

The Antichrist Chapter 11 ANTICHRIST IN REVELATION 13

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Transcript

The Antichrist

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In the thirteenth chapter of Revelation two Beasts are there described. The first is the final Head of the last great Empire before the establishment of the millennial kingdom of our Lord. The second Beast is denominated, in other passages, "the False Prophet." There is a difference of opinion as to which of these Beasts represents the Antichrist. In the Appendix to our book "The Redeemer's Return," where this subject is discussed and from which we shall here freely transcribe, we have stated that opinion is about equally divided. But during the last five years we have made a much wider investigation, and as the result we have found that the great majority of those who have written on the subject regard the first Beast as the Antichrist, and that only a comparative few—nearly all of whom belong to a particular school—favor the alternative view. However, the writings of the few have had a wide circulation and have exerted a considerable influence on students of prophecy, and therefore these papers on the Antichrist would lack completeness, and probably some of our readers would be disappointed, if we said nothing on the subject. It is in no spirit of controversy that we now present our own reasons for believing it is the first Beast of Revelation 13 who is the Antichrist. The book of Revelation makes known the fact that there is a Trinity of Evil. Each of these three evil persons comes into view in Revelation 13. First, there is "the Beast" (v. 2). Second, there is "the Dragon" (v. 2). Third, there is "another Beast" (v. 11). The fact that of this third Beast it is said "He spake as a dragon" (v. 11) at once intimates his satanic nature and character, for the speech corresponds to the heart. The demoniacal nature of each of these evil persons comes out clearly in Revelation 16:13,14, where we read, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the Dragon, and out of the mouth of the Beast, and out of the mouth of the False Prophet. For they are the spirits of demons, working miracles." Finally, in Revelation 19:19,20 we are told, "And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet . . . these both were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone," and then in Revelation 20:10 we read, "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 for ever and ever." The above scriptures clearly establish the fact that there is a Trinity of Evil. Now it surely needs no argument to prove that these three evil persons are opposed to and are the antithesis of the three Persons in the Godhead. The Devil stands opposed to God the Father—"Ye are of your father, the Devil," John 8:40, etc. The Antichrist stands opposed to God the Son—his very name shows this. The

remaining evil person stands opposed to God the Spirit. If this be the case, then our present task is greatly simplified: it is merely a matter of noting what is separately predicted of the two Beasts in Revelation 13 so as to ascertain which of them stands opposed to Christ and which to the Holy Spirit. Now there are only two arguments of any plausibility which have been advanced to support the view that it is the second Beast of Revelation 13 which is the Antichrist, but so far as we are aware no one has endeavored to show that the first Beast represents the third Person in the Trinity of Evil! Yet he must be so if the second is the Antichrist! This is unmistakably clear from Revelation 16:13,14 and 19:19,20. The first argument used is drawn from the language of Revelation 13:11, where of the second Beast it is said, "He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." This, we are told, indicates that it is the Antichrist who is here in view, aping the Lamb of God. Personally, we are amazed that such an assertion should have been made in soberness. It is difficult to imagine anything more wide of the mark, seeing that not only is it not said this beast with the two horns was "like the lamb" but in this same book "the Lamb" is pictured with "seven horns" (Rev. 13:6). But if this second Beast, the False Prophet, be the opponent of God the Spirit, then the two horns have a pertinent significance, for two is the number of witness, and just as Christ declared the Spirit of God should "testify (lit., bear witness) of Me" (John 15:26), so the third person in the Trinity of Evil bears witness to the first Beast—see Revelation 13:12,14,16. In the second place, it is said that the first Beast of Revelation 13 is presented as the political Head, while it is the second who is viewed as the religious Head. But if this is not a bad mistake, it certainly needs to be modified. It is the first Beast, not the second, who is worshipped (Rev. 13:12)! Having thus noticed briefly the two leading objections which have been brought against the position we are about to define and defend, we shall now present some of the many arguments on the other side. In the first place, to regard the Antichrist as limited to the religious realm and divorced from the political, seems to us, to leave out entirely an essential and fundamental element of his character and career. The Antichrist will claim to be the true Christ, the Christ of God. Hence, it would seem that he will present himself to the Jews as their long-expected Messiah—the One foretold by the Old Testament prophets—and that before apostate Christendom, given over by God to believe the Lie, he will pose as the returned Christ. Therefore, must we not predict, as an inevitable corollary, that the pseudo christ, will usher in a false millennium, and rule over a mock messianic kingdom? That this conclusion is fully borne out by Scripture we shall show in a moment. Why was it (from the human side) that, when our Lord tabernacled among men, the Jews rejected Him as their Messiah? Was it not because He failed to fulfill their expectations that he would take the government upon His shoulder and wield the royal scepter as soon as He presented Himself to them? Was it not because they looked for Him to restore the Kingdom to Israel there and then? Is it not therefore reasonable to suppose that when the Antichrist presents himself to them, that he will wield great temporal power, and rule over a vast earthly empire? It would certainly seem so. Happily we are not left to logical deductions and conclusions. We have a "thus saith the Lord" to rest upon. In Daniel 11:36—a scripture upon which all are agreed concerning its application—the Antichrist is expressly termed "The King" (which) shall do according to his will." Here then is unequivocal proof that Antichrist will exercise political or governmental power. He will be a king—"the king"—and if a king he must be at the head of a kingdom. In the second place, if the Antichrist is to be a perfect counterfeit of the true Christ, if he is to ape the millennial Christ as set forth in Old Testament prophecy—for, of course, he will not mimic the "suffering" Christ of the first advent—then it necessarily follows that he will fill the role of king, yea, that he will reign as a King of kings, as Satan's parody of the Son of man seated upon "the throne of His glory." That the Antichrist will also be at the head of the religious world, that he will demand and receive Divine honors, is equally true. Just as in the Millennium the Lord Jesus will "be a Priest upon His Throne" (Zech. 6:13), so the Antichrist will combine in his person the headships of both the political and the religious realms—see our notes on

Ezekiel 21:25,26 in Chapter 9. And just as the Son of Man will be the Head of the fifth world-empire (Dan. 2:44) so, the Man of Sin will be the head of the revived fourth world-empire (Dan. 2:40). In the third place, to make the Antichrist and "the False Prophet" one and the same person is to involve us in a difficulty for which there seems to be no solution. In Revelation 19:20 we read, "And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him . . . These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Now, if the False Prophet be the Antichrist, then who is "the Beast" that is cast with him into the Lake of Fire? The Beast here cannot be the Roman Empire (the people in it), for no member of the human race (as such) is cast into the Lake of Fire until after the Millennium (see Revelation 20). That "the Beast" is a separate entity, another individual than the False Prophet is also clear from Revelation 20:10—"And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are." In this last quoted scripture, each of the three persons in the Trinity of Evil is specifically mentioned, and if "the Beast" is not the Antichrist, the Son of Perdition, the second person in the Trinity of Evil, who is he? In the fourth place, what is predicted of the first Beast in Revelation 13 comports much better with what is elsewhere revealed concerning the Antichrist, than what is here said of the second Beast. In proof of our assertion we submit the following: Points of resemblance between the first Beast of Revelation 13 and the Man of Sin of 2 Thessalonians 2: — 1. The first Beast receives his power, seat, and great authority from the Dragon, Revelation 13:2. Cf.. 2 Thessalonians 2:9—"Him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." 2. "All the world" wonders after the first Beast, Revelation 13:2. Cf.. 2 Thessalonians 2:11,12—"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the Lie; that they all might be damned," etc. 3. The first Beast is "worshipped," Revelation 13:4. Cf.. 2 Thessalonians 2:4—"He as God sitteth in the temple of God." 4. The first Beast has a mouth "speaking great things," Revelation 13:5. Cf.. 2 Thessalonians 2:4—"Who...exalteth himself above all that is called God." Note also that in Revelation 13:5 it is said of the first Beast, he "has a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." Is not this one of the chief characteristic marks of the Antichrist? 5. The first Beast makes war on the saints, Revelation 13:7. cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:4—"Who opposeth...all that is called God," that is, he will seek to exterminate and obliterate everything on earth which bears God's name. From these points of analogy it is evident that the first Beast of Revelation 13 and the Man of Sin of 2 Thessalonians 2 are one and the same person. In the fifth place, that the second Beast is not the Man of Sin appears from the fact that the second Beast causeth the earth to worship the first Beast (Rev. 13:12), whereas the Man of Sin exalteth himself (2 Thess. 2:4), and compare Daniel 11:36: "And he exalteth himself." As already intimated, there are several things which show plainly that the second Beast is the third person in the Trinity of Evil, that is, the one who is the satanic parody of the Holy Spirit. The point now before us supplies further confirmation. There is nothing in Revelation 13, nor elsewhere, to show that this second Beast is worshipped, rather does he direct worship away from himself, to the first Beast. Therefore, he cannot be the pseudo christ, for the Lord Jesus did, again and again, receive worship (see particularly Matthew's Gospel), and will be worshipped on His return. But this second Beast, who directs worship away from himself, accurately imitates the Holy Spirit in this respect, for nowhere in the New Testament is the third Person of the Holy Trinity presented as a distinct Object of worship; instead, He is to "glorify" Christ (John 16:14) by drawing out our hearts unto that blessed One who loved us and gave Himself for us. Again; it has been generally recognized by prophetic students that our Lord referred to the Antichrist when He said, "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). If the one here mentioned as coming "in his own name" is the Antichrist, then it is certain that the second Beast of Revelation 13 cannot be the Antichrist, for he does not come "in his own name." On the contrary, the second Beast comes in the name of the first Beast as is clear from Revelation 13:12-15. Just as the Holy

Spirit—the third Person in the Holy Trinity speaks "not of Himself" (John 16:13), but is here to glorify Christ, so the second Beast—the third person in the Evil Trinity seeks to glorify the first Beast, the Antichrist. If it should be objected that the second Beast is represented as working miracles (Rev. 13:13,14) and, that as the Man of Sin is also said to come "after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2:9), therefore, the second Beast must be the Antichrist, the answer is, This by no means follows. The power to work miracles is common to each person in the Trinity of evil. Just as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, each perform miracles, so does the Dragon, the Beast, and the False Prophet (see Rev. 16:13,14 for proof). Three things are said in connection with the second Beast which correspond closely with the work of the Holy Spirit. First, "he maketh fire come down from heaven" (Rev. 13:13), cf. Acts 2:1-4. Second, "he had power to give life unto the image of the Beast" (Rev. 13:15), cf. John 3:6—"born of the Spirit." Third, "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" (Rev. 13:16), cf. Ephesians 4:30—"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Finally; the second Beast is clearly subordinate to the first Beast. But would the Jews receive as their Messiah and King one who was himself the vassal of a Roman? Was not this the very reason why the Jews of old rejected the Lord Jesus, i.e., because He was subject to Caesar, and because He refused to deliver the Jews from the Romans! In the sixth place, as we have seen, in Daniel 11:36 the Antichrist is termed "the King," and if a king he must possess a kingdom, and can there be any doubt as to the identity of this kingdom? Will not Antichrist's kingdom be the very one which Satan offered in vain to Christ? namely, "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" (Matthew 4:8). That the kingdom of the Antichrist will be much wider than Palestine appears from Daniel 11:40-42—"And at the time of the end shall the king of the South push at him (the Antichrist): and the king of the North (the Antichrist, as King of Babylon) shall come against him (the King of the South) like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships: and he (the Antichrist) shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over. He (the Antichrist) shall be overthrown: but these shall escape out of his (the Antichrist's) hand, even Edom and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He (the Antichrist) shall stretch forth his hand upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape." From this scripture it is also clear that the Antichrist will be at the head of a great army and therefore must be a political ruler as well as a religious chief. In the seventh place, it is generally agreed among those students of prophecy who belong to the Futurist school, that the rider upon the four horses in Revelation 6 is the Antichrist. If this be the case, then we have further proof that the Antichrist and the Head of the revived Roman Empire is one and the same person. This may be seen by comparing three scriptures. In Revelation 6:8, of the rider on "the pale horse," we read, "His name that sat on him was Death and Hell followed with him." In Isaiah 28:18, those who will be in Jerusalem during the Tribulation period are addressed by Jehovah as follows: "And your covenant with Death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand." What "covenant" can this be, except the one mentioned in Daniel 9:27, where we read of the Roman Prince (the Head of the revived Roman Empire) confirming the covenant with the many for seven years? Now reverse the order of these three passages, and what do we learn? In Daniel 9:27 we learn that the Head of the Roman Empire makes a covenant with the Jews. In Isaiah 28:18 this covenant is said to have been made with Death and Hell." While in Revelation 6:8 the rider on the pale horse (whom it is generally admitted is the Antichrist) is named "Death and Hell." Hence, from whatever angle we approach the subject it is seen that the Antichrist is the Head of the fourth world-kingdom.

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