

Who is the ANTICHRIST?

By H. C. Heffren

The subject of the antichrist occupies much of the religious thinking, public speaking and writing today. Evangelists criss-cross the country advertising sensational forecasts of events connected with prophecy, which they say are about to happen. Shelves in gospel book stores bulge with books dealing with the antichrist. Radio and television speakers are engrossed in telling curious listeners about this mysterious being. Bible Schools include diligent treatment of this study on their curricula. Frankly, just what IS the antichrist?

According to W. E. Blackstone, in his book "Jesus Is Coming," the antichrist is "The culminating manifestation of Satan." P. 107. He further mentions that, "He will enter into covenant with the Jews in Palestine and exalt himself above all that is called God. He is identified as the king mentioned in Daniel 11:36; as the second beast mentioned in Rev. 13; he is declared to be the Lucifer which is described in Isa. 14; and as the Man of Sin in 2 Thess. Chapter 2. Many theologians regard him as another Antiochus Epiphanes who is mentioned in the Apocrypha. The early Christian church believed that Emperor Nero was the antichrist. During the Reformation, practically all-leading Protestant theologians identified the Man of Sin with the popes of the Roman Catholic Church. This belief was so prevalent that it is included in the introduction to the King James Version of the Bible. In part this reads as follows: "...When they observe that the zeal of Your Majesty toward the House of God doth not slack or go backward, but is more and more kindled, manifesting itself abroad in the farthest parts of Christendom, by writing in defense of truth, (which has given such a blow to THAT MAN OF SIN as will not be healed)..."

In more modern times there has been a rash of prophetic preaching about so-called antichrists including Mussolini, Hitler, the black pope, and a continual parade of individuals whom some expositors seem to find some Biblical reason for calling antichrists. The only thing this confusion proves is that a great deal of speculation surrounds this subject. Since God is not the

author of confusion, we have to brand most of these ideas as whims of human conjecture.

While we deplore the fact that so much controversy rages about the antichrist, we do not think this is sufficient reason to ignore the subject. It IS in the Bible. Therefore, it must have some significance for people who seek to profit from the instruction given in the Word. The Bible was written to be understood by men and women of ordinary intelligence. God would not deliberately couch His message in subtle meanings or engage in devious, ambiguous descriptions that only an astute scholar could unravel or discover. Blackstone's attempt to identify the antichrist as king, devil, man of sin, Lucifer and a host of other things must be rejected on the grounds of being "private interpretation." There is not one shred of positive identification in John's epistles to support any of these claims. The Bible says, "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation." 2 Pet. 1:20.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT ANTICHRIST

The proper place to begin any explanation of the Bible is to see first of all what the Bible itself says on the subject. Actually the Bible has very little to say about antichrist. Only one writer mentions him, and his outline is so indefinite it is difficult to know whether he is talking about a person or a principle since he refers to antichrist both as "IT" and as a spirit. The quotations revealing the antichrist are as follows: "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, and even now there are many antichrists; whereby ye know it is the last time." ... "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." 1 John 2:18, 22. The next quotation is: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the "spirit" of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that "it" should come; and even now already is in the world." 1 John 4:3. The last reference is: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is

come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." 2 John 7. The importance of a teaching in the Bible is usually evaluated by the amount of space it is given in the Word. On this basis one would say that the observation of the antichrist is relatively unimportant since it is only mentioned by one writer very briefly. Notwithstanding this factor, let us examine just what the Bible does say about antichrist.

First John tells us when to look for the antichrist and secondly he tells us how to identify him. So far as the first part is concerned, there were many antichrists in the world when John wrote his epistle. The antichrist is a characteristic of the last times and was already prevalent in John's day. John lists four characteristics by which we can identify antichrist. He is a liar, a denier, a deceiver and a seducer. John does not identify him with the king in Daniel, nor the Man of Sin in Thessalonians, nor with the beast in Revelation (although John wrote that book), nor with any individual making a covenant with the Jews during any future tribulation period. Any attempt to identify the above creatures with the antichrist is purely speculative conjecture.

Let us carefully ponder what John wrote. First he said the chief characteristic of the antichrist is that of DENYING that JESUS IS THE CHRIST and of denying the Father and the Son. In saying this, John put his finger on the root of all religious error. Every error in the realm of Christendom is in some way related to the Person of Jesus Christ and His Atonement. Christ asked, "WHOM say ye that I am?" The battle of Jehovah's Witnesses, Modernism, Deism, Agnosticism and every other religious "ism" in the world stems from their appraisal of WHO Jesus Christ IS. So far as the antichrist is concerned, those who deny that Jesus is the Messiah are branded as antichrist according to John. If they deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, they are demonstrating the antichrist spirit. If they propagate this teaching they are branded as seducers and deceivers. The reason is obvious. Christianity alone is founded on A PERSON. Christianity is not a philosophy or an ideology, or an abstraction to which we give mental assent. It is not that we believe what Jesus said that makes us Christian, it is when we believe WHO

Jesus Christ IS, Son of God, Mediator, Deity, Incarnate God, Atoner and Judge. Then we are Christian, but any denial of this, John says is antichrist. John says that any teaching that denies all that Christ IS, is the work of deceivers. Anyone who persuades otherwise is a seducer. All the characteristics of antichrist are negative. They negate Christ.

An illuminating comment on this passage is given in "The Pulpit Commentaries," page 39 of 1 John. "It would be inaccurate to fix the term "antichrist" solely on one individual or one system, even if our knowledge of this or that one were complete enough to enable us to identify it or him as one form of antichrist. For in the prophetic passages referred to, such forms are pointed out as manifold. And the apostle declares that manifold are the forms that are already seen; for says he, "Even now there are many antichrists." So that we are forbidden by the terms of the passage to fasten any one form of heresy to the exclusion of others. Though prophecy and fact show many antichrists, there is one feature marking them all, namely, negation. "He is antichrist that denies the Father and the Son."

Christ was not crucified because of what He taught but because of WHO He was. "We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." John 19:7. Christ did not ask what men thought of His sermons, but "WHOM do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Matt. 16:13. Paul did not testify that he knew WHAT he believed, but rather, "I know on WHOM I have believed..." 2 Tim. 1:12a. Antichrist and the spirit of antichrist are expressly concerned with the denial of Christ coming in the flesh and of His being one with the father. Take away this fundamental pillar and Christianity immediately crumbles into another man-made philosophy. The person Christ is the jugular vein of faith and the very heart of Christianity.

THE MAN OF SIN

It is the teaching of Dispensationalism that the Man of Sin described in Second Thessalonians denotes the antichrist.

Dispensational literature abounds giving dire forebodings of this fearsome creature whose spectral shadow casts a pall of gloom and terror across the future. Where do preachers get the idea of this coming ogre who is to plunge the world into such unparalleled suffering? The basis for this teaching is found in 2 Thess. 2:1-12. In order to get the complete description we shall quote the entire passage.

"Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or troubled, neither by spirit nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the Day of Christ is at hand. 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 worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming; even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all the 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 a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." End of quote.

The pertinent points of our study are: Who is the Man of Sin? When is he to be revealed? What restraining power prevents him from being revealed? What role does he play in the church and in history? And why was Paul so vague in some of the details connected with his appearing?

Millennialists are almost unanimous in identifying this Man of Sin as a personal antichrist. He is supposed to be the incarnation of Evil and the supreme antagonist of the Jews. He is to be revealed after what they call the Rapture, and will

make his headquarters in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit, Whom the Dispensationalists term as "The Hinderer," is the restraining power, consequently the antichrist cannot be revealed until after the Rapture when the Holy Spirit is taken out of the world. His manifestation marks the beginning of Daniel's 70th week, according to their teaching. Eventually the antichrist will be confronted and defeated by Christ. The Scofield Reference Bible, Blackstone and other authorities in general, subscribe to this view although there is almost unlimited speculation on the details.

There are many basic fallacies in the Dispensational interpretation of this Scripture. First of all, Paul is addressing the brethren rather than the Jews. The brethren would not be affected since they are to be Raptured, and warning is intimated to the Jews who are supposed to be the victims of the antichrist. In v. 7, Paul said the mystery of iniquity doth ALREADY WORK. This statement cannot fit in with something that is to start after the Rapture. After Paul warned the brethren about the man of Sin he exhorted them to STAND FAST and hold the traditions they had been taught. V.15. This would be nonsensical advice if it was not meant to be heeded for two thousand years. The Man of Sin in Thessalonians is one who "opposes" God. The antichrist of John is one who "denies" that Jesus is come in the flesh. These are but a few of the Scriptural observations that are patent on the surface.

There are, of course, more fundamental reasons for rejecting the Dispensational interpretation. Most objectionable is their contention that the Holy Spirit is the "Hinderer" who is to be taken away prior to the revelation of the Man of Sin. Never does the Bible refer to the Holy Spirit in these terms. Paul told of his intention to travel to Thessalonica, "BUT SATAN HINDERED." 1 Thess. 2:18. Christ spoke of lawyers who hindered people from entering the Kingdom of God. Luke 12:52. Paul did not want the believer's prayers hindered by their misconduct or grieving the Holy Spirit. He did not want to hinder the gospel by his own misadventures. But never did Paul suggest that the Holy Spirit was the "Hinderer" as suggested by Dispensationalists.

There are other valid reasons for rejecting the Dispensational conjecture. Paul always spoke freely about the Holy Spirit. There was no reason for him to be devious or secretive about Him. There was no law in the Roman Empire to prohibit discussion of the Holy Spirit, so Paul would not hesitate to be frank about Him. With the Roman government it was different. It was worth his life to incur the wrath of the Emperor. The edicts of the Emperor were binding on the entire ancient world and that is why the early Christians spoke in symbols about the government. They understood clearly what was meant. Paul said "AND NOW YE KNOW what withholdest." This would not be true if it referred to something 2,000 years in the future and to an event they had never heard about. Millennialism only speculates that the Man of Sin is the antichrist. Paul wrote of something of which he could say, "And now ye know..." Paul was warning them of an immediate menace to their lives and faith and exhorting them to STAND FAST. There was no menace or exhortation applicable to them if it was not to happen for 2,000 years. Paul was warning them about a falling away which could result in a delusion and damnation that they might not be SAVED. 2 Thess. 2:10. Not one iota of evidence can be attached to a future antichrist or a Rapture. Any suggestion is purely an invention of the mind without any Scripture support whatever.

We are not definitely told what or who the Man of Sin was. It does not have to be an individual. Paul said, "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain ONE NEW MAN, so making peace." Eph. 2:15. "Man" in this place refers to all men included in the new relationship with Christ through faith. Likewise, the "man of Sin" could be representative of an entire order or organization characterized by elements opposed to God and to His church. When the Roman government fell and the Emperor moved to Constantinople, it gave way to the rise of the Papacy with its Hierarchy and priesthood. Many people interpret the Papal power as the Man of Sin, especially from the time of the

Reformation on, but it must be conceded that it is based on similarities and correspondences rather than on actual Scripture. Where the Bible is silent it ill behooves us to fill the vacancy with our assumptions or conjectures. Above all we dare not ascribe certainty where God has decreed mystery and silence. Dispensationalists are guilty of committing many misinterpretations in regard to the antichrist. For instance in 2 Thess. 1:1, 2, Paul speaks of the Day of Christ. Commenting on this, Ironside says, "The Day of Christ ALWAYS refers to the time when the saints will be gathered around the Lord Jesus Christ in the air...the Day of the Lord is the time of judgment..." (The Great Parenthesis. P. 114) Now in verse 1, Paul says, "Now we beseech you brethren by the COMING OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." Paul did not say anything about a Rapture in the "air" but he very plainly told of Christ's COMING. No expositor in any standard Commentary interprets this to be anything except Christ's Second Coming. Paul further spoke of THAT DAY, which does not refer to a Rapture, but to its antecedent, which is the Coming of Christ.

THE KING DESCRIBED BY DANIEL

Let us now focus our attention on the Dispensational claim that the king mentioned by Daniel is also the antichrist. W. E. Blackstone says, "DOUBTLESS he is the king described in Dan. 11:36." P. 109 (Jesus Is Coming). H. A. Ironside says, "DOUBTLESS he will take his place in the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem." Further Ironside says, he is, Quote: "Unquestionably, AT LEAST TO MY MIND (no Scripture, just to this man's mind) identical with the second beast of Rev. 13." Further Ironside says, "When the Holy Spirit, THE HINDERER goes up with the church at the Rapture..." The Great Parenthesis pp. 116-119. One more quote will suffice. It reads, "The seventieth week will begin with the signing of a covenant with the head of the ten-kingdom empire YET TO ARISE, and someone,

EVIDENTLY the antichrist representing Israel." The Great Parenthesis, p. 111.

We would like to call attention to the great vacuum of Scriptural support and the repetition of supposition in using such words as "doubtless," "evidently," "Unquestionably," and "at least to the author's mind." This is characteristic of Dispensational literature. One book by a leading authority contains pages strewn with "It is evident," "will obviously," "will apparently," "as intimated," "it seems clear," "it seems that," "if," "it seems to be," "probably" and "it may be regarded." These quotations are copied from two or three pages of the book called ISRAEL IN PROPHECY, and they indicate the slender Scriptural support for their premise when so much depends on guessing. For this reason, if for no other, we must reject the Dispensational conclusions. A doctrine based on so much uncertainty could turn out to be a rapture instead of a Rapture.

However, we do not have to reject Dispensationalism for their lack of Scripture. All we have to do is to quote what the Scriptures say about their speculation. What does Daniel say? The passage reads as follows: "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished...neither shall he regard any god..." Dan. 11:36, 37. Dispensationalists identify this king as the antichrist despite the fact that the sentence in which he is introduced begins with the conjunction "and" and the antichrist is not introduced in the Bible for more than another 600 years. To dogmatically assert or assume that this king is the antichrist ignores many principles of both grammar and history. Attention has already been called to the tremendous amount of surmises and postulations employed by their most-revered writers, and the absence of facts or Scriptures to support their claims. Their unfortunate recourse to the Talmud and to Jewish fables further weakens their case. In contrast with their theoretical hypothesis, let us now compare what the Bible actually does say to throw light on this king who is under scrutiny.

First of all, Daniel was narrating the prophetic history of Israel down to the coming of Christ. The king, it is true is not named, but Israel only had one king during this period. His name was Herod. Now note the following comparisons between what Daniel said and what Matthew says. Daniel said "He would not regard the God of his fathers." Herod was an Idumean, and thus was a subject of Jewry. During his reign he was elevated to the position of king because of his services to Rome. The Jews particularly resented this on the grounds that he was usurping David's throne. Herod did not embrace the Jewish religion although he did build the Jewish temple, which was one of the wonders of the ancient world, a marvel of architecture far exceeding Solomon's temple.

Daniel said that "The king would not regard the desire of women." The desire of Hebrew women was to become the mother of the Messiah. Just as every American woman hopes her son may one day become president, so every Jewish woman hoped to be the mother of the Messiah. Herod is the king who decreed the massacre of all the babes two years and under throughout a wide region in his effort to destroy the newborn Christ -- the Desire of Women. Daniel said he would prosper until the "Indignation." There were four Herods who ruled as kings. Paul had his hearing before one of them, namely Herod Agrippa in Acts 26. Paul addressed him as king throughout his entire defense. They spanned the historical period from before the birth of Christ until the fall of Jerusalem known as the Dispersion in history and which is called the Great Tribulation in the Bible. The family of Herod prospered until this "indignation" was accomplished, that is, the utter disintegration of the Jewish nation.

Concerning this first Herod, who was the only ruler of the Jews to assume the title of King during the entire period of Daniel's prophecy, the Bible further says, "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 with many." Dan. 11:44. Just compare this with Matthew's record, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the days of

HEROD THE KING, behold, there came wise men FROM THE EAST to Jerusalem...when HEROD THE KING had heard these things, HE WAS TROUBLED, and all Jerusalem with him...Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth and SLEW ALL THE CHILDREN that were in Bethlehem and..." Matt. 2:1, 3, 16. The similarity between the king mentioned in Daniel's prophecy and in Matthew's historical account, correspond too accurately to be accidental. Only history can corroborate prophecy. Most emphatically Matthew's account has the ring of certainty far more than the gross assumptions and suppositions of Dispensationalism.

THE COVENANT MENTIONED BY DANIEL

In Daniel 9:27, we read, "And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease..." The entire Dispensational doctrine swings on this one hinge, namely Daniel's Seventieth Week. In order to establish the postponement of Daniel's Seventieth Week, which is essential to their entire system of interpretation, Dispensationalists make some of the most astonishing suggestions of Divine error to be found in the religious world. Here is what one writer says, quote: "Christians living today, however, find themselves in an age which DANIEL DID NOT ANTICIPATE except PERHAPS BY IMPLICATION...This period (namely the present church age of nearly 2,000 years) was not described by Daniel, and is UNCHARTED AS FAR AS THE OLD TESTAMENT IS CONCERNED...Many students of the Scriptures have come to the conclusion that God in this present age is carrying out a program not revealed to Daniel..." (The Return of the Lord, p. 135, by John Walvoord.)

The reason Dispensationalists postpone Daniel's Seventieth Week until the future and brand the entire Church Age as a parenthesis during which time God's clock stopped, is not

because a Covenant was not ratified during the Seventieth Week. That was the period during which Christ died and brought the New and Everlasting Covenant into effect. But because this Covenant does not accord with Dispensational interpretation of prophecy they reject it and claim that the covenant referred to is one between apostate Jews and bogey-man antichrist after this "HIDDEN" interval which they call the Church Age. As if a "hidden interval" could exist!

Just in case any reader thinks the above fantastic assertion may be abusive, I quote a leading authority on Dispensationalism as follows : "Strange is it that many have supposed it was the Prince Messiah Himself Who was to confirm a covenant for one week. But when did He ever make SUCH a covenant? The blood OF THE COVENANT which he shed upon the cross is not to confirm a covenant for seven years, but is THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT." (The Great Parenthesis, p. 25). So a leading Dispensationalist admits the Everlasting Covenant was ratified during the Seventieth Week of Daniel in fulfillment of God's determinate will and foreknowledge, but he denies that this is the covenant Daniel prophesied. He charges that Daniel failed to see this age. He attributes total concealment of the present age so far as the Old Testament prophets were concerned despite the fact that "all prophecy is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. 3:16. this is a very serious indictment of men who "spake as they were moved of the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1:21.

We scathingly reject this dalliance with God's Word and brand it as pure sophistry. God's Word is not to be trifled with, and when God says "Seventy Weeks are determined," it must be fulfilled according to the plain meaning of what is declared or it is not true. The Bible says, "Let God be true and every man a liar." Rom. 3:4. God does not adjust His Word to suit our interpretation "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them. Isa. 8:20. If the Lord Jesus Christ ratified the Everlasting Covenant during the Seventieth Week of Daniel's prophecy and the Dispensationalists disclaim it and substitute a Covenant with

antichrist in order to make a political kingdom for the Jews the issue, who are you supposed to believe--God or the Dispensationalists? Romans 4:3 removes all doubt!

What then is the Covenant that Daniel proclaimed with such assurance? If we do our counting in sequence, this is what we read. "Seventy weeks are determined." That is an unqualified assertion. Counting: "Know therefore, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks." (That is sixty-nine weeks.)

Let us go back now and check our count. The sixty-nine weeks bring us to Messiah, the Prince. This is unto the baptism of Jesus, when He was anointed for His earthly mission. Isaiah prophesied of Jesus as the Prince of Peace. Peter hailed Him as "The Prince of life." Acts 3:15. Daniel called Him Messiah, the Prince. Next Daniel said, "After the three score and two weeks (he had previously listed the seven weeks) the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself." That is to say, after the sixty-ninth week, which is during the seventieth week, the Messiah shall be cut off. The marginal reading at this point in the King James Version says, "And the Jews shall be no more His people." Another rendering in the same margin reads: "The Jews shall no more be the Prince's (Messiah's) people." One thing is certain, Daniel was not a Dispensationalist!

We will now consider the 27th verse, which is the keystone to the entire passage. This reads as follows: "And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease..." One Bible translation renders this verse thus: "High covenant He shall make, before another week is done, and with folks a many, but when the week has run half its course, offering and burnt offering shall be none..." Knox. The main point to observe here is that the covenant was not to be made for the duration of one week and then repudiated in the midst of the week, but rather it was ratified during the seventieth week. The covenant itself is everlasting, but it was brought into effect during the seventieth week.

As pointed out previously, dispensationalists insist that the "he" who makes the covenant is the antichrist, but antichrist is not even introduced in the Bible for at least 600 years after Daniel's prophecy was uttered. From a grammatical standpoint, a pronoun always refers to its antecedent. If we do this, and it is absolutely correct that we should, the passage would read thus: "...Unto Messiah, the PRINCE SHALL BE SEVEN WEEKS, AND THREESCORE AND TWO WEEKS:...AND He (that is, Messiah) shall confirm the covenant with many for one week."

Let us see if this interpretation will stand the scrutiny of agreement with what the Bible says elsewhere. Obviously Matthew was a very avid student of Daniel's prophecy for he quoted Daniel in a number of places. In Matthew 26 we have the account of the Last supper. During this sacred episode we read: "And He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it unto them saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of THE NEW TESTAMENT (covenant) which is shed for MANY for the remission of sins. Daniel said, "He shall confirm the covenant with many," while Jesus said, "This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many." The time? In the midst of the seventieth week. God keeps His appointments right on time and no man can stop His clock! It is impudent arrogance to presume to suggest that God's timing could be wrong. It is utter folly and presumption to suppose that a handful of unbelieving Jews could stop HIS clock. This was not Paul's concept of the dignity of the Almighty when he wrote, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the KNOWLEDGE of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord or who hath been His counselor?" Rom. 11:33, 34. It is baffling beyond comprehension to understand how anyone claiming to be Fundamental could have the audacity to state in writing "That Daniel did not anticipate (the age of grace) except PERHAPS BY IMPLICATION." (The Return of the Lord, p. 135). Such a suggestion is preposterous beyond words.

Daniel prophesied that "Seventy Weeks are determined." Christ died in the midst of the seventieth week. When he died

on Calvary's cross, an unseen Hand reached down and miraculously rent the veil of the temple from top to bottom. At the moment the sacrifice and oblation ceased to have any further efficacious value for the way to reconciliation with God was opened by a New Mediator. The New and Everlasting Covenant came into effect and was then ratified by the Son of God to all His heirs. There is not even a vestige in the 9th chapter of Daniel to suggest an antichrist other than the vagaries of conjectures that are required to substantiate a mistaken premise. John tells us who the antichrist is. He tells us when he came and he told us how to recognize his operations. He tells us that his method of seeking to defeat God's plan is negative. Antichrist denies the keystone of Christian faith in the Deity of Jesus Christ as Lord. On this sacred fulcrum of the Person of Christ the whole structure of Christianity teeters, and every error in Christendom in some way has its origin related to a wrong view of WHO Christ really is.

THE SECOND BEAST IN REVELATION 13

In addition to the Man of Sin in 2nd Thessalonians and the King mentioned by Daniel, Dispensationalists maintain that the second beast mentioned in Revelation 13 is also the antichrist. We will repeat our practice of quoting the passage of Scripture in which the reference is found. It reads as follows: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake like a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him...and he doeth great wonders...and he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had the 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...and he had power to give life to the image of the beast...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 forehead: and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark of the

beast, or the number of his name. 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." (Rev 13: main parts of verses 11-218).

When anyone makes a definite assertion about the Bible, we have a right to enquire upon what authority the assertion is made. The apostle John is the only writer in the Bible who mentions and defines the antichrist. John also wrote the book of Revelation. Dispensationalists dogmatically assure us that the second beast in Revelation 13 describes the antichrist. Let us examine the evidence. John was well acquainted with the book of Daniel, but he makes no reference to it in Revelation 13. Nor does John make any reference to the so-called postponement of Daniel's seventieth week in Revelation 13. He makes no reference to the Jews whatsoever. He does not mention a covenant with the Jews which Dispensationalists ascribe to the antichrist. He makes no reference to the Rapture and no reference to a slaughter the antichrist is supposed to precipitate. Since John gave us our introduction to the antichrist, it seems incredible that not a single statement in Revelation 13 alludes in some tangible way to the antichrist he previously mentioned. There is no reference in 1 John to the antichrist performing miracles. In Rev. 13:14 we are told that the beast "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth." This deceiving is done in "the sight of the beast," and the penalty for not worshiping the image of the beast is death. None of these characteristics are related in any way with the antichrist described by John in his epistles, where his identity is established by the fact that he denies that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

A further difference between the beast and the antichrist is that the beast requires his mark or number on all peoples, the number being 666. John does not apply this characteristic to the antichrist. No one would be more capable of providing this information than John, but he is totally silent about any connection between the second beast and the antichrist. To give an adequate exposition of the dragon, the beast and the

second beast is beyond the scope of this short treatise but one thing is certain, and that is that any identification of this beast with the antichrist is pure conjecture. This applies to the ingenious schemes used to find a combination of Latin or Greek letters with numeral significance adding up to a total of 666. This beast is described as having two horns like a lamb and who speaks like a dragon. Since a lamb does not have horns, we conclude that the purpose of this creature is to disarm and deceive. Its main characteristic is in speaking like a dragon. It is recognized by what it SAYS. The antichrist is recognized by WHOM he DENIES. Only a preconceived idea could attribute this beast to be identified with the antichrist because the Scriptures describe them in contrasts rather than similarities.

WHAT ABOUT LUCIFER?

In Blackstone's book called "Jesus Is Coming," he says that the antichrist is both Lucifer and the devil, no doubt meaning the devil incarnate. Evidence points to the fact that the devil has never been short of individuals through whom to operate. One example is: "Then entered Satan into Judas Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve." Luke 33:3. Of Mary Magdalene it is said, "Out of whom were cast seven devils." Many individuals in history could qualify for this characteristic, if devilishness were a clue to identity. There would be nothing unique in this trait whereby anyone could claim a monopoly on it, as Antichrist.

In Isaiah 14:12 the Bible says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" It is a never-ceasing source of amazement how the Dispensationalists find so many evidences of the antichrist when the Bible has so few. There is only one writer, and that one among the last in the Scripture canon. Isaiah describes Lucifer as a being who fell from heaven! This is far removed from what John wrote, when he said there were many antichrists in his day. Did they ALL fall from heaven? Isaiah said Lucifer aspired to BE "LIKE" THE MOST

HIGH. v. 14. John said the antichrist DENIED the Most High, as well as His Son. Any attempt to identify Lucifer with antichrist is pure fiction. It is only a vagrant opinion having no means of Scriptural support. Dispensationalists surround the antichrist with unlimited personalities and mystery, but when compared with the Holy Scriptures, the mystery dissolves into a "Mythstory."

In concluding our treatment of this subject we reiterate that all the Bible says about the antichrist is what the apostle John mentioned in his four references. Anything beyond this is pure human speculation. That is the reason why Dispensational books are studded with phrases such as, "It seems, it appears, obviously, doubtless, if, it may well be, it seems clear," and other evidences of conjecture and speculation. Peter said, "We have a MORE SURE WORD of prophecy; whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that SHINETH in a dark place." 2 Pet. 1:19. God did not leave us to grope through dimly-lit human probabilities. He meant for us to grasp prophetic certainties, heed them, trust them and shine as spiritual beacons in a dark sin-benighted world. Jesus said, "FOLLOW ME." Paul said, "And though I...understand ALL MYSTERIES...and have not love, I am nothing." 1 Cor. 13:2. In the last analysis, it is not what we know, but how we obey that counts. God rewards us for the depth of our obedience rather than the extent of our knowledge.

John tells us exactly and unmistakably how to recognize those who are antichrist. It is those who confess NOT that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. THIS is...AN ANTICHRIST." 2 John 7. John was well acquainted with the book of Daniel, but not being a Dispensationalist, he makes no reference to it. In any event, the king mentioned in Daniel 11:36 does not qualify for antichrist for he does NOT DENY that Jesus came in the flesh. In fact he was not born for several hundred years after Daniel wrote his prophecy.

Likewise John makes no reference to the Man of Sin whom Paul describes in 2 Thessalonians, although it is safe to say that he was well-aquainted with this early epistle of Paul's. Why do Dispensationalists invent so many antichrists, past, present and

future, and why do they ascribe all manner of characteristics and actions as well as mysteries to them, when John makes it so clear that antichrist could be lurking near our own doorstep? The import of John's message is to warn people not to deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, as many are assuredly doing.

Dispensationalists still maintain that the Old Testament prophecies of the Kingdom are Jewish, political, earthly, and necessarily future. They assure us that this concept of the Kingdom was outlined in the Talmud and full-embraced by the Jews of Christ's time (The Millennial Kingdom, by John Walvoord, pp. 114, 115.) While we concede that the above statement is correct, we would point out that this is the very source of traditional interpretation of prophecy that Christ said, "Made the Word of God of none effect." Mark 7:13. Dispensationalists contend that this earthly Kingdom will yet come into existence when Christ returns to earth. They explain to their adherents that God has re-routed this Kingdom train over the "Hidden Interval" Expressway. (The Great Parenthesis, Ironside) pp. 36-67. Passengers are told to check their earthly kingdom baggage, which travels The Great Parenthesis scenic route, and claim it after the train arrives at the Union Millennial Depot in Jerusalem. All baggage is labeled "Perishable." If the passengers had looked at their bill of lading carefully they would have observed that all O.T. baggage unclaimed upon arrival at Calvary was thereafter labeled "dung," because it deteriorated so quickly. Phil. 3:4-11.

Unfortunately for the Dispensationalists, by their own admission, their train is already NINETEEN HUNDRED YEARS LATE. Adding to their embarrassment is their admission that the train crew was mainly composed of members of the disfranchised Talmudic Union who were running on an obsolete O.T. schedule. The engineer failed to observe an open switch at Golgotha and the train ran violently onto a siding where it has been ever since. When the train stopped due to loss of power, the Dispensationalists thought God's clock stopped. They didn't notice that Calvary was the end of the line for all the Old Testament and that all Kingdom-bound passengers were

transferred to the New Testament Kingdom Express. This super-deluxe train is pulled by a high-powered locomotive originating at Pentecost over the New Testament Faith Line. It is under new management and operates on new rules instituted by the Messiah.

One of the rules is that there is no earthly baggage allowed to be checked. Anyone who tries to smuggle discarded Old Testament theological refuse into God's Kingdom will find it difficult to pass God's Custom House for their ruling is "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to my Word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:20. This contraband Old Testament baggage carries a stiff penalty for anyone trying to bootleg it into the New Testament Kingdom and offer it on the "black market" as genuine gospel. (See Gal. 1-4).

God's Kingdom Special is operating right on time according to God's clock, as one would expect of Omniscience. Incidentally, the train is not bound for Jerusalem but for heaven; not for the Millennial Union Depot but for Glory. There is no chance of the antichrist sabotaging the train or starting a massacre just after its arrival for his destination is in the opposite direction. Our eternal destiny is in safe-keeping for "I know WHOM I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which is committed unto HIM." 2 Tim. 1:12. No one will be confused about when the train arrives, for it will not be a little earthly Jerusalem whistle stop but we will know by the sound of the LAST TRUMP!