

God's Eternal Plan #28
The Coming World Dictator
Revelation 13:1-10

As we continue our series on "God's Eternal Plan," we have come to the scriptures that introduce us to the coming world dictator. It is impossible to answer all of your questions in this one message, but I will try to share with you some foundational truths as they relate to this important prophecy, as I understand them. I realize that I am going to share some things you may or may not have ever been exposed to, but I am also convinced that I have a biblical foundation for my beliefs.

As we approach this subject of *The Coming World Dictator*, I must remind you that Satan is a great imitator. Satan does not originate anything, apart from the sin of his first rebellion. And you are aware that the Bible teaches that a part of God's eternal plan is to place His Son, Jesus Christ, on the throne of this world to rule as King of kings and Lord of lords. It is God's purpose to set up a world Dictator, and that Dictator is none other than the Lord Christ himself.

I am proud to be a part of this Republic that we call the United States of America, but we do recognize that the most economical kind of government is a dictatorship. The difficulty is not with the *kind* of government, but with the *dictator*. If you could have a righteous, a just, and a fair dictator, it would be the most economical kind of government that could be conceived. **Think of what it would be like to have to pay taxes to support only one ruler – one man.** You could provide him with all the luxuries of life and office, and still be more economical than our present system under which we labor today. And God's government for the world is a dictatorship. And the Dictator is to be Jesus Christ.

Satan is aware of the purpose and program of God. So as the great imitator, he purposes to put *his* puppet on the world throne as a deceiver, before Jesus Christ comes to the earth to reign and rule in glory. And in imitation of the program of God, Satan as "god of this world," will set up an appointed ruler, through whom Satan will rule this world, bringing it into subjection to himself.

It is not our purpose in this study to speak concerning the dictatorial reign of Christ, but to speak of the satanic imitator who will come to usurp Christ's authority to rule over the earth.

In Revelation 13, which we read a few moments ago, we have the description of this individual given to us by divine revelation. This is one who receives his power and authority from Satan. Notice that verse 2 says, “and the dragon (which is Satan) gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority.”

Here is an individual that comes to fulfill the purpose and program of Satan. One who comes with all the authority that belongs to Satan as “prince of the power of the air” and as “god of this world.” And Satan has selected this individual to whom he gives the special authority to rule this earth.

We find in the 4th verse of our text that this individual is considered invincible because he poses as God, “So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” When Satan puts his puppet on the throne, he is there not just as a dictator, he is there not just as a prince of peace, he is there not just as a god who has come in the flesh, he is there to take the place of the Living Lord of Heaven.

Can you see the master plan of deception that Satan is seeking to unfold on the earth? You see, God’s plan is to rule through His Son Jesus Christ, whom He has appointed as the “Prince of Peace.” And Satan brings one whom the Scripture calls the “son of perdition,” to the throne of satanic authority, who claims to give peace to the earth and peace to the nations. As a result, this one who Satan puts on the throne will be worshiped as a god.

This dictator uses his place of authority to try and discredit the authority of the true God. Verse 6 says, “Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven.” He not only does not know God, he directs men to worship one who is no god at all, who is Satan.

And then in verse 7 we see the great military power that is given to this false dictator, “It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.” The Greek reads like this, “And the beast was allowed to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And he was given authority to rule over every tribe and people and language and nation.” He will have the power of the Satan at his disposal.

And in verse 8 we have this statement concerning his great *power* and *influence*, “And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world was made - the Book that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered.” **In this**

summary statement, John draws together a great line of prophetic truth as he pictures this *satanic imitator* of Jesus Christ, as one who is elevated to the throne of this world by the “god of this world,” whom the “god of this world” claims as his *son*, so that he is called “the son of perdition.” So much so he is recognized as a god come in the flesh ruling on the throne. And Satan, who holds the scepter of this world in his hands, surrenders his scepter which he wrestled from Adam, to this one whom he elevates in the affairs of men, so that this dictator has authority and power “over every tribe and people and language and nation,” and they worship him as god, and submit to his authority in the political realm.

This puppet of Satan combines within himself those two offices that Jesus Christ will combine within Himself when He comes to this earth to reign. In Psalm 110:4 is God’s statement to Christ, “You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” Melchizedek combined two offices in one person in that he was a king and a priest. Christ will reign as King by God’s aauthhority, but He will also be a Priest before God on behalf of man. Knowing this, Satan will imitate the plan of God.

Now that we have seen what he *does*, look with me as we try to see who this anti-Christ really is. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 gives us this insight, “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” Is that “man of sin, the son of perdition” merely an influence or principle, or is it really a person. **Modern-day theologians tell us these verses of scripture are only a figure of speech to illustrate and typify moral sin.** But they are in gross error, for we have been told “and that man of sin be revealed.” In the original Greek there is a definite article before “man of sin” and should read like this, “...there must come a falling away first, and that the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.” There is a Greek law in grammar that says, “If a noun has a definite article before it, it refers to a specific person, place, or thing. If it does not have a definite article before it, it refers to an influence or an idea, or a characteristic.” Therefore, the Greek reads like this, “Don’t be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction.” There can be no doubt we are talking about a specific person that is referred to as “the man of sin, the son of perdition.”

The early church believed that Antichrist was to be a “person,” the embodiment of human blasphemy and wickedness, but toward the close of the twelfth Century many began to look on the Pope as Antichrist, and this view has found a place in many of today’s Protestant commentators. The

arguments in favor of this view are ingenious and plausible, but they are hard to reconcile with the Word of God. This view makes Antichrist a “system” rather than a “person,” and would see in the “Papal System” the antichrist. **But the Scriptures disprove that view.** For example, 1 John 2:22 says, “And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist.” And 1 John 4:3 says, “And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist...”

Judaism has denied that “Jesus is the Christ,” and Unitarianism that He has “come in the flesh,” but the Papacy – never! The Church of Rome has always confessed, “I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.”

Practically all Protestant commentators insist that the “Papal System” is described in Revelation 17:4-5 under the figure of a “woman” arrayed in “purple and scarlet color,” and decked with “gold and precious stones and pearls.” **That is undoubtedly true, but this “woman,” the “Mother of harlots,” is represented as riding on a “Beast,” universally admitted to be the Antichrist.** Therefore, if the “Beast” is the Antichrist, then the “Woman” cannot be, because the two are not one.

Furthermore, Daniel 11:36-37 tells us the Antichrist, as the “man of sin” is to “Exalt himself and magnify himself above every god.” And 2 reminds us, “So that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” However false and impious the claims of the Papacy, it always recognizes its subordination to God, and the Pope’s highest claim is that he is the “Vicar of Christ.”

While there are many things in the history of the Church of Rome, and in the conduct of her Popes that “foreshadow” the antichrist, yet it is clear from the Word of God the “Papal System” is not the Antichrist, and the Scriptures relating to him can only be fulfilled in the person of some “individual” yet to appear.

Who, then, is this “man of sin” that Paul calls “the son of perdition”? **The name the Apostle Paul gives the Antichrist; the “son of perdition” is not without significance.** That name is used but twice in the Scriptures. It is first used by Christ in His prayer to the Father as recorded in John 17:12, “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” **We know of course that Jesus is speaking of Judas Iscariot, because out of the twelve only Judas was lost.** And then the term “son of perdition” is used of the Antichrist.

The Apostle Paul also calls the Antichrist the “mystery of iniquity.” But what does that mean? In 1 Timothy 3:16 Christ is spoken of as the “mystery of Godliness.” **That is, He was God manifest in the flesh.** How did He become “manifest in the flesh”? **By being born of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit.** And it was through that experience that Jesus Christ, God’s Son, was “manifest in the flesh.”

Now we have to realize that “iniquity” is the opposite of “Godliness.” Therefore, the “mystery of iniquity” has to be opposite of the “mystery of Godliness.” And if that is true, as Christ is the “mystery of Godliness” then Antichrist must be the “mystery of iniquity,” and as Christ was the “Son of God” then Antichrist must be the “son of perdition,” that is, of Satan.

But why was Judas Iscariot called the “son of perdition”? Was he a child of Satan by some woman, or was he simply indwelt by Satan? We must allow the Scriptures to speak for themselves, and we have these words of Jesus recorded in John 6:70-71, “Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.” The Greek word translated “devil” is “diabolus,” and his a definite article, and should read this way, “Have I not chosen you Twelve, and one of you is the devil.” **There can be no other translation of this passage.**

But there is more, for in no other passage that this one is the word “diabolus,” or “devil” applied to anyone but Satan himself. This would make Judas the devil incarnate, or the “mystery of iniquity,” and explains why Jesus in John 17:12 calls him to “son of perdition.”

In addition to what we have already seen, we have been told this in Acts 1:24-25 concerning Judas Iscariot, “And they prayed and said, You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.” **Of no other person is it said anywhere in the Scriptures that he went “to his own place.”** In Revelation 11:7 we are told that the “Beast” that slays the “Two Witnesses” ascends out of the “Bottomless pit,” and that “Beast” is the Antichrist, “When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them.” **How did the Antichrist get into the “abyss”?** Well, it there is one “son of perdition,” and if Judas Iscariot and Antichrist are one and the same, then he got in the “abyss” when Judas went to his “own place.”

With that thought in mind, look at Revelation 17:8, “The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” **There are four things said about the “Beast.”** (1) First, he “was.” (2) Second, he “is not.” (3) Third, he shall “ascend out of the bottomless pit.” (4) Fourth, he shall “go into perdition.”

From this we learn that in John’s day the “Beast” “was not,” but that he had been before on the earth, and was to come again, and that he was to ascend from the bottomless pit. This is positive proof that the Antichrist has been on the earth before, and that when he comes in the future he will come from the “abyss.” Now remember, the Antichrist is *not* Satan, but Satan’s appointed dictator.

The question then arises – when was Antichrist on the earth before? If Judas Iscariot and Antichrist are one and the same, the enigma is solved. And this is the answer – when Judas was on the earth, he “was;” when Judas went to his own place, he “was not;” when Judas comes back from the “abyss,” he will be the Antichrist!

As we read and study the Bible it is clear that Satan is determined to deceive this world through the art of imitation. This is true in the political, social, intellectual, and religious realms. Therefore, it is imperative that believers understand the truth of God’s Word.