

The Antichrist Chapter 4 THE GENIUS AND CHARACTER OF THE ANTICHRIST

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Transcript

The Antichrist

Chapter 4 THE GENIUS AND CHARACTER OF THE ANTICHRIST.

For six thousand years Satan has had full opportunity afforded him to study fallen human nature to discover its weakest points and to learn how best to make men do his bidding. The Devil knows full well how to dazzle men by the attraction of power, and how to make them quail before its terrors. He knows how to gratify the craving for knowledge and how to satisfy the taste for refinement and culture, he can delight the ear with melodious music and the eye with entrancing beauty. If he could transport the Savior from the wilderness to a mountain, in a moment of time, and show Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, he is no novice in the art of presenting alluring objects before his victims today. He knows how to stimulate energy and direct inquiry, and how to appease the craving for the occult. He knows how to exalt men to dizzy heights of worldly greatness and fame, and how to control that greatness when attained, so that it may be employed against God and his people. It is true that up to now Satan's power has been restrained, and his activities have been checked and often counteracted by the Spirit of God. The brightest fires of the Devil's kindling can burn but dimly whilever God sheds around them the power of heavenly light. They require the full darkness of night in order to shine in the full strength of their deceiving brightness; and that time is coming. The Word of God reveals the fact that a day is not far distant when Divine restraint will be removed; the light of God will be withdrawn; and then shall "darkness cover the earth and gross darkness the people" (Isa. 60:2). Not only will that which has hindered the full development of the Mystery of Iniquity be removed, but God will "send them strong delusion that they should believe the Lie" (2 Thess. 2:13), and Satan will take advantage of this; he will then make full use of all the knowledge which he has acquired during the last six thousand years. Satan will become incarnate and appear on earth in human form. As we have shown in previous chapters, the Antichrist will not only be the Man of Sin, but also "the Son of Perdition," the Seed of the Serpent. The Antichrist will be the Devil's masterpiece. In him shall dwell all the fullness of the Devil bodily. He will be the culmination and consummation of Satan's workings. The world is now talking of and looking for the Superman; and the Devil is soon to supply him. The Antichrist will be no ordinary person, but one possessed of extraordinary talents. He will be endowed with superhuman powers. With the one exception of the God-man he will be the most remarkable personage who has ever appeared upon the stage of human history. But to particularize: I. He will be an intellectual genius. He will be possessed of extraordinary intelligence. He will

be the Devil's imitation of that blessed One "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). This Son of Perdition will surpass Solomon in wisdom. In Daniel 7:20 he is represented as "A horn that had eyes." It is a double symbol. The "horn" prefigures strength; "eyes" speak of intelligence. Again, in Daniel 8:23 he is referred to as "A King of fierce countenance." who shall "understand dark sentences." That which baffles others shall be simple to him. The Hebrew word here translated "dark sentences" is the same as the one rendered "hard questions" in 1 Kings 10:1, where we read of the Queen of Sheba coming to Solomon with her "hard questions" in order to test his wisdom. It is also the word that is used in Samson's riddle in Judges 14. It indicates that the Antichrist will be master of all the secrets of occult science. Ezekiel 28:3 declares of him "Beholding, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee." This will be one of his most alluring attractions. His master mind will captivate the educated world. His marvelous store of knowledge, his acquaintance with the secrets of nature, his superhuman powers of perception, will stamp him as an intellectual genius of the first magnitude. II. He will be an oratorical genius. In Daniel 7:20 we are told that he has "a mouth that spake very great things." As a wizard of words he will surpass Demosthenes. Here also will the Devil imitate that One "who spake as never man spake." The people were "astonished" at Christ's doctrine (Matthew 7:28), and said "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" (Matthew 13:54). So will it be with this daring counterfeiter: he will have a mouth speaking very great things. He will have a perfect command and flow of language. His oratory will not only gain attention but command respect. Revelation 13:2 declares that his mouth is "as the mouth of a lion" which is a symbolic expression telling of the majesty and awe producing effects of his voice. The voice of the lion excels that of any other beast. So the Antichrist will out rival orators ancient and modern. III. He will be a political genius. He will emerge from obscurity, but by dint of his diplomatic skill he will win the admiration and compel the cooperation of the political world. In the early stages of his career he appears as "a little horn" (or power), but it is not long before he climbs the ladder of fame, and by means of brilliant statesmanship, ascends its topmost rung. Like the majority of politicians, he will not scruple to employ questionable methods; in fact it will be by diplomatic chicanery and intrigue that he will win his early successes. Daniel 11:21 tells us that at first they will not give to him the honor of the kingdom, but "he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries." Once he gains the ascendancy none will dare to challenge his authority. Kings will be his pawns and princes his playthings. IV. He will be a commercial genius. "And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand" (Dan. 8:25). Under his regime everything will be nationalized, and none will be able to buy or sell without his permission (Rev. 13:17). All commerce will be under his personal control, and this will be used for his own aggrandizement. The wealth of the world will be at his disposal. There are several scriptures which call attention to this. For example in Psalm 52:7 we read, "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches; and strengthened himself in his substance." Again, in Daniel 11:38 we are told, "But in his estate shall he honor the god of forces (Satan): and a god whom his fathers knew not shall be honor with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things." Even plainer is Daniel 11:43, "But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt." In the last verse of Daniel 11 mention is made of his "palace." He will be wealthier than Croesus. Ezekiel. 28:4, 5 speaks of him thus, "With thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches." Thus will he be able to wield the scepter of financial power and outdo Solomon in all his glory. V. He will be a military genius. He will be endowed with the most extraordinary powers, so that "he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people" (Dan. 8:24). Before his exploits the fame of Alexander and Napoleon will be forgotten. None will be able to stand

before him. He will go "forth conquering and to conquer" (Rev. 6:2). He will sweep everything before him so that the world will exclaim, "Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:4). His military exploits will not be confined to a corner, but carried out on a vast scale. He is spoken of as the man who will "shake kingdoms" and "make the earth to tremble" (Isa. 14:16). VI. He will be a governmental genius. He will weld together opposing forces. He will unify conflicting agencies. Under the compelling power of his skill the world Powers will be united. The dream of a League of Nations will then be realized. The Orient and the Occident shall no longer be divided. A marvelous symbolic picture of this is given us in Revelation 13:1,2: "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a Beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the Beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the Dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Here we find the forces of the Roman, the Grecian, the Medo-Persian, and the Babylonian empires coalesced. He will be the personal embodiment of the world's political authority in its final form. So completely will the world be swayed by the hypnotic spell cast over it by the Beast that the ten kings of the Roman empire in its ultimate form shall "give their kingdoms unto him" (Rev. 17:17). He will be the last great Caesar. VII. He will be a religious genius. He will proclaim himself God, demanding that Divine honors should be rendered to him and sitting in the Temple shall show himself forth that he is God (2 Thess. 2:4). Such wonders will he perform, such prodigious marvels will he work, the very elect would be deceived by him did not God directly protect them. The Man of Sin will combine in himself all the varied genius of the human race, and what is more, he will be invested with all the wisdom and power of Satan. He will be a master of science, acquainted with all of nature's forces, compelling her to give up for him her long held secrets. "In this master-piece of Satan," says one, "will be concentrated intellectual greatness, sovereign power and human glory, combined with every species of iniquity, pride, tyranny, willfulness, deceit, and blasphemy, such as Antiochus Epiphanes, Mohammed, the whole line of popes, atheists, and deists of every age of the world have failed to unite in any individual person." "All the world wondered after the Beast" (Rev. 13:3). His final triumph shall be that, wounded by a sword, he shall live again (Rev. 13:3). He shall raise himself from the dead, and so wonder-struck will men be at this stupendous marvel they will readily pay him Divine homage, yea, so great will be his dazzling power over men, they will worship his very image (Rev. 13:14,15). Having contemplated something of the genius of Satan's prodigy, let us now consider his character. In doing so we shall view him in the light of the Character of the Lord Jesus. Christ is the Divine plumb-line and standard of measurement by which all character must be tested. In our last chapter we pointed out how that the distinguishing title of the coming Super-man—the Antichrist—has a double significance, inasmuch as it points to him as the imitator of Christ and the opponent of Christ. Hence, in studying his character, we find a series of comparisons and a series of contrasts drawn between the false christ and the true Christ; and these we now propose to set before the reader. Comparisons between Christ and the Antichrist. Satan is the master-counterfeiter, and in nothing will this appear more conspicuously than in his next great move. He is now preparing the stage for his climactic production, which will issue in a blasphemous imitation of the Divine incarnation. When the Son of Perdition appears he will pose as the Christ of God, and so perfect will be his disguise, the very elect would be deceived, were it not that God will grant them special illumination. It is this disguise, this simulation of the true Christ which we shall now examine, pointing out the various parallelisms which Scripture furnishes: Christ was the subject of Old Testament prophecy: so also is the Antichrist; many are the predictions which describe this coming one, see especially Daniel 11:21-45. The Lord Jesus was typified by many Old Testament characters such as Abel, Joseph, Moses, David, etc. So also will the Antichrist be: such characters as Cain, Pharaoh, Absalom, Saul, etc., foreshadow the Man of Sin. We shall devote a separate chapter to

this most fascinating and totally neglected branch of our subject. Christ was revealed only at God's appointed time: such will also be the case with the Antichrist. Of the one we read, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4:4); of the other it is said, "And now we know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time" (2 Thess. 2:6). Christ was a Man, a real Man, "the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5); so also will the Antichrist be—"that Man of Sin" (2 Thess. 2:3). But Christ was more than a man; He was the God-Man; so also will the Antichrist be more than a man: the Super-man. Christ was, according to the flesh, a Jew (Rom. 1:3); so also will the Antichrist be—for proofs see chapter three, section one. Christ will make a covenant with Israel (Heb. 8:8); so also will the Antichrist (Dan. 9:27). Christ is our "Great High Priest;" so Antichrist will yet be Israel's great high priest (Ezek. 21:26). Christ was and will be the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:1); so also will the Antichrist be (Dan. 11:36). Christ will be the King of kings (Rev. 17:14); so also will the Antichrist be (Rev. 17:12,13). Christ wrought miracles: of Him it is said "approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs" (Acts 2:22); so also will the Antichrist, concerning whom it is written, "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2:9). Christ's public ministry was limited to three years and a half; so also will the Antichrist's final ministry be (Rev. 13:5). Christ is shown to us riding a "white horse" (Rev. 19:11); so also is the Antichrist (Rev. 6:2). Christ will return to the earth as Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6,7); so also will the Antichrist introduce an era of peace (Dan. 11:21); it is to this that 1 Thessalonians 5:3 directly refers. Christ is entitled "the Morning Star" (Rev. 22:16); so also is the Antichrist (Isa. 14:12). Christ is referred to as Him "which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:8); the Antichrist is referred to as him that "was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit" (Rev. 17:8). Christ died and rose again; so also will the Antichrist (Rev. 13:3). Christ will be the object of universal worship (Phil. 2:10); so also will the Antichrist (Rev. 13:4). The followers of the Lamb will be sealed in their foreheads (Rev. 7:3; 14:1); so also will the followers of the Beast (Rev. 13:16,17). Christ has been followed by the Holy Spirit who causes men to worship Him; so the Antichrist will be followed by the Anti-spirit—the False Prophet—who will cause men to worship the Beast (Rev. 13:12). There is no need for us to make any comments on these striking correspondences: they speak for themselves. They show the incredible lengths to which God will permit Satan to go in mimicking the Lord Jesus. We turn now to consider: Contrasts between Christ and the Antichrist. I. In their respective Designations. One is called the Christ (Matthew 16:16); the other the Antichrist (1 John 4:3). One is called the Man of Sorrows (Isa. 53:3); the other the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2:3). One is called the Son of God (John 1:34); the other the Son of Perdition (2 Thess. 2:3). One is called the Seed of woman (Gen. 3:15); the other the seed of the Serpent (Gen. 3:15). One is called the Lamb (Isa. 53:7); the other the Beast (Rev. 11:7). One is called the Holy One (Mark 1:24); the other the Wicked One (2 Thess. 2:8). One is called the Truth (John 14:6); the other the Lie (John 8:44). One is called the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6); the other the wicked, profane Prince (Ezek. 21:25). One is called the glorious Branch (Isa. 4:2); the other the abominable Branch (Isa. 14:19). One is called the Mighty Angel (Rev. 10:1); the other is called the Angel of the Bottomless Pit (Rev. 9:11). One is called the Good Shepherd (John 10:11); the other is called the Idol Shepherd (Zech. 11:17). One has for the number of His name (the gematria of "Jesus") 888; the other has for the number of his name 666 (Rev. 13:18). II. In their respective Careers. Christ came down from heaven (John 3:13); Antichrist comes up out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7). Christ came in Another's Name (John 5:43); Antichrist will come in his own name (John 5:43). Christ came to do the Father's will (John 6:38); Antichrist will do his own will (Dan. 11:36). Christ was energized by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14); Antichrist will be energized by Satan (Rev. 13:4). Christ submitted Himself to God (John 5:30); Antichrist defies God (2 Thess. 2:4). Christ humbled Himself (Phil. 2:8); Antichrist exalts himself (Dan. 11:37). Christ honored the God of His fathers (Luke 4:16); Antichrist refuses to (Dan. 11:37). Christ cleansed the temple (John 2:14,16); the

Antichrist defiles the temple (Matthew 24:15). Christ ministered to the needy (Isa. 53:7); Antichrist robs the poor (Ps. 10:8,9). Christ was rejected of men (Isa. 53:7); Antichrist will be accepted by men (Rev. 13:4). Christ leadeth the flock (John 10:3); Antichrist leaveth the flock (Zech. 11:17). Christ was slain for the people (John 11:51); Antichrist slays the people (Isa. 14:20). Christ glorified God on earth (John 17:4), Antichrist blasphemes the name of God in heaven (Rev. 13:6). Christ was received up into heaven (Luke 24:51); Antichrist goes down into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20).

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