



The Antichrist's Rise to Power

END OF THE AGE SERIES
Volume III

Gordon Lindsay

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Introduction

The present volume deals with the first three and a half years in the reign of the antichrist. Previously he has been engaged in consolidating his power. Now he begins to reveal his iron will in directing world events. Under ordinary conditions it is unlikely that the nations would permit their sovereignty to be taken over by a central authority.

The antichrist, however, comes on the scene in a time of great confusion and uncertainty. After World War II, Europe with America's help formed a united front called NATO to withstand possible aggressions of the Russian colossus. Now after America became bogged down in Vietnam and her people lost their taste for war, Europe has serious doubts whether the U.S. would intervene in case Russia should decide to cross the Iron Curtain into the NATO countries. For the time being there has come a sort of a detente between the East and the West.

This dilemma provides the open door for the rise of the antichrist. NATO and the Common Market have laid the groundwork for ten kingdoms to be formed into the antichrist confederacy. Once he consolidates his power he works out an accommodation with Russia by agreeing to special spheres of interest. The clay and the iron of the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image are mingled together for a season, though only for a season.

The antichrist's next step is in the direction of Israel. This little nation today stands almost alone, surrounded by a sea of enemies. The Arab world has sworn to liquidate her. Israel will look questioningly at the strong man of Europe and will be gratefully surprised to learn that his overtures are friendly. In fact he makes a league with Israel in which he guarantees her security. Alas, Israel is blind to the nature of the man, for the Scriptures refer to this treaty as a "covenant of death," a covenant he will break at a time convenient to his interests.

The antichrist's initial attitude toward the Catholic church is conciliation. In this he will follow the example of Benito Mussolini who curried favor with the Catholics by restoring the sovereignty of the people over the Vatican. Thus in Revelation 17, we find the Harlot Woman riding the Beast. In the end the ten kings turn against her and burn her with fire.

During the first three and a half years of the antichrist's reign, he will put down anarchy at the price, however, of the loss of individual freedom.

He will cause craft to prosper and thus gain popularity with the masses. This will also be at the price of personal liberty, for the hour will come when no man may buy or sell, save he has the mark. However, the first three and a half years are a time of comparative peace and prosperity, although there may be brief wars in which the antichrist is invariably victorious. At the end of that time the antichrist is wounded unto death, but his deadly wound is healed. The startling, world-shaking events that follow will be the subject of our next volume.

Chapter I

The Antichrist Takes Power Over Western Europe

In our previous volume, we have shown how the antichrist rises to power. Our present volume traces the events of the first part of his reign, of which the Scriptures reveal considerable detail. As Hitler rose to power during a time of chaos and confusion in Germany, so the Beast of Revelation 13 will come into power at a time when the world is in a state of extreme turmoil. The peoples of the nations will be looking for a man who can bring order out of chaos, and whose word will carry the weight of authority.

Were conditions in the world normal, there is little likelihood that the nations would be willing to have their sovereignty limited by a central power, but people will have become so wearied of the disorder and anarchy that they will welcome a man who promises to be able to restore something like normalcy in the earth. Especially will this be so during the crucial period when the man of sin conceals his true nature and appears as a beneficial father who has nothing but the good of mankind at heart.

The Beast's Power spoken of in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 will not come out of either America or Russia, the two present superpowers, but as Antiochus Epiphanes, his antetype, “.. he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people” (Dan. 11:23). Western Europe which was the territory of the old Roman Empire today greatly fears the Russian colossus and has formed a front under NATO against her. Nevertheless, in recent years since Russia has attained such overwhelming nuclear strength, Europe is undecided whether America, after her frustrating experience in Vietnam, would come to her aid should Russia threaten Europe with nuclear blackmail. They realize that the Soviet Union could overrun Europe very easily if America chose not to intervene. Europe knows this only too well and is seriously considering the contingency.

It is in the midst of this bewilderment and uncertainty that a strong man will arise in Europe. His country is one of the ten nations in Europe. Six of

these nations no doubt are the original members of the Common Market—France, West Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg. There are several other continental countries which are not in the Communist orbit. Recently three more nations, Great Britain, Ireland, and Denmark, have joined the Common Market, making nine on January 1, 1973. This union will be increased to ten nations. Over these ten nations will arise the dictator of the Beast empire—the one popularly termed the antichrist.

At first he is but one of the leaders of the ten nations, but soon his talents and gifts will cause him to stand out above the others. Indeed he shortly becomes a force to be reckoned with by all nations of the world, including the Communist camp. In time most of Europe will accept his leadership. Three nations, however, will resist and seek his overthrow (Dan. 7:8, 24). They will take a leaf from World War II and decide that they must take measures to stop this man before it is too late, as occurred in the case of Hitler, who gobbled up one small nation after another before the Western powers finally took action.

Nevertheless, these nations will receive a surprise. In a series of lightning military actions, the antichrist will subdue the three countries which oppose him (Dan. 7:24). After that, he will be unopposed on the continent.

The result of his victories will cause him to be recognized as a military genius in the same category as Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Napoleon. Not a few will view his rise to power with serious misgivings, but others will welcome the appearance of a strong man who can guarantee order on the continent. They will say, “Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:4).

The Beast And Russia

In our previous volume we have seen that the final stage of Gentile power was portrayed in Nebuchadnezzar’s image by feet of iron mingled with clay. In other words the final form of the Beast Power would be a kingdom of dual character. The iron represents fascism; the clay on the other hand stands for Communism. The feet have ten toes which represent ten kingdoms.

Significantly the Communist confederacy today includes ten main continental powers:

Russia

Czechoslovakia

Romania
Lithuania
Bulgaria
Hungary
East Germany
Latvia
Poland
Estonia

The Russian confederacy had its beginning when Soviet Russia overthrew three of these nations in 1939—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. After World War II, Soviet Russia violated her most solemn promise of permitting Eastern Europe to choose its own form of government. She forcibly brought all of these nations under Soviet hegemony.

As we have said, since World War II, Russia and her satellites on one hand, and Western Europe on the other hand, have been ready for battle at a moment's notice, being deterred mainly by the fear of nuclear warfare. The tension and mistrust between the powers have never ceased, but even to this day it exists in ever-increasing intensity, although at the present time there is a sort of a detente between the two camps.

What then will this great leader do? Will he move against Russia in direct onslaught as did Hitler? No. The antichrist will have no desire for a direct clash with Soviet Russia. The iron mixed with clay will cleave together for awhile. Hitler kept up a word duel against Russia before he finally proposed a nonaggression pact between them. The antichrist will be a wiser man; he will not immediately tangle with the vast Soviet empire.

The great showdown will not come until Armageddon. Therefore, craftily he will make a rapprochement with Russia, and for a time will feign goodwill. But the true nature of both “kings” is portrayed in type in Daniel 11:27:

“And both these kings’ hearts shall be to do mischief, and they shall speak lies at one table; but it shall not prosper: for yet the end shall be at the time appointed.”

As explained in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, the clay and the iron, which are mingled together, will not cleave indefinitely the one to the other. The peace between the two will last only for a season. Eventually the non-aggression pact will be ignored. Peaceful intentions are merely feigned, and both powers secretly jockey for advantage. In the end they will be at each other’s throats. Nevertheless, for a time the dual empires will form an axis, and their combined power will enable them to

intimidate and bring fear upon the whole world. The Russian juggernaut like a steam roller has always had a tendency to move slowly, but with suspicious eyes it ever watches for advantage. The antichrist of the west is more active than the men in the Kremlin. Having for a time taken care of the Russian problem, he will move rapidly to consolidate his empire, at the same time maneuvering to secure absolute personal control. As we have said, he will appear at the beginning as a benevolent dictator who in the midst of anarchy and chaos will succeed in restoring law and order. Thus he will earn the gratitude and confidence of the populace who are weary of the turmoil and confusion. On the other hand, those who have any knowledge of the Scriptures will become more and more apprehensive. Nevertheless, the adept statesmanship of the antichrist and his unbroken chain of successes will tend to silence those who have been critical, and the world will dare hope for the dawn of a new era:

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast” (Rev. 17:12-13).

Chapter II

The Antichrist Feigns Friendship With the Papacy and Israel

What will be the antichrist's attitude toward the papacy and the Catholic church? Clearly his initial attitude will be conciliation. Soviet Russia has taken a hard line against both the Greek and Roman churches, in fact against all religion, permitting religious worship to continue only under the severest restrictions.

On the other hand, the antichrist will follow the example of Benito Mussolini. During the early years of his rule, Mussolini, a man of no religion himself, nevertheless saw the wisdom of soliciting the favor of the pope who wielded an enormous influence not only over the Italians, but over hundreds of millions of subjects in other nations. No one in Italy in those days dared raise a finger against Il Duce, and he could afford to appear to be gracious to the pope, knowing that in return he would win the favor and approval of the Catholic world. Therefore, Mussolini arranged to release the pope from his "imprisonment," which the latter had imposed on himself after he lost the papal states in 1870, by granting him the autonomy of the territory of the Vatican, an area of approximately a mile square. The pope then could assume his former position as an earthly monarch. He would now be able to have his own flag, issue his own postage stamps, and send out ambassadors and diplomatic agents, as any other sovereign state.

Revelation 17 shows us that the Beast Power will follow the same course as Mussolini did. John the apostle saw in the Spirit the Harlot Woman, Mystery Babylon, sitting on the beast:

"So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:3-5).

The identity of the Harlot Woman is not difficult. She is guilty of the blood of the martyrs—those who perished during the centuries of the cruel

inquisition when millions were slain who resisted her claims. Verse 15 indicates the vast numbers of many nations who are under her rule:

“And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.”

The woman sits on “seven mountains” (Verse 9), the seven hills of Rome, and is “that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (Verse 18).

The identification of the Harlot Woman is clearly Rome. There is much to say about this Woman that excited John’s wonder, but this must be reserved for later; except we may say that there is strong evidence that more than the Catholic church is involved. Rome has made overtures toward the “separated brethren” of the Protestants, and there are many who are high in ecclesiastical circles who are disposed to look with favor on a rapprochement with Rome. The late Bishop Pike and Eugene Carson Blake were leading sponsors for the creation of a superchurch. By 1966 eight of the most powerful denominations in America blueprinted a plan designed to bring together 25 million churchgoers within a decade.

If this merger of denominations should heed the call of the Catholic church and integrate with it, the world would have a super-church indeed. Such a church would flourish for a season under the patronage of the antichrist. In the end the kings that reign under the Beast system will turn against it and burn it with fire. (Nevertheless, many of the people in these churches will be saved and make up the Body of Christ.)

The Antichrist and Israel

The antichrist, having obtained the favor of the papal church and sympathetic Protestantism, and by means of a pact with Russia secured his defenses on his eastern boundaries, will then turn his attention to Israel. The children of Israel are God’s chosen nation, but that does not mean that all the people of Israel will hear the voice of the Lord. Indeed, many today are little more than atheists. Men like Karl Marx, the father of Communism, have been Jews. The Scriptures make it clear that a remnant of Israel will be saved, but those who continue to live in unbelief will be judged.

Israel today is looking desperately for someone who will champion her cause. America has sought to befriend her and indeed is her best ally, but bogged down in Vietnam, she was unable to keep her promise against Nasser’s aggression at the Strait of Tiran which brought on the Six-Day War. Israel today has few friends. The whole Arab world is sworn to

liquidate the little state and to drive her into the sea. She is in a precarious position and despite peace negotiations has little more than a respite from the persistent attempts of enemies to destroy her.

Because nationally Israel has not yet accepted her true Messiah, there are severe trials looming ahead for her. In these difficult days she will be tempted to welcome any powerful prince who will offer her protection. Israel will look questioningly toward this strong man rising up in Europe, anxiously pondering his policy towards her. To her relief, his attitude is apparently more than friendly. Indeed, he does more than make overtures of peace; he is ready to back up his words with a treaty, promising her protection against aggression. Israel, blind to the true nature of the man, will look with favor upon his proposals. Isaiah calls his proposal a covenant with death:

“Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it” (Isa. 28:15-18).

Daniel the prophet gives us further light on this ominous development. He speaks of “the prince that shall come,” whose people would destroy Jerusalem and the Temple. It was the Romans who did this in A.D. 70; therefore, “the prince that shall come” must be associated with the revived Roman Empire. This is none other than the antichrist.

What will the dictator do? He will make a covenant with the Jews for one prophetic week—or seven years. But in the midst of the week he will break the covenant, defile the temple, “cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease,” and shall initiate a terrible persecution against the Jews—that is, those who will not accept his claims:

“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate” (Dan. 9:27).

This persecution will rival that of the antichrist’s forerunner, Adolph Hitler. But we are ahead of our story. This will be unfolded in another volume.

The False Prophet of Revelation 13

We must also say that a man shall arise in Israel who will work hand-in-glove with the Beast Power of Europe. He is the second Beast of Revelation 13; and really he can be termed an antichrist, although for clarity we shall use the Scriptural term, False Prophet. This is the man referred to as the False Messiah in John 5:43:

“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.”

Many of the people of Israel will accept the antichrist’s claim and receive him as their Messiah to their infinite regret later, but there will be a remnant who will reject his claims.

Chapter III

The First Three and a Half Years

America has never had a love for dictators. When Hitler and Stalin joined hands in 1939 the U. S. as well as Britain could only view the event with the deepest of forebodings. If those two powers, Russia and Germany, had remained together, it is reasonable to believe that they could have dominated the world. However, after 666 days Hitler broke his word and invaded Russia. The iron and the clay would not mix, and the power of the Beast was broken.

When America hears that Russia and the antichrist have joined together in a mutual pact, it will cast a shadow of gloom over our nation and will initiate the beginning of the darkest hour this country has ever known. Our leaders will not know which way to turn. Shortsighted statesmen who have weakened America by downgrading the threat of Communism will find themselves in the same position as Chamberlain, who won brief popularity by appeasing Hitler. With shame they will see that their ignorance of the Scriptures has caused them to be guilty of paving the way for America's Gethsemane. The nation will realize that her very survival is at stake. There will be revolutionary changes in our country, and our present way of life will be altered forever. America will have no alternative but to permit herself to be governed by a virtual dictatorship—a circumstance which will continue until the battle of Armageddon is fought.

By and large Europe will resign herself to developments. The fact is that the early years of the antichrist will be prosperous years. There will be great economic gains as the prophet Daniel clearly indicates, "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 ..." (Dan. 8:25).

Modern society is so constituted that the man who can bring in and maintain prosperity is considered the man of the hour *regardless* of what faults he may have. We have seen in recent elections that material prosperity more than any other issue dominates the thinking of the voters. Though a man be a disbeliever in God, it would make little difference to the public if only he could make the country prosperous. It must not be thought

that the reign of the Beast will immediately usher in an economic depression. Christ pictured those days to be a time of prosperity as it was in the days of Lot:

“Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded ... Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Luke 17:28, 30).

The fact that the dictator is so successful in solving the economic woes of the world will enormously strengthen his hand and will tend to neutralize the arguments of those who oppose him.

It is also said that he “by peace shall destroy many.” This can only mean that his will is strong enough to enforce peace on the nations during the early part of his reign. By quieting the nations’ fear of the Communist menace and working out an accommodation with them by which means the two will set up a mock peace designed to further their own sinister purposes, the energies of mankind will for a brief season be devoted to producing wealth. The antichrist promises to eliminate poverty.

What about the United Nations? How often does history repeat itself? When Hitler rose to power, the League of Nations was utterly impotent and no longer an effective force in the world; instead its voice was ignored and held in contempt. After the beginning of World War II, its very existence was practically forgotten. When the war was over, this moribund institution functioned only long enough to preside over its own funeral, the corpse having been long dead, and to transfer its assets to the newly created United Nations. This latter institution, which is today failing rapidly, is still passing resolutions that even the smallest nations ignore. When World War III breaks, the United Nations will go the same way as did the League of Nations. That which is born of the pride of man, that which leaves God out, has only a dismal fate awaiting it. The coming dictator will view it with utter contempt.

The Antichrist Will Tighten His Control

Every act of the antichrist will be to tighten his control over the ten kingdoms quietly but steadily. He will not be slow to employ the inventions of science to extend his power beyond his own borders. What are some of the means that he will use?

In answer to the above question, a number of modern inventions come immediately to our mind. One of these is television. For a time television

was very limited to distances of which the television tower cut the line of sight on the horizon.

Because of the limitations of the height of the television tower, good reception did not extend over a hundred miles. But now with the satellites—24,000 miles above the earth—televised broadcasting can reach out from one satellite to over a third of the world's surface! The antichrist will not be dependent on coaxial cables which presently link the television stations of the U. S.

It is obvious that the great dictator will avail himself of this remarkable development of science to communicate with the people, to sell his policy to them. By its means the impact of his powerful personality will register on the masses. Revelation 11:9 indicates that he will utilize to the full the possibilities of television. The antichrist's victory over the Two Witnesses apparently will be telecast to "the people and kindreds and tongues and nations" of the earth.

The Computer

Another development that will take place during the early years of the antichrist's reign will doubtless be the use of the computer on a large scale. Actually, its use has produced a revolution already in America. Its memory banks can hold an almost infinite amount of information. Various governmental agencies such as the FBI in their fight against crime, the Internal Revenue Department which keeps tabs on the income of U. S. citizens, municipal departments, and other government departments are quietly exchanging this information about each citizen and storing it. These agencies are sworn to keep their information secret, but many U. S. congressmen are greatly disturbed over the potential power of the computer to encroach on the freedom of the individual. In time of national emergency when the mobilization of every person is necessary, the pressure will be overwhelming to establish a master memory bank which will hold all pertinent information concerning every person in the nation, including his sources of income, his political affiliation, his religious faith, his criminal record if any, where he works, what his skills are, etc.

It is easy to see the value to a dictator of a master bank of information of every citizen within his domain. By this means he can mobilize the entire manpower and womanpower of his kingdom. He can keep tabs on the political activities of his subjects and subject to arrest and imprisonment all persons who he might feel are working against him or would be his

potential enemies. During the early part of his reign there is little doubt that he will avail himself of the full potential of science to control the activities of all citizens. This will probably be done quietly at the first. When the true nature of the dictator is revealed, it will be too late to thwart his evil purposes.

The Atomic Bomb

Two separate Western European powers today have access to and control the atomic bomb. One is NATO of which the Western countries and the U. S. are members. They are equipped with vast quantities of powerful bombs, as well as tactical nuclear weapons. France separately has developed the bomb. Hence the antichrist when he assumes power will fall heir to the control of nuclear weapons. But as we have noted, his policy at the beginning will appear benevolent. He will manifest great solicitude for the welfare of the nations that he dominates and until he reveals his true nature, the people will trust him and rest in a false security. But the hour is coming when he will call down fire from heaven. What is that, but the atomic bomb?

Chapter IV

The Rapture of the First Fruits

Sometime during the rise to power of the Beast of Revelation 13 the rapture of the first-fruit saints takes place. This subject is dealt with in our book *The Rapture*, and we shall not discuss it in detail here, except as it affects the activities of the Beast. The rapture is described in detail by Paul in I Thes. 4:13-17:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so we shall ever be with the Lord.”

That there is a first-fruit rapture and resurrection distinguished from the general harvest at the close of the Tribulation seems clear. Matt. 27:51-52 speaks of a first-fruit resurrection of Old Testament saints. Paul looked forward to an out-resurrection in his letter to the Philippians (Phil. 3:11, 14). Statements made by Jesus indicate that there will be those who escape the hour of temptation that will come upon the whole world:

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Luke 21:36).

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:10-11).

As we have said, we shall not go over this ground except to note the effect this epochal event will have upon the Beast kingdom and upon those left behind. For we are told some will be taken and others left:

“Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come” (Matt. 24: 40-42).

The Sun-clad Woman of Revelation 12 represents the saints of all dispensations. She represents Israel in the Old Testament days and largely the Church in the present age. She is shown in the heavenlies with the moon under foot. But when she gives birth to the Manchild who is caught up to heaven, we no longer see her in the heavenlies but upon earth. Her position of dominion and power radically changes. Instead of sitting in the

heavenlies she is now on earth and is fleeing to the wilderness in terror for her life (Rev. 12:5-6). As mentioned, it is not the province of this volume to follow events which will happen to the Woman during the Great Tribulation, but rather the effect the rapture of the Manchild (or the first-fruits) to heaven will have on those left behind and upon the strategy employed by the Beast, or antichrist.

It has been customary to suppose that the rapture will involve so many people, so many uncounted millions, that its impact upon the whole world will be overwhelming. Trains, planes, and automobiles, we are told, will suddenly lose their pilots or drivers, and a transportation crash will occur that in their cumulative effect will be considered a worldwide catastrophe. We believe the picture is greatly overdrawn. While the event will be strange and mystifying, a number of circumstances will largely reduce its dramatic effect. Satan, as can be imagined, is planning and hoping very much to confuse the issue.

In the first place, although every eye shall see Christ at His visible coming, the rapture of the first-fruits will be invisible to the world. For another thing, the population of the earth toward the close of this century may reach six or seven billion people. The number raptured will be comparatively small. Moreover, it is not generally realized that thousands of people disappear daily in America—husbands leaving their wives, children running away from home. Obviously, the rapture of the saints will create widespread surprise, but there will be many explanations besides the true one.

An example perhaps is the theory held by the flying saucer enthusiasts. They claim that because the world is in such grave danger of nuclear destruction, visitors from other planets are coming to earth to observe and to try to warn earth-dwellers, even to spirit them away from the danger. Books have been published by flying saucer enthusiasts which purport to tell how people already have been carried away to other planets by these visitors. Of course, the majority of people do not take these claims seriously. Nevertheless, popular magazines have carried hundreds of articles on the subject. Many books have been written about flying saucers and given wide circulation. There are probably over a million flying saucer fans who might explain the mystery of the rapture by connecting it with the flying saucer phenomena. (The writer met one man who in all seriousness

claimed to have ridden in a flying saucer 11 times!) This is only one example of explanations which will arise to confuse the issue.

Moreover, in the last few years literature on spiritism and sorcery under the guise of the euphonious names of psychic phenomena and scientific research, ESP, etc., is flooding the country. Vast numbers of people have had their curiosity aroused by these preternatural phenomena; and not being versed in the Scriptures, they are unable to distinguish the supernatural, which is of God, from the false. Indeed we hear of materialization, telecommunication, levitation, transportation of bodies—to mention only a few of the manifestations. People are becoming so mixed up and confused about these things that the disappearance of some saints would be regarded as merely one more manifestation of psychic phenomena. Indeed, the writer constantly receives letters in his office from well-informed people in other fields who suppose that psychic manifestations are actually true gifts of the Spirit in operation as recorded in I Corinthians 12-14.

Now the Beast, or antichrist, will use his power to the utmost to confuse the issue. He will seek as did the magicians of Moses' day to imitate or simulate divine miracles. It will be recalled that Moses performed a miracle of the rod's turning into a serpent, and the magicians were able to do likewise (Exod. 7:10-12). They were able also to turn water to blood with their enchantments (Exod. 7:20-22). As a result of this we are told that "Pharaoh's heart was hardened."

In fact, witchcraft in heathen lands has progressed to a degree that persons have been caused to vanish into thin air. A well-documented case is that of a boy in Manila. The phenomenon baffled the authorities until a minister with the power of God, Lester Sumrall, cast out the demon. What Satan has done once he will do again. The Beast's "coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (II Thes. 2:9). He will demonstrate his power and will no doubt be able to cause some persons under his power to vanish at will.

Not only the Beast but other false prophets will "shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24).

The effect of the rapture upon the world, therefore, we believe is overdrawn. The events attending the translation of Elijah should teach us some things. News of the event soon reached Bethel, but did it cause people to repent? Not at all. They thought it a hilarious joke. In fact, although the

sons of the prophets had witnessed the occurrence, their report was not taken seriously. Indeed 42 irreverent youths rushed out to meet

Elisha and to mock him. It is significant that the Beast's reign is 42 months long. The 42 youths mocked Elisha, saying, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head." The two beasts came out of the woods and "tare" the youths. Note: There are two beasts of Revelation 13 which will appear during the Great Tribulation that will destroy the peoples of the earth.

Most surprising of all in connection with this event is the fact that the sons of the prophets who witnessed Elijah's being taken up to heaven did not believe he actually reached there, but supposed that he was left by the Spirit on some mountain. Thus after they had revelation from God that Elijah would be taken away from Elisha (II Kings 2:3, 5), fifty sons of the prophets came to Elisha and sought permission to make a three-day search (Verse 17)! Does not this search of three days foreshadow the three years of the Great Tribulation in which search is made for the missing persons?

"And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not" (II Kings 2:16-17).

The sons of the prophets of course did not find Elijah. If they could make such a mistake, is it not likely that some people during the Tribulation will institute a search for the missing saints? They may, as the sons of the prophets, believe that they have been merely transported to another location!

As we have said, the antichrist himself will demonstrate great signs and lying wonders by which if it were possible he would deceive the very elect. Most remarkable of all will be his own pseudo-resurrection:

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast ... And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13:3-4).

Apparently the Beast was wounded unto death, and then came back to life again. Let us suppose that after the shooting of John Kennedy or his brother Robert Kennedy, one of them had quickly recovered from the fatal wounds. What effect would that have upon the masses? If they had said that God had given them life again so that they could fulfill their destiny, the effect would be almost incalculable. That apparently is what the Beast will

do. But his god is, of course, Satan. He gives him his power. So we are told, “they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast.”

Chapter V

The Rise of the Preternatural

We have already referred to the current and unprecedented rise of sorcery in our land, as well as in other nations. There seems to have been in recent years an extra effusion of demons from the pit, and these spirits of darkness are responsible for the accelerated manifestations of all kinds of spiritist phenomena. Professed religious people who have rejected the supernatural, or the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, are more and more becoming believers in the preternatural. This was the case of Dr. James Pike. He repudiated the miracles of the Bible; but when he was brought into contact with spiritist phenomena, he fell for it at once.

Now the antichrist receiving his power from Satan will manifest powers beyond the human. Daniel speaks of “a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power” (Dan. 8:23-24). In previous years a man of this nature would have been suspect and hardly have been accepted by people. Indeed in olden times those who wielded dark powers were often burned as witches; but since the late world war there has been a veritable flood of sorcery in the land, until at length people are beginning to take these things for granted. The way is, therefore, being prepared for the man of sin who will come with all power and signs and lying wonders, and the people will believe him.

That this is true is clear when we consider the case of Jeane Dixon. A few decades ago she would not have been taken seriously, and two or three centuries ago she would have been considered a witch; but now she is acclaimed as a prophetess and is quite popular with many people.

Jeane Dixon has some very interesting things to say in the book *A Gift of Prophecy* by her biographer, Mrs. Ruth Montgomery. Mrs. Dixon predicts the coming great world holocaust, which of course Bible-reading Christians know is coming. Of crucial significance is her prediction of the rise of a dynamic world leader some time in the 1980's. According to her, he will found a new Christianity which will bring all mankind into one all-embracing faith. This personage she says, “is the answer to the prayers of a

troubled world.” She adds that “his power will grow until 1999, at which time peace will be established on the earth.”

The present writer felt obligated to refute this teaching, and in his book *The Mystery of Jeane Dixon, Prophetess or Psychic Medium?*, he points out that this “great leader” far from being “the answer to the prayers of a troubled world,” will be none other than the antichrist. We received correspondence from Mrs. Dixon that she had been misunderstood and that now she agrees that her vision actually came from the devil, and the man in question is indeed the antichrist! We are glad that she has awakened to her error. Nevertheless, she still continues her astrology column, one of the black arts condemned by the Scriptures (Isa. 47:12- 14). We shall have more to say about Jeane Dixon later.

The Rise of Satan Worship

A few years ago it would have seemed absurd to predict that Satan worship would become an accepted thing in America. Yet in the year 1966 one Anton Szandor La Vey founded the first Satanic Church in San Francisco, dedicated to indulgence, sex, and vengeance and all sins. The *National Observer* (Oct. 13, 1969) gives this description of La Vey’s church:

“Inside the black-painted house on California Street, a visitor is shown to a fully-lighted living room with solid-black walls and a hell-fire red ceiling. A stuffed owl peers from atop a black coffin that stands on end beside a stone fireplace. The mantle of the fireplace, the visitor is informed, holds ‘the vital living altar—a voluptuous nude priestess who reclines there during the church services.’

“The 30-year-old high priest, with his shaved skull, mustache drooping into a pointed goatee, bears a striking resemblance to the popular image of Lucifer himself. He boasts that his church now has many card-carrying members and 10 U.S. branches.

“Mr. La Vey has little patience with do-gooder witches; he preaches evil and wields black magic with abandon. A part of each ceremony is devoted to personal requests, and somebody always asks for a curse against some unknown victim.”

Newsweek (April 13, 1970) gives a detailed account of the rise of “the cult of the occult,” which is fast spreading over America:

“Interest in the occult for decades the domain of tiny coteries, has suddenly emerged as a mass phenomenon in the United States. Increasing thousands of Americans are now active practitioners of witchcraft, spiritualism, magic and even devil worship. A book about clairvoyant Jeane Dixon, *A Gift of Prophecy*, has sold over three million copies.

“Those with an ear to the youth underground detected the craze coming a few years ago, when the language of magic entered the hippie vocabulary. Ouija boards turned up in Manhattan’s East Village, and rumors of black masses began to flit around the campuses. Astrology and numerology became cocktail party amenities into a typing-pool conversation piece. The 1968 film, *Rosemary’s Baby* won a wide audience for its nightmare of witchcraft and evil. And last year when Charles Manson’s satanic ‘family’ hit the headlines, the public realized that the gulf between fantasy and contemporary practice was narrower than it had assumed.

“San Francisco’s Church of Satan, for example, has a reputation for orgy and mad perversity in the middle class neighborhood where it is located. It shows interested spectators a film called *Satanis* which purportedly reflects the church’s rituals—black-robed men and women conducting a black mass (a mocking inversion of Christian mass) with a nude woman for an altar.”

A flood of psychic material is filling the shelves of the bookstores. Spiritism is having an unprecedented revival. All forms of psychic phenomena are being publicized as never before. The Apostle Paul speaks of the sorceries of the Gentiles and labels them as demon worship:

“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils” (I Cor. 10:20-21).

Elsewhere the apostle speaks of people in the last days departing from the faith and giving heed to these demons:

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (I Tim. 4:1).

Perhaps the most publicized form of psychic activity which is attracting great numbers of people is divination which goes under various names of spiritism, telepathy, ESP, clairvoyance, hypnotic trance, etc. That Paul identifies divination with demon activity is clear from Acts 16:

“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour” (Acts 16:16-18).

When the evil spirits were cast out of the girl, there was no more divination. The Scriptures give a most solemn warning against trafficking with these spirits. Saul came into condemnation for his consulting with a witch:

“So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it” (I Chron. 10:13).

This is not the place for an extended discussion of sorcery; we have dealt with these subjects in detail in other volumes. Nevertheless, it is relevant to our subject, and we have called attention to the present craze because it is conditioning people to tolerate, if not actually embrace, some of the practices of sorcery. Once people come under the influence of evil powers, they are ready to delve deeper and deeper into the mysteries of the occult. Thus when they are completely snared by its fascination, and the antichrist appears on the scene with his lying wonders, his knowledge of the occult, and his understanding of dark sentences, the people will be ready to

receive him. It will be the hour of the great delusion as Paul tells us in II Thes. 2:8-12:

“And then shall that Wicked 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 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 strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Chapter VI

The End of the First Three and a Half Years of the Antichrist's Reign

Three and a half years have gone by since the antichrist made his covenant with Israel. These have been years fraught with events of world-shaking importance. The peoples of the earth have been in a state of intense suspense. Despite their fears and misgivings, until now the world holocaust had been averted. The antichrist has dominated the scene and has kept things under his control. The situation seemingly has turned out better than was expected. Europe as a whole will be prepared to tolerate a strong man at the helm.

Let us now summarize the circumstances which have caused the nations to feel a sense of security—but false security as we shall see. Indeed, the quiet is the hush before the battle, the calm before the storm. The worst storm the world will ever witness is brewing and is about to break in all its fury. But first—

1. The Israel problem will seem to have been solved.

Today the most difficult problem the world faces is that of Israel. Political analysts and experts have repeated again and again that the situation in the Middle East seems insoluble. The interests of the two sides seem to be altogether irreconcilable. The only possible solution would be for some power that is strong enough to force a solution to merge. The antichrist is that man. He will lay out a plan and demand that his decrees be obeyed. The parties involved will have no choice but to comply with his will. Remarkably enough, his solution will seem to favor Israel. Since America is a friend to Israel, she will see no reason for being against the antichrist's plan. He will find some solution that will pacify the Arabs, although it will probably not satisfy them. But they will have no choice except to go along.

2. Agreement with Russia.

In the settlement with Russia, the antichrist will probably make concessions and will work out some kind of agreement in which he and Russia will share the spheres of influence. This agreement will continue for

a time, although in the end the “clay and iron” of Nebuchadnezzar’s image will not mix. The future break in the Beast power will no doubt lead to Armageddon, but for the time being there will be agreement.

This rapprochement will cause mixed emotions in America. At first she will be pleased that a strong power has arisen in Europe to offset the power of Communist Russia. When Communism and Fascism come to an accommodation, it will probably cause the same fear to arise as was the case in World War II when Hitler and Stalin suddenly came to an agreement, an event which precipitated World War II.

Apparently the agreement with Russia will calm the fears of the masses of Europe and Asia, and they will look upon it as a good omen. How little do they realize the true direction that events are carrying them!

3. The antichrist will put down anarchy.

The antichrist will be the lawless one; yet he will tolerate no challenging of his authority. He will be a dictator in every sense of the word. Protestors, anarchists, revolutionaries, opponents of the regime will be dealt with so sternly that others will be discouraged. In fact, any opposition will be forced to go underground; but as we shall see, there will be little chance for an underground. Modern science has given the antichrist such tools as the computer, which make it possible for his henchmen to be able to keep track on every individual within the bounds of his kingdom. The Scriptures explicitly state that a special mark will be given every person to identify him and to show whether or not he is loyal to the state. On the whole the people who have experienced years of tumults, riots, disorders, and uprisings will welcome a regime that will be able to enforce the law and order. They will not be too particular to consider where it will lead.

4. The antichrist will solve economic problems.

Civilization as it is now constituted depends on economic stability. In previous generations when hard times came, the people could fall back on the land. They could grow all the food they needed and could get along until times got better. The economic situation of the nations has radically changed. Most people now live in the cities. Small farmers can no longer compete with the big corporations; they have had to leave the farm. Most of the people work in factories, offices, or stores, or for the big corporations.

They are dependent on their paycheck for the next week’s survival. A serious depression throwing large numbers out of work as was the case of

the thirties would soon result in extreme hardship, with riots and disorders of the most serious kind. The antichrist will “cause craft to prosper.” This is an extremely vital matter to the masses. It has been proved that a man with a starving family will, if necessary, exchange his liberty for bread. The Common Market in Europe is providing an integrated economic system that will no doubt lead toward political unity in Europe. It is the framework undoubtedly upon which the antichrist will operate.

5. *The antichrist will play for the cooperation of the Roman Catholic Church.*

The antichrist in his rise to power will not be against religion. He will feign to be its friend. He will be ecumenical and will call for a united church, an amalgamation or accommodation of the Catholic and Protestant bodies. As we have seen, already the World Council of Churches has advanced far in the direction of a United Protestant Church. The Catholic Church after some far-reaching changes has already made certain overtures for a return of “the separated brethren.”

Revelation 17 shows that a united Christendom will accept the patronage of the antichrist. The Harlot Woman as Babylon the Great rides the Beast and enjoys its protection. Thus the antichrist is more cunning than Hitler whose hatred for the Jews showed forth even before he came to power. The antichrist will feign friendship for the church during the time he is consolidating his power. And the nominal church, all unaware of his hidden intent, is led into a steel trap from which it will be unable to extricate itself. The hour will come when the antichrist will turn against the church and order it destroyed, even as Hitler did the Jews. That occurs toward the end of his reign. In the meantime he shows himself as a friend to the church, and indeed by this means succeeds in securing the confidence of the masses.

6. *He shows himself a military genius.*

As we have seen, not all nations will bow under the antichrist's will. Lightning blitzkriegs will crush the opposition. And the antichrist will appear as a master military strategist. “Who can make war with the beast?” the world will say. The Communist nations will take notice; for a time there will be an uneasy peace, though the pot will be boiling underneath.

Chapter VII

Other Events Around the World

What of America during this time? We have already mentioned that many in the U. S. will witness these developments with deep foreboding. Many of course will lean toward socialism or dream of a world government and will eagerly approve all as they see the clay of Communism and the iron of Fascism reach an understanding. They will believe that the tensions of the world are eased, that their crusade for world government has borne fruit; but others who see such enormous powers being concentrated in the hands of one man can only foresee grave trouble ahead.

In America enough people are familiar with Bible prophecy to spread dire warnings of the nature of Europe's dictator. He is labeled in no uncertain terms as the antichrist. They see in him another Adolph Hitler who, instead of seeking to exterminate only the Jews, will throw off his mask at the appointed time and will seek to enslave the world, and that all those who resist him will be ruthlessly liquidated. Others who are ignorant of the Scriptures or who do not take the Bible seriously will consider these persons as doomsday prophets and will deride their fears.

Their complacency, however, will not be shared by the whole nation. Events have taken on an apocalyptic nature, and a growing sense of fear and foreboding will occupy the minds of all except the most optimistic. False prophets will arise as they did in the days of Jeremiah to predict peace (read Jer. 28), but they will not succeed in allaying the fears of the populace. Luke 21:25-26 describes the general state of the feelings of the people: "... upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth...." As for the peaceniks who prophesy peace, I Thes. 5:3 describes what will happen: "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

The believer who knows his Bible, while sharing with others the anxieties and apprehensions, will understand by the prophecies that these things must come to pass. He has been warned by the Lord that "when these

things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28). The rapture of the firstfruits will certainly make a great stir among Christendom which in general is not ready for the coming of the Bridegroom.

Two powerful trends will affect America at this time. Among true believers there will be a deepening of personal experience. The anticipation that Christ’s coming is at hand will result in a greater consecration. There will be a mighty outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh, as Joel 2:28-29 declared:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.”

This revival will continue to spread to hungry hearts in all denominations, Protestant and Catholic alike. It is the last of the latter rain which ripens the harvest. It will be the greatest revival of all time and the final one. From all groups and denominations will assemble the army of the Lord, an army filled with the Spirit. It is the true Philadelphia Church to whom Christ gave the promise.

“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man may take thy crown” (Rev. 3:10-11).

Yet with this great revival there will be an opposite trend of deepening apostasy. The theory of Darwinian evolution, Satan’s masterpiece, which teaches that all mankind, including Jesus Christ, has descended from the brute beast, flatly denies the Bible account of creation and that man was created in the image of God. It will be the hour of gross delusion. In the confusion every kind of deceptive teaching will appear to draw away disciples from the church.

The significance of this teaching of evolution is not lost on youth. If men are descendants of the brute beast, the Bible account of creation becomes a myth; its warnings of divine judgment are false. The promise of an after-life is all a delusion. The cry is, “Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.” The teachings going forth from modernist pulpits are in accord with that philosophy. Peter foretold this in his epistle written 1900 years ago:

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of” (II Pet. 2:1-2).

The Laodicean church will include many of these false teachers who bring in their damnable heresies. The “God is dead” theory propounded by one Thomas J. Altizer, a man described as “smoking black cigars” is but one. He is a little bolder than the rest in his blasphemies. This promoter of Christian atheism says, “The God one prays to in church on Sunday mornings—the old man in the sky is dead. As we move into the twentieth century, God ceases to be real, actually present in the life of man, including faithful men, including Christians.” Altizer backs up his philosophy by quoting, of all men, atheist Nietzsche, from whose writings the monster Adolph Hitler got his inspiration. The answer to this Satanic delusion that God is dead are the words of Christ in Revelation 1:18 in which He says, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death.” Christ is alive, not dead!

As the world prepares for the worship of the antichrist and the one who gives him his power, Satan, wicked men sitting in the courts—men utterly ignorant of the Word of God—by a series of judicial decisions seek to detach America from public worship of God. This is in defiance of the Constitution, as Justice Potter Stewart, the dissenting justice, pointed out in his minority report, “that the First Amendment requires that Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” These men have forbidden both Bible reading and prayer in the schools. On the other hand, the teachings of the atheist Nietzsche, Darwin’s Bible-denying evolution, and all other substitutes for true religion are still permitted free course in the schools. Many people, even clergymen, have overlooked the ominous significance of the Supreme Court’s decision. It was claimed that the school prayers were only a form and, therefore, meaningless. But they missed the point altogether. The brief prayer in the schools was the one contact the youngsters had who came from non-Christian homes. When the Court struck out prayer as being of questionable value in the schools, the act could not fail to have a definite effect upon young minds.

An accurate description of the majority of the lawyers of our present Supreme Court is found in Luke 11:52:

“Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.”

The key of knowledge of course is the Bible. Those lawyers, having not themselves entered into the truths of that great Book, have now actually

hindered the children and young people that would have benefited by its teachings in our schools and colleges.

One of the first things that the Communist revolution did in Russia was to suppress or severely limit public worship. The older folk were permitted to continue their religious exercises, but every effort was made to prevent the youth from receiving religious training. Today Russia is a nation of atheists. If

America cannot see the handwriting on the wall in these fateful Supreme Court decisions, she is blind indeed. The nation is becoming rapidly secularized. It is rapidly moving toward that hour of the Great Tribulation, which is the theme of the next volume of the series.