

The Antichrist Chapter 6 THE DOOM OF THE ANTICHRIST

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Transcript

The Antichrist

Chapter 6 THE DOOM OF THE ANTICHRIST.

If there is a measure of difficulty attending the placing and elucidation of some of the prophecies which depict the various phases and stages of the Antichrist's career, the cloud lifts as the end is neared. And this is in full accord with many other things which pertain to the closing days of the Age. The nearer we come to the blessed event of our Lord's return to this earth, the more light has God seemed to cast on those things which immediately precede the Second Advent. It is as though, at first, God furnishes only a bare outline, but ultimately He fills in the details for us. It is thus with the end of the Antichrist. The Holy Spirit has been pleased to supply us with a most comprehensive and vivid description of the closing scenes in the career of the Son of Perdition. It is with mingled feelings that we turn and ponder what has thus been recorded for our learning. The awful course which is followed by the Man of Sin cannot but shock us. The frightful hypocrisy, the shocking duplicity and treachery, the terrible cruelty, and the amazing impiety of this Monster of wickedness, make us marvel at the forbearance of God, who endures "with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." But when we come to the final scenes, and behold the Antichrist openly challenging heaven, publicly defying God, and making a deliberate and determined effort to prevent the Lord Jesus returning to this earth, we are well nigh rendered speechless by the unthinkable lengths to which sin will go. On the other hand, as we learn that all of this is the ending of that long dismal night which precedes the Day of Christ, the Millennium, we see that it is but the dark background to bring into more vivid relief the glories of the God-Man. The destruction of the Antichrist will be followed at once by the setting up of the Messianic Kingdom which shall bring peace and blessing to all the earth. And the contemplation of this cannot but fill us with joy and thanksgiving. "The end of the Man of Sin marks an era of sublimest interest to the believing children of God. It shall be the day of our triumphant manifestation, and the Jubilee of all creation. The day, Oh, Hallelujah! when Satan's crown of pride shall be smitten, and his glory trailed in the dust; when his long-continued and persistent temptations shall have an end; and his power receive the wounding from which it shall never recover itself. That blessed, blessed day when He whose right it is, shall reign, and the kingdom of Israel be no more overturned and dishonored. The sweet, sweet day, when the mockings, the scourgings, the bonds, the imprisonments, the afflictions, and the torments of the great multitude of whom the world was not worthy, shall cease to annoy forever, and the whole earth be at rest, and break forth into gladness" (Mrs. E. Needham). But before that

blessed Day arrives, the last hour of the night of Christ's absence has to run its course, and as the darkest hour precedes the dawn, so the last hour of this "night" shall be the most foreboding of all. The period which immediately precedes the return of Christ to the earth will witness the most awful events ever chronicled. It was of this period that Daniel spoke when he said, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (Dan. 12:1). It was to this same time that Christ referred when He declared, "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days" (Mark 13:19,20). This is "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world" (Rev. 3:10). It will be a time of unparalleled wickedness, and a time of unprecedented suffering. It is the time when God shall avenge the murder of His Son, when He shall take to task a world that has so long despised His Word, and trampled His commandments under foot. The very Antichrist will be one of the instruments of His vengeance—"the rod of His anger" (Isa. 10:5). It is because men received not the love of God's truth. He shall send them strong delusion that they should believe the Devil's lie. It is because men had "pleasure in "unrighteousness" they shall be deceived by the Lawless One. It is because Israel refused that blessed One who came in His Father's name that they shall receive the one who comes in his own name. This is why the Antichrist will, for a season, be suffered to prosper, and apparently to defy God with impunity. But when God has used him to perform His own pleasure, then shall He empty upon his kingdom and upon his subjects the vials of His wrath. Just as God has set the bounds of the sea, saying thus far shalt thou go and no further, so has He fixed the limits to which He will allow the Antichrist to go. And when that limit is reached the Son of Perdition will find himself as helpless to pass beyond what God has decreed as a worm would be beneath the foot of an elephant. This will be made evident as we proceed. At the close of our last chapter we followed the career of the Antichrist to the point where he turns upon the Jewish people and seeks to cut them off from being a nation. Fearful will be his assaults upon them, and bitter will be their wailings. It is at that time the Remnant will cry, "O God; why hast Thou cast us off forever? why doth Thine anger smoke against the sheep of Thy pasture? Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast purchased of old; the rod of Thine inheritance, which Thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein Thou hast dwelt. Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the Enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary. Thine enemies roar in the midst of Thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs. A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees. But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers. They have cast fire into Thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling-place of Thy name to the ground. They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together; they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land. We see not our signs: there is no more any profit neither is there any among us which knoweth how long. O God, how long shall the Adversary reproach? Shall the Enemy blaspheme Thy name forever? Why withdrawest Thou Thy hand, even Thy right hand? Pluck it out of Thy bosom" (Ps. 74:1-11). It is at this time that the prophecy of Amos 8 will receive its final fulfillment: "The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise wholly as a flood; and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day: And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but the hearing the words of the Lord: And they shall wander from sea to sea,

and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst" (Amos 8:7-13). How remarkably does Psalm 74 interpret this prophecy of Amos! The reason why the godly Remnant shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord and shall not find it, and the meaning of the famine of hearing the words of the Lord is that all the synagogues in the land shall have been burned up. But not for long will this frightful persecution continue: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O My people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian: he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and Mine anger in their destruction" (Isa. 10:24,25). Once the Antichrist turns upon Israel his days are numbered, for to touch that nation is to touch the apple of God's eye (Zech. 2:8). God shall up a scourge for him" (Isa. 10:26). What this scourge is we learn from Daniel 11:40: "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him; and the king of the north (the Antichrist) shall come against him (i.e. the king of the south) like a whirlwind with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow, and pass over" (Dan. 11:40). The king of the south who pushes it—assails—the Antichrist is the king of Egypt. The Antichrist, here termed the king of the north, i.e. Assyria, shall leave Babylon, and marshalling his imperial forces, which he has ready for immediate action, shall lead them against him (the king of Egypt) like a whirlwind. The rapidity of his movements and the immensity of his armies, is intimated by the words, "He shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over." His progress will be as the rushing of an overwhelming torrent from the mountains, that spreads over the land, and carries everything before it. "He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown" (Dan. 11:41). His route from Babylon to Egypt will take him through Palestine, the land which is soon to be the glory of all lands; and, although we are not told here what he will do there at that time, his hand will, no doubt, be heavy upon it, as also upon the many other countries which he will overthrow. But these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon" (Dan. 11:41). These three peoples will escape his fury. The reason for their escape seems to be a double one. In Psalm 83, which describes an event at a little earlier period, we are told, "they have taken crafty counsel against Thy people, and consulted against Thy hidden ones. They has said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent, they are confederate against Thee: the tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur (the Assyrian) also is joined with them" (Ps. 83:3-8). Thus we see that these three peoples acted in concert with the Antichrist when a determined effort was made to utterly exterminate the Jewish people. The Antichrist, therefore, spares these submissive allies of his when he goes forth to overthrow the other countries. So much for the human side as to why "these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." But there is a Divine side, too. These peoples are spared at that time in order that they may be dealt with later by God Himself. Thus did Jehovah declare of old through Balaam the heathen prophet: "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies" (Num. 24:17,18). This will be right at the beginning of the Millennium. Israel, too, shall be used by God in this work of judgment upon their ancient enemies: "But they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (Isa. 11:14). "He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries: and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt: and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his

steps" (Dan. 11:42,43). The victorious King will then take possession of those countries which were overthrown by him during his march from Babylon to Egypt. Having now reached this land which dared to push at him—the land never completely subjugated by the previous kings of the north referred to in the earlier part of Daniel 11—its king and subjects must now bow before his iron scepter. He becomes master of its treasures of gold, silver, and precious things. The Libyans and Ethiopians, who were the allies of Egypt, will be compelled to follow in this train. Thus will he crush this Egyptian rebellion, and demonstrate once more his military prowess. Yet not for long will he be permitted to defy Heaven with impunity. "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 many" (Dan. 11:44). That these troublous tidings are we learn from Jeremiah 51. A serious attack will be made upon his Babylonian headquarters, and during his absence from there, the kings of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz—no doubt emboldened by the insubordination of Egypt—will besiege and capture one end of the Capital. The time is nigh at hand when God shall utterly destroy that City of the Devil, and a preliminary warning of this is now given: "And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the Lord. Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyeth all the earth: and I will stretch out Mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate forever, saith the Lord" (Jer. 51:24-26). As a beginning to this end, the Lord says, "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz (all situated in the vicinity of Armenia); appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion. And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. The mighty man of Babylon hath forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned their dwelling places; her bars are broken" (Jer. 51:27-30). It is this ominous news—the tidings which trouble him of Daniel 11:44—which reaches the ears of Babylon's King, then absent in Egypt. The alarming tidings that part of the city has already been destroyed arouses him to fierce anger, for we are told, "therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many" (Dan. 11:44). As he nears the capital, "one post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to show the King of Babylon that his city is taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted" (Jer. 51:31,32). The end is not far distant: "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; the daughter of Babylon is like a threshing floor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come" (Jer. 51:33). God now calls on the Jews who are found dwelling within that city to leave at once, lest they be caught in the storm of His fierce anger: "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver you every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord" (Jer. 51:45). A graphic description of Babylon's destruction is found at the end of Jeremiah 51 and also in Revelation 18. The fury of the Antichrist at the destruction of Babylon will know no bounds. Enraged at his loss, and incensed against God, he will now turn his face toward Palestine, and at the head of his vast forces will bear down upon the glorious land. Even so, it is God who is directing him and his blinded dupes—directing him to finish the work of judgment upon Israel, and directing him to his awful doom. Habakkuk gives a fearful description of the spirit in which the King of Babylon and his hosts shall fall upon the dwellers of Palestine:—"For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful: their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of

themselves. Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. (How this verse anticipates the cruel aerial war-weapons!). They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand. And they shall heap dust, and take it. Then shall his mind change, and he shall pass over, and offend, imputing this his power unto his god" (Note how this last verse serves to identify the "Chaldean" with the "King" of Daniel 11:38,39). So terrible will be this onslaught that we are told, "And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein" (Zech. 13:8). His course is vividly sketched by Isaiah in the tenth chapter of his prophecy: "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Mickmash he hath laid up his carriages: They are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Galim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmena is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day" (Isa. 10: 28-32). Nob is his camping-ground for that day, and it is there he will "plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the goodly holy mountain" (Dan. 11:45). Nob must be some elevation commanding a distant view of Jerusalem from the west. As he stands on the hill that night and looks at the Holy City, he "shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem" (Isa. 10:32). We now come to the closing scene. The following morning the Man of Sin leads his forces to the famous Armageddon, there awaiting his final re-inforcements before attacking Jerusalem. It is of this that Joel speaks: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (Joel 3:9-14). It is to this that Micah refers: "Now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion. But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His counsel: for He shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor" (Micah 4:10,11). But it is not in the valley that the battle is fought, but around Jerusalem, where the Beast and his armies deliver the final blow of God's judgment on that city ere the Deliverer appears. It is then that God will say, "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, and the staff in their hands is Mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of My wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (Isa. 5-12). he Antichrist is but the Lord's instrument after all. Just as Moses picked up and held in his hand the rod which became a serpent, so shall this offspring of the Serpent be wielded by the hand of God to accomplish His predetermined counsels. Once again, though, the Beast appears to be successful. Jerusalem falls before his onslaught as Jehovah had foretold that it should— "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall

go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city" (Zech. 14:2). Intoxicated by their success, it is then that the heathen shall rage and the people imagine a vain thing: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying, Let us brake their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Ps. 2:2,3). And then comes the grand finale. The heaven will open and from it will descend the King of kings and Lord of lords, seated on a white horse, with His eyes "as a flame of fire" (Rev. 19:11,12). Attending Him will be the armies of heaven, also seated on white horses (Rev. 19:14). Far from being appalled at this awe-inspiring spectacle, the Beast and the kings of the earth and their armies shall gather together to "make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His armies" (Rev. 19:19). "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zech. 14:3). At last the Christ of God and the christ of Satan will confront each other. But the instant the conflict begins, it is ended. The Foe will be paralyzed, and all resistance cease. Scripture has solemnly recorded the end of various august evil personages. Some were overwhelmed by waters; some devoured by flames; some engulfed in the jaws of the earth; some stricken by a loathsome disease; some ignominiously slaughtered; some hanged; some eaten up of dogs; some consumed by worms. But to no sinful dweller on earth, save the Man of Sin, "the Wicked One," has been appointed the terrible distinction of being consumed by the brightness of the personal appearing of the Lord Jesus Himself. Such shall be his unprecedented doom, an end that shall fittingly climax his ignoble origin, his amazing career, and his unparalleled wickedness. "Hitherto proud boastings have issued from the lips of Satan's king; but now he falls helplessly to the ground blasted by the lightening which streams from the King of kings; and together with the False Prophet and in the full sight of his countless armies, he is seized by the angels of the Lord, to be hurled alive into the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (G. H. Pember). The overthrow of the Antichrist is described as follows:—"But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the Wicked" (Isa. 11:14). "And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand"—an expression which always refers to that which is supernatural (Dan. 8:25). "And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet shall he come to his end, and none shall help him" (Dan. 11:45). "And then shall that Wicked (One) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming" (2 Thess. 2:8). "And the Beast was taken, and with him the False Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the Beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20). "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the King it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it" (Isa. 30:33). "And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, and (they) shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev. 20:10). Frightful, too, shall be the doom meted out to the followers of the Antichrist. Zechariah 14 tells us, "And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hands of his neighbor, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbor" (vv. 12,13). So, also Revelation 19:21 declares, "And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

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