

# Church History - Session 3 (After Augustus)

by Edgar F. Parkyns

---

*The sermon explores the development of church history, from the early Christian era to the establishment of Roman Christianity in Britain, highlighting key figures and events that shaped the church's doctrine and practices.*

**Duration:** 58:27

**Scripture:** Romans 13:13

**Topics:** "Church History"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of following the teachings of Jesus Christ and being practical in our faith. He argues against the concept of original sin and emphasizes individual responsibility for one's actions before God. The speaker also mentions a letter written to the church to provide stability and prevent confusion about the timing of the day of the Lord. He references the Chesapeake Tunnel as a possible illustration and discusses the kingdoms mentioned in the book of Daniel, particularly the fourth kingdom with ten horns.

---

## Transcript

There's nothing complicated in it to perfect you. It's delightfully easy and informative reading. I'm very grateful to Sister Nancy for producing all this material for us.

There is a brief summary of Lesson 1, and I should have put in Lesson 2. Oh yes, it is there, that's right. Lesson 2 starts under the second line. And there are those historic details, historical details, which you may like to have by you.

That brought us to the close of the era of persecution under pagan Rome. And it plunges us into a new era of church history and church trouble. Constantine was the emperor who professed at least sympathy for Christianity, and some say he was converted to Christianity.

We don't know the whole story, but it is said that when he went to meet his rival at the Battle of Mill Vien Bridge, he saw a sign in the sky, the sign of the cross, and the words, in this sign conquer. He decided to go forward using that sign on his banners, and won a resounding victory which put all of Rome under his power. So he decided to patronize Christianity from that time forth.

He seems to have been fairly sincere. He kept the title of Pontifus Maximus, that is he was still the head of the mystery religions. The high priest of them all, and he didn't cut himself off from them.

But he very definitely favored Christianity, largely from political reasons, for Christianity was now so strong that he thought that unless he sided with it, it might destroy his empire. So he chose the easy way out. But there does seem to have been a measure of sincere interest in him.

He was baptized before he died, and one of the great things he did was to summon one of those huge church councils. Up till this time the church had been a prescribed sort of body, unpopular. But now with the patronage of the empire, he moved right in, and when he found that the church, having escaped persecution, now began to quarrel in its ranks, he was most distressed about this, and decided to step in and he said, look here you Christians, you really must agree among yourselves.

And so he called the great council of Nicaea to settle a new doctrinal battle that was going on. Arius, as we shall call him, I dare say that's not the best pronunciation of his name. Arius was a man whose ministry greatly affected Spain, and some of the Christians in Western Europe, and he was seeking to defend Christianity from the tendency to have three gods.

You see, people had come out of a religion of paganism where you have as many gods as you like, and he was rather afraid of the usual Christian position, and so he said that Christ wasn't really God. He was God's representative, he was indeed the firstborn of all creation, but he wasn't really God, he only showed forth God. And his position was quite rational, very popular.

You'll find it reflected today in the arguments of the Jehovah's Witnesses. They're really Aryans, taking up the old Aryan heresy. And the folk in Spain and in Gaul followed him by the thousands.

His movement was growing, and Constantine himself thought it was fairly good. But the Orthodox bodies were developing Trinitarian ideas, but they needed a champion, and they found a champion in the young Presbyter Athanasius, who at the council of Nicaea, when everybody else seemed to be stuck without any reasonable arguments, stepped forward and boldly defended the Orthodox church position. And he made an excellent job of it, so much so that they threw him out.

And he went into exile in disfavor, and the battle raged backwards and forwards for several years, until at last Athanasius won out. He won out chiefly by the patronage of the emperor, and the Trinitarian form of doctrine became established as the regular one. I'm not entirely convinced that a regular form of doctrine in this area is essential.

I think it's much better that a man knows Jesus Christ by revelation, because aren't there thousands and thousands of people who can recite, for instance, the Apostles' Creed, but it's just a matter of words for them. But if Christ has shined into your heart, and you love him and worship him, and you can say, my Lord and my God, from experience, then you're in a position which is not at the mercy of a lot of argument. At any rate, the whole thing was crashed out.

When I was in taking my first Bible school in the village of Opusi, at least the first in my second trip, in the village of Opusi in Midwest Nigeria, the lads really got stuck on the question of the Trinity. And I got a bit stuck too. I thought, however do I deal with this? Do I hammer it into them and say, look, one God in three persons, or what do I do? And I looked up some of the old church documents and some of the old church creeds, and went through them rather carefully, and checked them with Scripture.

And I found that what the creeds did was to summarize what the Bible had said about the person of the Lord Jesus, without attempting to produce a perfectly understandable argument. And I thought, that's pretty good. And when I read one of the creeds, I think it was the Nicene Creed, to our African lads, and I went through it very carefully, one of them, the that man really knew his Bible.

Eusebius, the church historian, was a very gentle old man. He didn't like the idea of these Christians getting hot under the collar, or whatever they had around their necks, on matters of doctrine. And he tried to soften the blow.

And he said, look, why don't you both agree like this? Instead of saying homoousion, that is the same substance, why not say homoousion, of like substance. Christ is of like substance with the Father. Wouldn't that please you both, and wouldn't that settle the whole issue? And so we had what is known in church history as the Battle of the Diphthong.

And at last they wiped the diphthong out and finished that with homoousion, of the same substance with the Father. Soon after this, another diversion, diversity of doctrine arose from a British monk. We called him Pelagius.

You probably, if you study Latin, pronounce him in a different way from that. And he wasn't too happy with Christianity, which is all tied up with mere creeds. It was all but all better to say, I believe in God the Father, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

And say, I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting, that there wasn't much life in it. And his reaction was a common sense one. He said, look here, what's all this about talking about God and all this stuff? Why not be practical and just copy the example of Jesus Christ and follow his teachings? And he developed the thought that there's no such thing as original sin.

Every man is responsible for what he does, responsible before God, for right or wrong. Every man has a conscience. And if we take Jesus Christ as our example, we can win our way to heaven.

Good, robust, common sense sort of line of things. And what, a later poet, one of yours, Matt Herrick, what matters is how straight the gates, how charged with punishments the scroll. I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul, isn't that Herrick? And isn't he one of your men? Well, that just about expresses the ideas that Pelagius was releasing in Britain all those years ago.

And he began to get quite a good following in the churches. Naturally, both reacted from the deadness of creedal orthodoxy to something which sounded like practical Christianity. But you know, you who have tasted of the grace of God, and have been saved by his grace and renewed by the Holy Ghost, that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.

And Pelagius, of course, going against the major established creeds, was condemned for heresy. On the orthodox side, at the beginning of the 4th century, Augustine, a hippo in Africa, a propagate young man with a godly mother, had a tremendous conversion. His mother had prayed for him much, and I think he used to pray a bit also.

He used to pray, Oh God, make me holy, but not yet. In fact, the confessions of Augustine are well worth reading. That's one of the nicer bits, isn't it? But he saw in vision, or rather heard a voice saying, Take and read, tolle lege.

And he took the Bible and opened it in Romans 13 and read that great passage about leaving wantonness and following holiness, and he was convicted and turned to Christ. He had a very real conversion. And so, from his conversion onwards, a great and able teacher, he taught that salvation was by grace and through sovereign election.

For there was no explaining his conversion, because he didn't merit it, he didn't work it up. God must have apprehended him. And so, he became an advocate of sovereign election and salvation by grace through election.

That is, God chose Augustine before Augustine chose God. And really, his conversion was a act of God's mercy. You'll find that position is held today, to some degree, by the Brethren folk.

Some Lutherans still hold it. Who else? Some Presbyterians would hold it, wouldn't they? Yes. You might even find some Anglicans who hold to it.

But, as he developed his doctrine, he made that magnificent contribution which would bring people back to the grace of God. But he also made another contribution which has wrought havoc to truth. He taught that the grace of God was only received through the sacraments of the church ministered by the ordained priesthood.

And in his book, *The City of God*, which was written at a time when the Roman Empire was disintegrating, he exhorted men to look away from that old, fading, crumbling civilization to God's new order, the church, which was God's city, which was under the discipline of the head through the bishops and through the sacraments, and meeting out salvation to all whom God had chosen. And that was a sad contribution for the church to receive. In the meantime, we had some reaction from Nestorius, who led a group of people into isolated communities.

He and his followers denounced the worship of Mary, which was then coming in. The formal creeds has put the Lord Jesus so far out of reach that folk needed somebody to step in between them and God. And as heathen people, they had been worshipping the Queen of Heaven in various forms, Astarte, Cybele, or various from group to group.

They all had a similar group of gods, but they all looked to a mother figure among their gods. And so the Virgin Mary slipped in and took the place of the mother figure among the gods, and folk began to pray to her instead of coming direct to Jesus, who was too far off and too unapproachable for them to understand. Nestorius denounced the worship of Mary and were missionaries in the Middle East.

They were condemned by one of the later church councils, the Council of Ephesus, about year 500. And unhappily, even they, although they were zealous missionaries, didn't have a clear understanding of the way of salvation. They weren't condemned for that though.

They were condemned for speaking against Mary, or rather the worship of Mary. I've drawn a line under that well to separate them from the next a little bit of information. I haven't listed all the groups that arose at this time.

We would never finish our course if we went rambling through the woods looking for Edrual Bush. But we paused to look at Priscillian of Spain. He was condemned by the official church, and he's listed among the heretics.

But his writings were rediscovered, or some of them about 1886, showing that Priscillian really taught people to get back to the Bible, back to the gospel, back to the first things. His teaching was pure and clean. And although he was condemned by rivals as a manichae, you remember the followers of Nanny, who believed in a duality of good and evil, yet it's now demonstrated that he preached the true gospel.

Thought of the testimony by Kennedy tells you about that. You will notice that he was accused, this is one of the early cases, of the church killing those that didn't agree with the official position. This of course was going to increase and increase as the years went by.

In Britain a simple form of Christianity was in existence, probably brought over by Roman soldiers in the early days. It is generally thought that there must have been Christianity in existence in Britain in a fairly well established but simple form by the year 100 AD. And the forefathers of our age were praying to God in a simple way, reading portions of the scripture, understanding some of the great principles of salvation.

Patrick, all the people in Ireland know about St. Patrick, at least they know about his day if they don't know anything else about him. I believe he was an orange man, wasn't he? He was captured by pirates and while he was in Ireland as a prisoner working with sheep in Northern Ireland, he found the Lord and he found the gospels and he had a real knowledge of salvation. Went back to Scotland and spread Christianity in that area.

A little while later Columba made a similar journey, travelling by boat from Northern Ireland to Scotland and forming a little community at Iona on the south west edge of Scotland, a little island there. And they too spread the scriptures in Britain. In fact the scriptures were so well appreciated in Britain that by the time of Alfred the Great, of whom you may have heard, the scripture was officially circulated through the nation, handwritten copies.

But about 590 the great Bishop of Rome, Gregory, tremendous man, tremendous drive, sent a young missionary monk called Augustine to the south of England to convert England to the true church. Augustine came with a great big cross and all the paraphernalia and garments of the official church of Rome and he persuaded Ethelbert, the king of Kent, to submit to this new and elaborate form of Christianity, which of course had a great deal of appeal to heathen. It had all the vestments that the old heathen priests wore, it had all the complications that made for a mystery religion, and it gained a good deal of ground.

At last, when it was found that those who loved the Lord would not submit to this change of form, they said we are Christians, we follow the Lord Jesus, but we do not wish to submit to the sea of Rome. At last, by treachery and armed force, the humble Christians were overthrown. They were invited to a council and massacred.

And so the official Roman form of Christianity was established. Roman Christianity took over and in the next couple of centuries, celibacy was forced upon all the priesthood in Britain. Now, our next section, I should have put a line there really, I'm sorry I didn't do it.

B. Developments. Looking back over the period, during the first centuries of the Christian era, five patriarchs, that is, monarchical bishops, bishops who reigned over the church of their area, were recognized as equal leaders. The patriarch of Jerusalem, he soon lost his place because Jerusalem was twice destroyed, and that of Alexandria, of Rome, and Ephesus, and later on Constantinople.

When Constantine the Great built his magnificent new city at Constantinople and moved his capital from old Rome to Constantinople, much of the imperial power, of course, went with him, so that the patriarch of Constantinople became a rival to the patriarch of Rome. Two rival bishops who were then contending one against the other. But the bishop of Rome had new freedom.

There was no immediate emperor over him. Everybody now looked to him as leader. And although he was an ecclesiastical man, he began to have more and more control over political matters.

Moreover, the heathen races were now spilling over the borders of the decaying empire. Goths and Ostrogoths and Vandals, and later on the Huns in various forms, came wave after wave, one wave driving the other westwards. And the old Roman empire was disintegrating, they were hiring more and more foreign mercenaries, getting into ever deeper trouble, and they were beginning to pull back from the borders of the empire, back behind the Rhine and the Danube.

And Rome was itself sacked twice during this period. Now, one man who was able to save the situation was the bishop of Rome. For his missionaries had already been going into these heathen tribes and had been converting them, not with such conversion as you would know, but another kind of conversion in which you thought of compromise between Christianity and heathens.

And their conversions weren't genuine as a rule, but they did replace the heathen gods with Christian ones. That's why the church so quickly took to the worship of the saints. You see, they had already been worshipping a pantheon of gods, and they needed a heaven full of gods.

Well, well, why not worship the martyrs? And very rapidly they attained this exchange. For instance, when the great heathen temple in Rome, I've forgotten its name, dedicated to Cybele and all the gods, was taken over by the church, it was rededicated to the virgin and all the saints. It's quite a simple transition, you see.

It wasn't difficult for people who were superficially converted to accept this new form. The old heathen priest to the goddess Oestra, the spring goddess, was quickly transferred to Easter, Oestra to Easter. Quite a simple change, and it became a Christian feast instead of a heathen feast.

The heathen winter solstice feast, when the sun nearly died and they had a special feast to commemorate his rebirth, was changed to Christmas. And into the idea of Christmas was incorporated many of the ideas associated with the old heathen gods of the Norse people, and the Vandals, and also the Roma, as you have it in the Christmas tree, which is a Norse heathen symbol, mistletoe, another heathen symbol, Roman symbol, holly, another heathen symbol, the yule log. Nearly all those things associated with Christmas feasting were just taken over from the heathen religions and just given a new name.

And so now you have your Christmas 25th, which is of course the winter solstice. As far as we know, Christ was born somewhere in October. I'll work it out for yourself.

Pope Leo, ambitious, ever seeking to gain power at Rome as over against Constantinople, publicly proclaimed himself head of the whole church, but the church council of Chalcedon soon after didn't accept it, but granted his rival patriarch, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was of course ministering from the new head of the empire, granted him equal powers with the Patriarch of Rome. Eastern and Western empires divided primary, AD 364, both Christian now by name. A new form of government had arisen in Rome, the government by Christian emperors so-called.

The Western Roman Empire, harassed by tribal invasions from beyond the Rhine, enfeebled by vice within, it was a poor picture, and internal strife under incapable rulers began to collapse. Goths, vandals, Huns, in great successive waves overran the empire, and the whole thing broke up 476 AD. And strange to say, this empire, which had lasted a thousand years, finally folded up under an incapable ruler called Romulus Augustulus.

He had the highest title of all the lords, and with him the whole thing faded, and he was overthrown by one of the Hunnish groups, Odoacer King of the Heruli. Whilst a remarkable change took place in Europe, that is the broken remains of the empire, into a religious unity, and with each fresh invasion the church was able to pen it, check some of the bloodshed, cause these heathen leaders to submit to baptism. I didn't mention that at the same time the monastic orders were beginning to grow.

Men who wanted to keep themselves clear from the corruptions of the age began to form communities and live together. Soon they were recognized by the official church and allowed to continue, and so almost every growing civilized community had its own monastery, and there men, having taken vows of celibacy, would live apart and seek by prayer and fasting to serve God. Their motives were fairly good, and one thing they did was to preserve a certain amount of education, and as you know some of those old monks spent years illuminating Bible manuscripts and the writings of the saints, and were patient, quiet workers.

When Gregory was in full power, his rival at Constantinople, the Patriarch of Constantinople, was envious of him, and determined that Gregory shouldn't take over the whole church, and so the rival Patriarch claimed the title Universal Bishop. Gregory was angry, and he published a circular letter, an encyclical, in which he declared that any man assuming that title was the forerunner of Antichrist. And the ungodly Eastern Emperor Quocus, a godless man who was hated by all, decreed the next Pope, Boniface III, head of all the churches of Christendom and Universal Bishop.

Now, in all this unrest in the church, even though they lost the doctrines of salvation and life, they didn't know much about Christ. They did know quite a bit about Antichrist. It's possible to get taken up with secondary things to sort of assail your conscience from those things which are of most importance.

And I want to warn you against this, and in this class, don't get so taken up with these things that we're sharing here, that you lose sight of the centrality of Christ, his love, his grace, his full salvation, the glory of his person. Don't let anything rob you of the great central truths. But in the early church there were many writings about the Antichrist, and I'm quoting you from the great Jerome who translated the Bible into Latin, gave us the Vulgate version, the standard version for 14 centuries, no, at least 11 centuries, and it's still attainable today.

Great work. Jerome in the fourth century wrote, he who hindered is taken out of the way. That is Constantine, that is the emperor of Rome, who had been the hinderer as we have seen, had moved from Rome to Constantinople.

Get it? He who hindered is taken out of the way. And do we not consider that Antichrist approaches, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the spirit of his mouth? And he goes on to explain from Daniel, you who know your Daniel will understand what he's saying, do you want me to go through it? The fourth kingdom which plainly belongs to the Romans is the iron that breaketh and subdueth all things, but his feet and toes are part of iron and part of clay, which is most manifestly proved at this time. For as in the beginning nothing was stronger and harder than the Roman empire, so in the end of things nothing is weaker, since both in civil wars and against divers nations we want the assistance of other barbarous nations.

If I have integrated the iron and clay of the Roman kingdom, let them not blame me, but the prophets. Now anyone have any difficulty with that? Do you want me to go into Daniel a little bit? Or can we press on? Do you know the Daniel picture? Maybe I'd better pause. In Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 we have two parallel visions of the future.

One given to Nebuchadnezzar and the other given to Daniel. So Nebuchadnezzar was given the vision of the image and it was something like this. A bit lopsided.

It was an image which I think he tried to build afterwards and Daniel gave him the interpretation and he said thou art this head of gold, head of gold, the shoulders and breasts of silver. After thee, said Daniel, another kingdom shall arise inferior to thee. And we know that the Medes and Persians arose after Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom.

The valley of bronze. Another kingdom inferior. After the Medes and Persians came the Greeks under Alexander.

And then the legs of iron. When the Grecian empire broke up, Rome took over the old world. But the feet and toes, part of iron, part clay.

A stone cut without hands eventually smites the image on the feet and the kingdoms of the earth become the kingdoms of our God. Then in Daniel 7, Daniel was given another view, apparently of the same sequence, in which he saw the glory of Gentile power, not as a beautiful image but as wild beasts. And he saw the Babylonian head as a lion with eagle's wings.

He saw the kingdom of the Medes and Persians as a bear raising itself on one side, devouring much flesh. He saw the kingdom of the Greeks as a leopard, very swift, having four heads. Alexander's kingdom broke up among his four generals, two of them very much affecting the kingdom of the Jewish people.

And then he saw the Roman beast, great a beast. That's where the word beast comes from, great and terrible. This one reappears in Revelation, so I'd better make sure I don't get my plots written in Revelation mixed up with Daniel.

The fourth beast, verse 19 of Daniel 7, diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, teeth of iron, nails of brass, devoured, breaking pieces, stamped the residue with his feet. Ten horns, one little one. That would make eleven, wouldn't it? One little one.

Three fell, spoke, made war with the saints. He shall be consumed and destroyed. Now, Bible students of the early church, realizing that these two Daniel visions were the same, recognized that these ten horns corresponded to the ten toes of the image.

So, what Jerome was saying was, we have been living in the time of the iron kingdom, and already it has changed to a weak condition of part iron and part clay. The empire is breaking up. So, we expect the ten horns, or the ten toes, to reappear, replacing the old Roman empire, and we expect out of the midst of them, Antichrist to arise.

So, let me read on what Jerome was saying. He is now quoting from 2 Thessalonians 2. Antichrist shall sit in the temple of God, either at Jerusalem, as some imagine, or in the church, as we more truly judge, showing himself that he is Christ and the Son of God. And unless the Roman empire be first desolated, and Antichrist precede, Christ shall not come.

So, you can see that Jerome is getting a bit shaky. He feels that Antichrist is on the way. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote, the predicted Antichrist will come when the times of the Roman empire shall be fulfilled.

Ten kingdoms of the Romans shall arise together in different places, but they shall all reign at the same time. Amongst these, the eleven is Antichrist, who by mysterious and wicked artifices shall seize the Roman power. Ambrose says, after the pouring or decay of the Roman empire, Antichrist shall arise.

Prithestum, a little later, said, when the Roman empire is taken out of the way, then shall he come. When this is dissolved, he shall seize on the vacant empire, and shall endeavour to assume the power both of God and men. You can see then how the anticipations of Antichrist are arising in the midst of all this chaos.

A hundred and fifty years later, Gregory the Great, in denouncing the ambitions of the Patriarch of Constantinople, added, By this pride of his, that is the pride of the Patriarch of Constantinople, by this pride of his, what else is signified but that the time of Antichrist is now at hand. The King of Pride approaches, and what is wicked to contemplate, an army of priests is prepared. That was from Gregory the Great.

So you can see the way that these great leaders of the church are appealing in the midst of all this chaos. I think I might turn for a moment to 2 Thessalonians 2. In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul actually paraphrases Daniel 7. And he says this, Now we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ, or maybe the day of the Lord, is now present. Paul had already wrote them about the second coming.

He spoke of it as being near. He said, We which are alive and remain shall be caught up. But no, other impressions had been affecting this little group of new believers, and they were saying, The day of Christ is right on us.

No doubt the political convulsions of the time were scaring them, and they said, It's right here. And some of them were even neglecting to work, just going out and looking up in the skies for the coming of the Lord. And Paul had to steady this attitude, and he did not believe in any moment coming of our Lord Jesus.

The early church did not believe this. They knew, for instance, that Peter would die. They thought that John might not die.

But they knew that as long as Peter was around, the Lord wouldn't come. They weren't quite so sure about John. We are told to watch and be ready, and we are told that that day shall not overtake us as a thief.

Yes. You're not the only one who's fuzzy on who makes up the ten Yes, we'll have a look at that in due course. But I don't think tonight, it's a little bit beyond our reach tonight.

So Paul wrote to steady their mind. If he had believed in any moment coming, and if he had believed that the church would have been caught up before Antichrist appeared, he would have just been able to say, It's all right brethren, the church will be caught up before Antichrist comes. But he didn't say that.

What he said was, That day shall not come except there come one, a calling away in the church. Then, out of it that man has soon be revealed, the son of perdition. And he gives him a Judas title.

Get that? A Judas title. Antichrist is not, in the New Testament, an infidel. That's just a modern idea.

In the New Testament, he is someone like Judas, a professing Christian, and he rises out of the middle of a backslidden church. There'll come that falling away, and out of the falling away shall come that man of sin, the son of perdition. That is the Judas title.

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worship. That is, he will be against all heathen idols. In fact, he that is called God, or worship, is a veiled reference to Caesar, Sebastos, Sebasma, the same word.

And as you know, in that day, the Caesars were demanding worship. Everyone had to offer a pinch of incense to Caesar. Paul said, This Antichrist will not, this man of sin, will not submit to that.

Instead of submitting in that way, he himself, as God, will show himself in the, sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. There's going to be a seat in close association with this man's rule. He's going to sit, just as Christ sits in heaven, this man would sit on earth, showing himself as God.

Remember ye not that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? He had told them about this by word of mouth, but he was very careful about what he wrote. So he didn't write the name of the hinderer. You see that? And now ye know what withholdeth, or what hinders, that he might be revealed in his time.

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work, the corruption is already here in the church. Only he who now hinders will hinder until he be taken out of the way. Now he was writing all these things for the church to steady her, so that she wouldn't get all agitated and think that the day of the Lord, or the day of Christ, was now present.

Do you understand that? Written to steady the church. Now you don't steady people by describing in such detail something they will never see. How can I illustrate this in a way that you will understand? I don't know.

I ought to study your locality better. But let me see, isn't there a tunnel here somewhere? What's it, the Chesapeake Tunnel, is that right? All right. Now, supposing that you have to stop your car at your destination is this side of Chesapeake Tunnel, and you're afraid you're going to miss the spot.

Which will help you most, to describe the scenery before the place where you get off, or to describe it in great detail on the other side of the tunnel? Obviously, if I want to steady your mind, I'm going to describe the things that you will see en route. Not the things that, if you saw them, it would be too late. Don't you see that? And when Paul is writing this, he's telling them, not to be surprised or scared that they shall not come, except first the calling away, and then as a result of the calling away, the rise of this Judas-like character, who will sit in the Temple of God.

Have you ever checked what Paul means about the Temple? You may read his epistles right the way through, and you will find that never once does he refer to the Temple of Jerusalem as being the Temple of God. And I'm sure he wouldn't refer to a temple built by Antichrist as being the Temple of God. No, when Paul talks about the Temple of God, he always means the church.

If you look it up, check it every time. Go through the concordance in his epistle. Always the church or your body, that's the Temple of God.

Which temple ye are. So, this man is going to be an apostate, apostle, claiming the prerogatives of God. He's going to oppose heathendom.

He's going to deceive many. He won't appear until the Roman hindrances are removed, and his power will be reduced in two stages. The Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and finally destroy him with the brightness of his epiphany.

His coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. He'll do all kinds of miracles. All deceivableness of unrighteousness.

Not just straight unrighteousness, but deceivableness of unrighteousness. Because like Judas, he'll be professing to be a close disciple of the Lord Jesus. God shall send them strong delusion that they shall believe the lie.

So, there is Paul's description, and if you study Daniel 7 carefully, especially if you're acquainted with a secular conversion, and compare it with this, you'll find that Paul is developing what Daniel saw. The eleventh little horn on the beast is identical with the one that Paul is describing. So, you can understand the agitation among thoughtful men during this period of the break-up of the Roman Empire.

What's going to happen next? Century after century the Roman Empire has been broken up. What's going to be the end of it all? What's coming next? When will Jesus come? Oh, Paul told us he won't come unless the man of sin is revealed first. Right, have a break, and we'll see what happens next.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/1/SID1361.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/edgar-f-parkyns/church-history-session-3-after-augustus/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**