

I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

A. Remember the divisions of Eschatology

1. There are six

- a. The intermediate state (the state of the soul between death and the final resurrection).
- b. The Millennium (the whole period of time between the first and second comings of Christ).
- c. The precursory signs (indications in creation, the nations and the church of Christ’s coming).
- d. The Parousia (the second coming itself in great power and glory).
- e. The events at the Parousia (one general resurrection and one final general Judgment).
- f. The eternal state (of everlasting heavenly glory for the elect church and everlasting conscious punishment for the reprobate wicked).

2. Last week we started looking at the “precursory signs.”

- a. We saw that both Postmillennial and Premillennial Disp. eschatologies reject the signs.
- b. We saw that the signs are not mere signposts: they are the way in which Christ comes. They are indications to us that Christ is at the Right Hand of God and that He is “on His way.”
- c. We saw that the signs increase in frequency and intensity as the end approaches.
- d. We saw that the signs bring judgment on the wicked and are a call to us for watchfulness. The signs are in creation (earthquakes, famines, natural disasters, etc); in the nations (war, lawlessness and persecution) and in the church (spread of gospel and apostasy)

B. We conclude our treatment with the Antichrist (a huge topic of which we only give highlights).

1. Antichrist is “a future reality of opposition to God in Jesus Christ and the true church.”

- a. First, Antichrist is *future*, not merely someone who lived and died a long time ago (the Postmillennial view is that Antichrist was the Roman Empire and her emperors especially Nero).
- b. Second, Antichrist is future *for the church*, not merely someone who will attack the Jews and the so-called “tribulation saints” after the Rapture of the church (Premillennial Disp. view).
- c. Therefore the Antichrist is a reality *in our future* for which we must be prepared.

2. The most popular (and wacky) view of the Antichrist is that of Premill. Dispensationalism.

- a. The Antichrist will begin to rise shortly before the Rapture of the church, but he will not be revealed as *the* enemy of God until after the church is removed by the rapture.
- b. The Antichrist is, acc. to Premill. Disp., the white horseman of Rev. 6:2 (he goes forth to conquer after the church has supposedly been removed in 4:1). But the man on the horse in Rev. 19:11-15 is clearly the same (Christ). The white horse is the preaching of the Gospel in this age.
- c. During Antichrist’s 7 year reign God’s judgments will be poured out on earth (the Tribulation, supposedly described in detail in the seals, trumpets and vials of the book of Revelation).
- d. Antichrist will make a peace treaty with Israel (the 70th week of Daniel 9:27) which will enable Israel to rebuild their temple. But he will break his treaty with Israel after 3 ½ years (the Great Tribulation) and he will desecrate (II Thess. 2:3-4) and destroy (Matt. 24:1-2, 15-22) the temple.
- e. At the height of the Antichrist’s power Christ shall return from heaven to destroy Antichrist, restore Israel and set up a 1,000 year kingdom of peace and prosperity on earth (the Millennium).

II. THE ANTICHRIST: A BRIEF STUDY (Antichrist means “against” or “usurper of” Christ).

A. The spirit of Antichrist has been in the world since the fall of man into sin. Antichrist is simply the pinnacle of man’s alliance with Satan (I John 4:1-3; II Thess. 2:7).

1. In the OT the devil attempted to produce a worldwide Antichristian kingdom.

- a. The devil’s first attempt was at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4-9).
- b. The devil made further attempts in Egypt, but God destroyed Egypt in the 10 Plagues.
- c. Near the end of the OT period the devil made great progress in developing the kingdom of Antichrist (Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece and the Roman Empire). Each of these kingdoms stretched across much of the globe (Est. 1:1); each of them had a personal leader who demanded worship (Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Alexander the Great, Roman emperors); and each of them

persecuted the people of God. But the devil's plans for an Antichrist were thwarted by the coming of Christ to bind him at the cross (as we saw in our treatment of Rev. 20).

2. The book of Daniel gives the most detailed prophecies about Antichrist in the OT. The purpose of Daniel's prophecy is to assure God's people of the triumph of Christ over Antichrist.

- a. In Daniel 2 Nebuchadnezzar has a dream of successive kingdoms in the form of a great image.
- b. In Daniel 7 Daniel himself has a vision of successive kingdoms in the form of terrible beasts (the lion, the bear, the leopard and the indescribably horrible beast). These beasts are Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece and Rome. There is also the vision of the little horn (Dan. 7:8).
- c. The later passages of Daniel's prophecy teach about Antichrist under the type of another "little horn" who in history is called Antiochus Epiphanes. This man called himself "God manifest," demanded divine worship, slaughtered the Jews and desecrated the temple (the so-called "abomination of desolation"). He died in 164 BC.

B. The NT draws on material from Daniel and other prophecies and teaches a future Antichrist.

1. Antichrist will be a composite beast exhibiting features of the four beasts of Daniel 7.

- a. Revelation teaches this in chapters 13: two beasts emerge from the sea and the land. We know from Daniel that a beast is a kingdom. These beasts are not two separate kingdoms but two aspects of the same kingdom: the combination of a lion, bear and leopard (as in Dan. 7).
- b. The beast from the sea is a worldwide, devil-inspired, persecuting, political entity; and the beast from the earth is the composite of all false and apostate religion which serves the first beast.
- c. In addition, according to chapter 17, there is Babylon the harlot, the seductive power of the kingdom of Antichrist, drunk with the blood of the saints.

2. From the material in Revelation we can make some conclusions about the Antichrist.

- a. The Antichristian kingdom will be a worldwide, political organization with great power, ruling over all nations, and "all that dwell upon the earth [except the elect] shall worship him" (13:8).
- b. The Antichristian kingdom will be the culmination of all false religion, apostasy and especially the false church. False religion will aid and abet the Antichrist to come to power.
- c. The Antichristian kingdom will be the final deification of man and the devil (the number "666" is man to the nth degree) and the kingdom of Antichrist will be Satanic (13:4).

3. In addition, it is clear from II Thess. 2 that there will a final, personal Antichrist.

- a. The worldwide political entity will have a man at the very top who will be the personal embodiment of Satan. He will demand to be worshipped (II Thess. 2:3-4, 8).
- b. This man will come to power when the church (2 witnesses of Rev. 11) has finished worldwide preaching of the Gospel. Then Antichrist will make the official work of the church impossible for a short time ("abomination of desolation" [Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2:3-4; Rev. 11:7]).
- c. II Thess. 2 is not speaking about the desecration of a literal temple (either the one in Jerusalem in AD 70 or some future rebuilt temple) but the temple *which is the church* (I Cor. 3:16-17; II Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21). The Antichrist will make Christian public worship impossible (Rev. 13:15-17).

C. Our calling with respect to Antichrist.

1. We must not fear the coming of Antichrist.

- a. The Bible does not tell us about Antichrist to terrify us but to warn us to watch and pray.
- b. He comes in the purpose of God. He has only the power which God determines (10 horns).
- c. The Antichrist will not be able to separate us from Jesus Christ. We might be killed but our death brings us to heaven where we live with Christ in the soul (Rom. 8:35-39; Rev. 20:4).

2. We must be encouraged by the coming of Christ to judge the Antichrist.

- a. God will destroy the beasts, the harlot of Babylon and the devil himself. This will happen especially in the last great battle of Armageddon which will be the final overthrow of God's enemies. The days of Antichrist will be shortened for the sake of the elect.
- b. The personal Antichrist will be destroyed without a fight by Christ (Dan. 8:25; II Thess. 2:8). Christ will destroy the Antichrist *with the spirit of His mouth and the brightness of His Coming*.
- c. Next we look at the Second Coming itself.