

World Domination or Dominion?

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon explores the concept of world domination, contrasting the divine right of Christ's dominion with the human system of domination through force and assertiveness.

Scripture: Zechariah 9:10, Acts 10:42, Acts 17:31, Romans 5:14, Ephesians 1:22-23, Ephesians 2:15-16, Philippians 2:5-11, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 1 Timothy 2:5, 1 John 2:18

Topics: "Divine Dominion", "Antichrist Spirit"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks addresses the contrast between world domination and divine dominion, emphasizing that true dominion is vested in Christ, the Son of Man, while the rise of dictators represents a rival ambition for power. He explores the historical and spiritual implications of this struggle, highlighting the antichrist spirit that seeks to assert human glory over God's authority. Sparks calls for a return to spiritual values, urging believers to focus on the measure of Christ rather than human accolades in ministry. He concludes that the Church, as the body of Christ, is destined to manifest His dominion, free from the influences of antichrist. Ultimately, he emphasizes that true power comes from spiritual maturity and alignment with God's purpose.

Transcript

In the course of our lifetime we have beheld a new phenomenon, or the return of an old one. It is the meteoric rise of dictators. We say truly when we say that this has been phenomenal. In a few short months, from nowhere and nothing, from ostracism, ridicule, and almost general suspicion, such have risen to a place where not only their own nations are at their feet, but all nations are holding their breath while these dictators speak. How is it explained? What is the principle basic to it?

It dates back to the eternal counsels of God. In those counsels God determined to gather up the dominion of this world under the Headship of His Son. Adam was "a figure of him that was to come" (Rom 5:14).

"...He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness IN A MAN whom he hath ordained..." (Acts 17:31).

"And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42).

"For there is one God, one mediator also between God and men, himself MAN, Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

(See also Eph 1:9,10; 4:10; Col 1:16-19; Heb 1:8; 2:6-10)

Thus it has been made known that the dominion of this world and of all which, being beyond it, relates to it is eternally vested in a Man: the One Who is known to be the Son of God, Who became Son of man. He is the "heir of all things". The inheritance is the "inhabited earth to come" (Heb 2:5). But there is another who has assumed the role of rival to God's Son, and whose ambition has ever been world-dominion. The background of this world's history, that is, the spiritual and unseen background of the cosmos, can be summed up in a few quotations from Scripture.

"...Cain was of the evil one, and SLEW HIS BROTHER" (1 John 3:12).

"Ye are of your father the devil... He was A MURDERER from the beginning" (John 8:44).

"Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they KILLED THEM WHICH SHEWED BEFORE OF THE COMING OF THE RIGHTEOUS ONE; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers" (Acts 7:52).

"A man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a pit for the winepress, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruits of the vineyard. And they took him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and him they wounded in the head, and handled shamefully. And he sent another; and him they killed: and many others; beating some and killing some. He had yet one, a beloved son: he sent him last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is THE HEIR; come let us kill him, and THE INHERITANCE SHALL BE OURS. And they took him, and KILLED HIM, and cast him forth..." (Mark 7:1-8).

The emphasis is ours, for the purpose of indicating the connecting thoughts. The governing matter is that of the inheritance vested in God's Son. The next thing is a long history of jealousy working out in murder wherever that Son is in view in type, prophecy, or reality.

We next come to Satan's means, or instrument, of domination. It is also in man. As God's Son is the Man according to His mind and after His heart (using human language of God) so, as we have sought to point out, Satan sought to adapt, and succeeded in adapting, man to his thought for his purpose. The history of man is a long-drawn-out effort to reach to heaven independently of God, the course of Cain: power, rule, domination, worldly glory, reputation, etc. It is the story of man coming to the fore and occupying the place of honour. It is the pride of Satan working through the poor, worthless, ruined human race (as viewed from God's standpoint). Oh, what an indictment of so much that is brought into Christian work to make a success of it, even by those who mean to be so consecrated! Think of the value that is attached to degrees, titles and orders in the propaganda work of the Christian organizations. To carry weight, have influence, attract interest, make an impression, we find a feverish quest for people of degree, title, of standing as amongst men, and when we see these letters and qualifications on the announcements, advertisements and programmes of Christian effort, we may well ask, 'But what has that to do with the work of God? What place does that have in Holy Ghost activity?' Degrees, titles and honours may be all right in their own realm, if they are really earned and the result of genuine qualification as before the best

standard of honourable men; but it is of the essence of antichrist to make them currency for profit in the things of God! These are strong words, but we will prove our point. It would be well for all Godly men to suppress and hide their degrees when they come into the presence of holy things, and so holy a God. Here, only spiritual values are recognized. But let us proceed.

Satan has ever in his mind world-domination through man, and the full-grown expression of this mind will be antichrist. Now let us see several things which are said about antichrist.

"Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that Antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists". "Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist" (1 John 2:18,22).

"Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the Antichrist" (1 John 4:3).

"Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God..." "Whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders..." (2 Thess 2:3,4,9).

From these passages we learn four things:

- (1) Antichrist is firstly a spirit.
- (2) Antichrist is the expression of a principle.
- (3) Antichrist is a type of man.
- (4) Antichrist has a kingdom or world-domination in view.

No. 1 relates antichrist directly to the evil powers, "not of God".

No. 2 means that the glory of man is ever the factor which governs.

No. 3 means that this spirit and principle operate by way of a dominant ego, and intense soul-force.

No. 4 indicates what it is antichrist is after.

Now we are able to understand the times and world happenings. Steadily the world is coming under the domination of a handful of dictators. The probability is that they will suffer one another until other forms of world-government are weakened. But in time they will have to eliminate one another until one is left supreme. (That is, one representative of a human System.) Leaving prophecy aside as not being our present subject, there are however two or three things that need to be said in summarizing the whole matter.

Firstly, may it not be a significant thing that in the realm of what speaks of God there are no outstanding giants in spiritual leadership today? Some of us came into our ministry just at the tail-end of a generation of such. We will not mention names, but Bible teachers, missionary leaders and mighty preachers were in the earth in no sparsity for a generation or more. There was a galaxy of them, and their works stand today. But we have seen the last of them pass off this scene, and there are few, if any, successors. Sometimes we almost cry that God would raise up men adequate to the present spiritual need. Why are things as they

are? May it not be that as Satan is bringing his antichrist in so manifestly along the lines of the power and glory of man, God, in His things, is keeping man as such hidden and largely at a discount because He is going to bring in His Man with heavenly glory? May not dictatorship then be one of the most powerful signs of the times?

But then what of the phenomena? We cannot wholly account for this power, influence and domination on human grounds. There are greater forces at work which operate in spite of the will of the people. It is uncanny. And yet is it not perfectly true that the connecting link between the instrument and the supernatural powers is an intense and terrific soul strength? A will is asserted which will brook no resistance. A mind is projected which is agile, subtle and tireless in the extreme. An emotional force is poured forth like a tidal wave carrying all before it, and working people up to uncontrollable frenzy. Yes, it is the consummate demonstration of that selfhood, that ego, which first drew things away from God and cast His Son out of His world. All this is with the accompaniment of pageantry which makes man its object of glory and almost worship. Is this not enough to make Christian men shun everything and anything which would make them to appear something before men?

But, 'behold the Man!' How has world-dominion been secured in Him?--for it has been secured. The answer is in the Scriptures:

"...this mind... which was... in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, counted it not a thing to be grasped (margin) to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant (margin), being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:5-11).

So that what counts before Him and in His work is not man's attainments, achievements or abilities, but just the measure of Christ. What an infinitely higher level of spiritual life would be represented by God's people if the only consideration in the matter of their leadership, and the ministry, were that of the measure of Christ!

We have moved into a new phase of things. 'Revival' is being sought earnestly, and certain great names in revival history are in mind, on lip, and much used to stimulate revival-mindedness or mentality. But it may be that God is not going now to allow a great work of His to be related to men's names. Try as we will and may, we shall not produce anything adequate and living if God is not doing it. It has got to be His work, and manifestly His alone. Pentecost in its meaning and value for any time stands over against the background of the Cross--the Cross in which Christian disciples and apostles lost everything of this world.

They lost their Christ after the flesh; they lost their kingdom of God after the flesh. They lost their own lives, reputations, hopes, expectations and faith so far as anything of God being bound up with this earth was concerned. They recovered all only in a heavenly and spiritual way. Their own souls were crucified when Christ died. But what a mighty recompense in the spirit!

There may be too much soulishness about for God to commit Himself, and He will not until there is more emptiness and despair.

There is one other thing which is apropos of what we have been saying. This introduces another set of Scriptures, such as:

"And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, THE FULLNESS OF HIM that filleth all in all" (Eph 1:22,23).

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity... that he might create in himself... ONE NEW MAN... and might reconcile them both in one body..." (Eph 2:15,16).

"Unto him be the GLORY IN THE CHURCH and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever" (Eph 3:21).

These, and other suchlike Scriptures, make it clear that "the church, which is his body" is the "one new man" which is destined to be the instrument of Christ's world-dominion.

This "man" is the fruit of His Cross. This Church was born of His travail. This is a crucified, buried, and risen Church in union and identification with Christ. What glory can it know save the glory of its Head? In this Church there is no place for antichrist in principle. It is in and by the Church which is His Body that the fullness of Christ will be displayed, and God will come into His rights. "Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever".

In this connection, there is much said in the Scriptures as to measurement in relation to the Church. In type we have it in Solomon's Temple, but even more so in that of Ezekiel. There every aspect and phase is strictly measured by a heavenly standard. That which is represented by the types is brought out in the spiritual reality of the Church in "Ephesians". There we have:

"The breadth and length and height and depth" (3:18).

"The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (4:13).

"The measure of the gift of Christ" (4:7).

"The working in due measure of each several part"(4:16).

So that what governs in this spiritual Church or Body is the measure of Christ. We are told that in this Body no earthly factors have any place. "There cannot be Greek and Jew" (not, there is both Greek and Jew); no nationalism or national distinction; no denominationalism, inter-denominationalism, or undenominationalism. All of these represent only human distinctions and differences from one another. Christ is other than all this, and, when Christ predominates, natural elements and features become subjected, whether temperamental, social, educational, national, or of any other kind. The ascendancy of Christ is the only way to one-ness and spiritual power. It is in this "one new man" that "the exceeding riches of his grace" will be shown forth "in the ages to come" (Eph 2:7).

We have been careful in our use of the words 'dominion' and 'domination'. The latter speaks of force, assertiveness, despotism and suchlike features. These belong to antichrist. The former is by Divine right with all the universe agreeing and co-operating eventually.

"His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zech 9:10).

"To him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever" (Rev 1:6).

Spiritual power and soul-force are very different things, and they belong to different kingdoms, the kingdom of the heavens and the kingdom of men. Man's destiny, according to the thought of God, demands that he be born of the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, and come to spiritual maturity.

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