous pretensions, but we need to remember that God Himself is going **“to give them up,”** in retributive judgment, **“to believe the * lie,”** because they would not have His truth. And, in our own day, how easily have deceivers like Mrs. Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy, Mrs. Ellen G. White, Madame Blavatsky, Annie Besant, Katherine Tingley, John Alexander “Elijah” Dowie, and other charlatans, not to speak of Rome itself, been able to enslave the minds and consciences of vast multitudes of people who refuse the simple truth of the Word of God; and, mark you, all this with the Holy Spirit still in the world, waiting to guide into all truth every honest soul who is willing to be led by Him and taught through the Word!

* In the Hebrew it is the definite article - **“the lie,”** i.e., the lie of the Antichrist.

How much easier will it be for error to assert itself when He is no longer here! But time presses, and it is necessary that I briefly touch on the last verse of our chapter.

I know that many of you will be anxious to have me attempt to expound this verse, and tell you plainly what is meant by its mystic number. **“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred three score and six.”**

All I can say is that six is the number of man, and three of manifestation. In these three sixes I see the full manifestation of what is in the heart of man - man’s last effort to attain to divinity and deity, to rob God of His glory and to exalt himself. But, undoubtedly, when the Antichrist actually appears, and the first Beast is manifested, the meaning will be so plain that everyone who turns to God in that day will be warned thereby to **“have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,”** but will cleave to the Lord all the more earnestly because they know that the end has drawn so nigh. Guesses as to the meaning of 666 have been innumerable; I shall not add another.

And in closing, I would again remind my hearers, that time for us also is flying quickly by. If any of you are unsaved, it is well for you to remember that mercy’s day is quickly gone. Gospel light already seems to be vanishing from the earth; the darkening apostasy is making rapid strides; a famine for hearing the Word of the Lord will soon be here. Oh, that now, in this day of grace, men would heed the testimony of the Scripture of truth, receive the virgin-born Son of God as Saviour and Lord, and spurn the lies of every antichrist.

- **“Oh earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!”**

- **“Hear, and your soul shall live.”**

- **“He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and cometh not unto judgment, but is passed from death unto life.”**

~ end of chapter 15 ~

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