***The Red Dragon

RV153-01***

We are studying Revelation 11:19 through Revelation 12:6. Our subject is "Tribulation Personalities." This is segment number six.

**Anti-Semitism**

The apostle John, at this point in his vision, has been introduced by Jesus Christ to some of the prominent personalities who will take part in the final drama of the tribulation era. This is a set of parentheses. These personalities are being introduced one-at-a-time. First of all, John sees the figure of a woman who is associated with certain features which identify her as the nation Israel. This woman is portrayed as being in great suffering, as if she were in the labor pains of childbirth. This picture symbolizes the suffering of the Jewish people over the centuries from anti-Semitism brought down upon them by Satan himself.

Throughout history, some gentile nations have treated the Jews with justice and with kindness, and they have received the blessing of God. Other gentile nations have treated the Jew unjustly and with persecution, and they have come under the curse of God. The ultimate source of anti-Semitism in the world is Satan, who is trying to frustrate God's decree of providing salvation through the Jewish people. From the promise that a Savior would be born through a woman (given in Genesis 3:15), Satan tried in a variety of ways to prevent the birth of the God-man Jesus Christ. Satan tried to kill all of the Jews to make it impossible for Jesus Christ to be born as a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. After the birth of Jesus, Satan tried to lead the Lord personally into sin to do the same thing that the first Adam had done – to subject Himself to Satan, and to worship him. On many occasions, Satan tried to bring the enemies of Jesus upon the Lord to try to kill Him. On occasion, Satan indeed came very close to achieving his goal of destroying the Savior and the line of the Messiah. However, God always denied him the victory.

**The Arab World**

With the final victory of Jesus Christ over Satan on the cross, Satan, in frustration and in anger now, seeks to take vengeance on the Jewish people by promoting intense anti-Semitism. Today, the little nation of Israel is once more the focus of world attention and of world antagonism. The Arab world, motivated by Satan, seeks to destroy the Jewish state of Israel. Arabs claim, amazingly, believe it or not, that the promise of a Savior to Abraham, and of blessings upon the nation, was through the son Ishmael, not through the son Isaac. The Arabs sincerely believe, as the Koran teaches them, that God's chosen son was Ishmael, not Isaac – that Isaac was the rejected son; that Ishmael was the accepted son; and, therefore, the Arabs are the chosen people of God. The Arabs are the object of God's blessing. Muhammad was very careful to point out, and to arrange in the Koran, that most of the Scriptures were to be rejected, so that he could limit the Scriptures to something to establish his claim for Ishmael.

**Ishmael**

Therefore, having accepted the fact that the Jews do not have a line of blessing through Isaac, the Jews are a nothing people. Therefore, any persecution of the Jews, and any destruction of the Jews, is perfectly acceptable to God, because He doesn't care about them. His concern is for the people of Ishmael. The Arabs are not wild crazies. They have a logical doctrinal basis for what they are doing, and that is this conception that Ishmael is the line of blessing.

**Satan**

Well, Satan is now in a frenzy to destroy the Jews, and to prevent the one thing that is still ahead – Jewish people in non-glorified bodies (in regular human bodies), where they can enter into the ordinary relationships of life: marriage; and, having children. God needs people of the Jewish race in the Millennial Kingdom who have bodies which have not been glorified. So, Satan is now out once more to destroy the Jewish people in order to prevent a Jewish Millennial Kingdom on this earth, because once that happens, he is going to be cast into the lake of fire. He must, at all costs now, somehow, prevent the millennium from taking place.

His last great effort to do this, of course, will be through the antichrist during the tribulation seven-year period. The Jews today are more and more isolated as a people. Sadly enough, even the United States is lessening its support for them. But it is even sadder to realize that some false doctrine in the Christian community concerning the return of Christ, and the setting up of His Millennial Kingdom, is contributing in a major way to anti-Semitism.

The Bible never teaches that God has abandoned the Jewish people; that He ever will; or, that He has replaced the nation of Israel with the church. If that is the case, then the Jew is no longer under the special care of God. You've heard about Dominion Theology. You've heard about a variation of the concept of postmillennialism – that Christianity is going to take over the power structures of the world. There are some very prominent theologians who are teaching this now – the concept of Christians taking over the world for Christ, and that the result of that is going to be that at the end of that conquest by Christianity, the world will get better and better, and then Jesus Christ will return.

There are some Christians who've gotten way off on false doctrine relative to the millennium. Some of them have sat in this auditorium, and who have been taught better, and who will for all eternity pay a very serious price for the fact that they have deviated from biblical truth. They chose to believe a lie.

One man told me one time that he stood out in our gym foyer, and another man, who had been here for a long time, and had gotten a lot of instruction, said, "We're wrong here at Berean Church. We're in the millennium now." He said, "What did you say?" He said, "We're in the millennium now. We are taking over this nation. Christian forces are moving to the front. Don't you see it? It's all around us. We're on the wrong track here."

Well, if that is true, and if the Jews have been rejected and the church is the kingdom of God, then who cares about the Jews? Who is to get upset because Hitler wanted to go around killing millions of Jews? Do you see the point? Amillennialism has the concept that there is no earthly kingdom ahead, because the Jew has been cast aside by God, and the church has replaced him. Postmillennialism has the concept that there will be no earthly kingdom, but that the world will become better and better through the gospel, and then Christ will return to bring in eternity. Both of those concepts reject the Jew. There is no need for the Jew anymore. The result is that out of the Christian community itself is coming a powerful basis for anti-Semitism.

The Bible never teaches that God has abandoned the Jewish people and replaced it with the church. The Bible never teaches that God has rescinded His promise to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant. If you make that mistake, you have fallen into a very serious error.

Now, how in the world can this happen? You read the Bible; I read the Bible; and, these people read the Bible. How can they come to a conclusion like that? How could anybody sit in this auditorium and stand in that foyer and say that we're in the millennium?

**Origen**

This problem of anti-Semitism within Christianity, believe it or not, began with a simple fracture of a principle of interpretation. During the first 200 years of Christianity, the Bible was interpreted on the basis of the literal meaning of the words which God the Holy Spirit had used. But at the beginning of the third century, the literal method of interpretation was challenged by a man named Origen. Origen was a prominent teacher of theology and philosophy in Alexandria, Egypt. He lived from 185 to 254 A.D. Origen was born to Christian parents in Alexandria, Egypt in 185 A.D. His father, Leonides, was a devoted Christian who took time to teach his son Scripture. And Origen proved to be an apt pupil. I want you to understand that Origen was not a flake. He was not some cultist. He was a devoted Christian, and was well-taught by his father.

His father was such a devoted Christian that he came under the persecution of the Roman government and was put in prison for his faith. His son wanted to join him there, but was prevented from doing so, and so settled for writing letters encouraging his father to stand firm and true to the Lord. The Father in time was executed, and Origen became the main support of his mother and six younger brothers. Origen was a gifted teacher of Scripture, and even though he was a layman, there were occasions when he was teaching bishops and church leaders who wanted to know the Scriptures better. In fact, he became so prominent in that, that the leading bishop told him to cease and desist, because he didn't think it was proper for a layman to be teaching preachers. Origen did not cooperate, so he excommunicated Origen. Origen died in 254 A.D. as the result of injuries which he had received five years previous during the Decian persecution of Christians.

Here was the problem that this devoted Christian man had. I tell you about Origen and his background so that you'll know how easy it is for a sincere Christian who really loves the Lord, and who is really seeking the truth, to deviate at a certain point, and go far off-field. It is a threat to each of us each day of our lives. I have seen, in over three decades of ministry at Berean Church, a long trail of destroyed Christians – debris by the side of the road. They still sit there whimpering and writhing in their agonies because they never are able to get back on the track, because they went off on some little deviant of doctrine that was not justified by Scripture. And Satan had them, and they became spiritual casualties.

**Plato**

In the case of origin, he fell in love with the teachings of an Athenian philosopher named Plato, who lived from 427 to 347 B.C. And Origen began reinterpreting the Bible so that it would be compatible with the teachings of this Greek philosopher, Plato. Plato taught basically that there were two worlds: the world of ideas; and, the world of material things. He said that the world of material things was not real. It was a mere copy of the spiritual world.

**Christian Science**

Now, if that sounds like Christian Science to you, that's exactly what it is. Christian Science says that the material world is not real. I'm not real. You're not real. Mr. Holt is not sitting there. That's just an illusion. He's a delusion, and you're an illusion, or something like that. The material is not there.

In Christian Science, a little boy lived down the street from a lady who was in Christian Science, and she always said that these material things were not real. One day she got sick, and she said, "No, I'm not sick. That's just an illusion. That's not real." One afternoon, he came running home to his mother and he said, "Mother, do you know Mrs Jones down the street, who didn't think she was sick? Well, now she doesn't think she's dead," because her illness carried her to the logical reality of death. But Christian Science says, "No, that's just an illusion. There is no death. It's mortal evil. The real world is out there."

Plato concluded that the reality was out there, and everything else was an illusion. He also said that the material world was evil: "Things are evil, but the spiritual world is where things are good."

Perhaps you remember when we had the films by Francis Schaeffer where he showed the picture of the philosophers of Athens or the wise men of Athens. There in the center he had Plato and Aristotle. He had Plato pointed upward, and Aristotle pointing downward. That was because the philosophy of Aristotle was that the material world is where it's at. This is the reality. With Plato, the reality was above – the spiritual world. That was the whole message in that portrait.

Plato said spiritual things are good, and material things are evil. The idea of God is a spiritual idea. That's the ultimate good. He also taught the preexistence of the human soul, before its union to the body. That you think that that sounds like Mormonism, you're right. That's exactly where Joseph Smith got it &n dash; that all souls are preexistent. And that's why Mormonism then followed the next conclusion: you have to have lots of wives so that you can get lots of bodies created, so that these poor souls, who are sitting out there waiting to get a body to prove themselves worthy of eternity with their Heavenly Father, can be joined to a body. Plato said, "We have to have bodies for these souls. These souls are preexistent, but they become contaminated by the evil of the body. So, they must escape the body so that they can return to their righteousness."

**Asceticism**

How do you do this? Well, Plato said that the soul redeems itself by contemplation of God, and by asceticism – punishing your body, not doing anything that satisfies the body. Well, this led to the repression of all legitimate sensual desires. And its ultimate expression was, of course, the convent and the monastery of the medieval church.

**Purgatory**

When these souls redeem themselves by their contemplation of God and by asceticism, they will enter a heavenly vision of eternal beauty and goodness, and that is, for them, heaven. Plato said that the non-redeemed souls will suffer punishment for a time, but he said that the punishment won't go on forever. If that sounds like purgatory to you, that's exactly it. That's where the idea came from – that souls will be punished only for a time, until they have served a certain period of penance, and then they will be released. However, as the result of his experiences with people, Origen said that some souls are so bad that they are beyond being redeemed.

**Reincarnation**

One of the other things that are rather that Plato taught was reincarnation – that you come back as a human being in another life. You keep coming back. So, death is denied, and resurrection is removed. Origen taught what is commonly brought now into the New Age movement. Reincarnation is the way that you deal with your evil. You come back and get another shot at it.

Origen viewed the philosophy of Plato as the light that God gave through human reason by which we can understand the Scripture. That's what his mistake was. He said that God gave Plato the word. Origen called this the "logos," which is the Greek word for "word," which is what Jesus called Himself. He called Himself, "I am the Word." John begins his gospel: "In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God; and, the Word was God." The Greek word is "logos." He said that this "logos" (this concept of God – this God-like quality) is what is possessed by the philosophers. God has given them truth to illuminate Scripture. And by this, he meant that there were hidden meanings below the words of Scripture, and the philosophers had the key.

**Mary Baker Eddy**

That sounds like Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy of Christian Science. That is exactly it. She called herself the Holy Spirit, who had the keys to Scripture. She had the opening of the understanding of what Scripture had to say, because what Mary Baker Eddy said was that the words don't tell you what God thinks: "What God thinks is underneath, and I've got the key. You people who want to know what the real truth is – you join up with me, and, I'll tell you." This is the same idea that Origen fell into here – a really godly, sincere Christian man.

This led to a maze of doctrinal speculation which simply were not justified by the literal reading of Scripture. The mistake that Origen made was that Platonic philosophy prepares the mind for the light of Scripture.

**Three Meanings of Scripture**

So, Origen decided that the Bible had three meanings. A passage in the Scripture had to be interpreted in three ways. There was, first of all, the literal meaning of the words. That was for you simple folks. He said that God uses the literal meaning to hide the real deep meaning from spiritual swine. The pearls of the deep meaning of the Word of God were to be hidden from spiritual swine. However, he said that some literal must, by reason, be totally rejected as false, which is the liberal view of how to look at a Bible that has mistakes in it. Even, Origen said that some literal meanings are just beyond human reason to accept. The second meaning, he said, was the moral meaning of the words. This is to guide in relationships with God and man. Then he said that the third meaning (that's where it's at) is the spiritual meaning. Here are to be found the deep truths for mature folks. And out of that, obviously, came speculative theology, where you look beneath the meaning of the words, and you start saying that the words don't mean what they say. Then you can begin speculating.

It's like when I was at Baylor University, speaking to the head of the Bible department, who was trying to explain to me that there was no future for the Jewish people on this earth, and that God was not going to put up a kingdom upon this earth based in Jerusalem under the Jewish people, which would be ruled by Jesus Christ. I said, "Well, what about when Revelation says, "He's going to reign for 1,000 years on this earth in such a kingdom?" He said, "Oh, John that does not mean an actual 1,000 years. That's like when you say, 'I have so much to do, it's going to take me 100 years to get all this stuff done.'" What was he doing? He's playing Origen. He was saying that the true meaning of that 1,000 years was hidden beneath those literal words, and it had a spiritual significance.

Where do you go when you start interpreting the Bible like that? You go wherever your mind wants to take you. That's why there is no consistent agreement with amillennialists or postmillennialists about what the Bible means. It's everybody's opinion, because the words do not restrict you in what you say that God believes (what God has said).

**The Allegorical Method of Interpretation**

So, Origen systematized what we call the allegorical method of interpretation, or the spiritualizing method of interpretation. He looked for the real message of God beneath the words, and he devised a system of interpreting the Bible for one purpose. He knew that if he took the teachings of Plato on the surface, then the Bible condemned what Plato taught. So, he devised this method so that he could say, "Here's what Plato really meant, and here's what the Bible really means, and they mesh together. And he created a system of theology, which is what is the curse of the Roman Catholic Church to this day – that the concepts of Greek philosophy have been transformed into doctrinal principles of Scripture. That's why it's hard for us to understand where a lot of things that Catholics believe come from. They came from these Greek philosophers, and they were transformed by the church into biblical doctrine. So, Origen devised this system. He was a sincere man. He introduced this into Christianity. And, boy, did it take off!

After the third century, the whole church followed his allegorical system of interpretation, and the can of worms had been opened, and nobody could close it again. The result was that it completely destroyed the meaning of prophecy, and it completely destroyed the separation between Israel (as God's earthly people with a totally distinct program) and the church (God's heavenly people with a totally distinct plan).

Well, the effect for the Jews was this: The allegorical method of interpretation had destroyed the Jews' prophetic future. Roman Catholic theologians followed this system of Origen. They abandoned the meaning of God's covenant promises to the Jews, and they began to spiritualize them away.

I once asked a student in the Bible department at Baylor, who was an amillennialist: "Well, tell me. How do you deal with the fact that God said to the Jewish people, 'I'm going to give you a land?' He promised this to Abraham; he reiterated it in the Palestinian Covenant; and, he said, 'I am going to give you a land, and it will be yours forever.' How can that apply to those of us who are members of the church, the body of Christ?" He said, "Well, don't you think that the United States is your land that God has given you?" What was he doing? He was playing Origen. That's not what the Bible meant. The Bible never was saying, "I'm going to give some of you folks the United States; some of you folks Germany; and, some of your folks Ireland. That will be your native land. He was speaking very explicitly to the Jewish people about a strip of land on the Mediterranean Sea.

The Roman Catholic theologians completely gutted the promises to the Jews. They concluded, therefore, that the church had forever replaced the Jew as the true Israel of God. And all of the rights of the Abrahamic Covenant now belonged to Christians. Understand that. They said that the church was now the true Israel of God. You will never find that in the Bible. You will never find Christians called the Israel of God. The church was now the true Israel of God, and therefore, all of the blessings promised to the Jews in the Old Testament came to the gentile Christians. However, you will also notice that these same people never bring on the curses that were also promised to the Jews for their failure to obey the Word of God.

They taught that the Jews, therefore, were no longer the chosen people of God. They would never enjoy an earthly kingdom under the Messiah King. Therefore, the Jews were an irrelevant people in the world. These conclusions could only be reached by a non-literal interpretation of the Scripture, which is what Origen interjected, and which is the basis of amillennialism and of postmillennialism today. The substitution of the church for Israel in God's program removed the Jew from special divine protection. Therefore, the argument was that we need not worry how anybody treats the Jews, because the Jew is no longer God's covenant people.

Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church developed a great contempt for the Jew, and the Jew was viewed as an impostor who was trying to claim a special place with God which belong to them, the church. The Jews were seen as unrepentant Christ-killers, and, as a people, they were determined to retain their separateness and their distinctiveness as a race waiting for the Messiah to come. The church had evolved from a Jewish background, and was therefore the new Israel of God. The Roman Catholic Church said that the Jews were spiritually blind, and therefore, they were arrogant, and they had no right to exist as a special people.

So, this allegorical interpretation of prophecy, which dismissed the Jew, led very easily into anti-Semitism. This is the basis for the hatred against the Jews today, in view of the fact that you can read Genesis 12:3 where God says, "If you attack the Jew, then you come under My curse; and, if you treat the Jew right, you come under My blessing." What do these people say? They say, "It doesn't apply. That's not applicable anymore. God has dismissed the Jewish people."

**Augustine**

Well, this led to certain doctrinal conclusions. Along came the great church leader, Augustine, who lived from 354 to 425 A.D. He was the Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. Origen's spiritualizing method of interpretation was completely dominant in the medieval church. Augustine organized these allegorical conclusions into a theological system which came to be known as amillennialism. He said that there was no millennium at all. When the Protestant reformers came along, they kept the Roman Catholic system of amillennialism. That's why most of the people in churches today, that you're acquainted with, are all amillennialists who don't believe that Jesus is ever going to come to reign on this earth.

The Roman Catholics themselves claim to be the direct recipients of God's covenant promises to Israel. Therefore, they felt that they could dominate the political realm as well as the spiritual realm, because under the Jewish system, it was a theocracy. The leaders of Israel were dominant in both spiritual and political matters. The Roman Catholic Church, therefore, dominated all nations, and oppressed biblical Christians who refused to follow the work system of Roman Catholicism for salvation.

Well, this view of prophecy was a total departure from what we read in the New Testament, and the looking for the imminent return of Jesus Christ to set up His kingdom on this earth. The apostolic fathers of the New Testament church believed that the Jews must be saved by faith in Christ, but that they still had a future as a nation. Before Origen, the people who followed the apostles are called the apostolic fathers. Some of them were direct students of the apostles before they died. Every one of them, in every writing that they have, indicated that the Jews are God's chosen people; that the Jews have a future; and, that the Jews are going to have a kingdom upon this earth. It wasn't until Origen messed things up that they changed their mind about that.

So, that tells us that for the first 250 years of Christianity, everybody was a premillennialist. Everybody expected Jesus Christ to come before the millennium and set up that kingdom, and they were waiting for His return to set up this earthly kingdom. They taught that the Jews would be restored as a nation, and that they would realize all of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, but that would come after the rapture of the church. They understood that God was doing something special – the church, but it was not part of Israel.

So, the Lord is going to come back at his Second Coming. He will restore the Jewish theocratic kingdom.

These early church fathers also expected a seven-year period of tribulation under an antichrist who would have magical powers. This is amazing. I've done this with you before. We have tapes on this, where I've read to you the writings of these apostolic fathers, where they are so explicit: "There is a kingdom coming. Jesus will rule on this earth. There's going to be 1,000 years. The church is going to be removed." They've got it all. Yet, once Origen came on the scene, and said, "Let's interpret the Bible spiritually instead of literally," the groundwork was laid for the intense hatred and antagonism toward the Jewish people, and the anti-Semitism that Satan has promoted.

Well, the church fathers who succeeded these apostolic fathers held these premillennial dispensational views even after 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed. It wasn't until the beginning of the fourth century that this began to change.

So, today we have a group of Christian called Reconstructionists. They're called the dominionists, and they call themselves Kingdom Now. They're led by some prominent people like Gary North, who is a financial news adviser, and himself a minister and a seminary graduate – a Presbyterian. As a Presbyterian, naturally, he is an amillennialist. But reconstruction means reconstructing American society according to Biblical principles. Dominionism means that Christians are going to dominate society, and be elected to political office. Kingdom Now means that we are in the millennial kingdom. We are in the kingdom of God, and it's happening now.

The Christians of the first three centuries recognized that this was not the case, and these very movements now are contributing to the attack on the Jew. The beliefs resulting from Origen's non-literal interpretation have brought a great deal of suffering to the Jewish people. They are being treated as forever rejected. And then, when Constantine, the Roman emperor, made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire, Christians claimed political power as well as spiritual power. Then they were really after the Jewish people.

**The Crusades**

By the fifth century, the Roman Catholic Church considered itself the rightful owner even of the Promised Land. And they said, "What are you Jews doing in our country? We, the church, own the Promised Land. God has rejected you. You have no business in Palestine." They looked at the followers of Muhammad, and they said, "Where do you Muslims get off living in our Promised Land? It belongs to the church." So, what happened? One of the popes said, "I call upon all godly Christian men from all over the realms of the Christian empire to rally to a crusade, and to form a great military organization. And we will go to the Promised Land, and we will take it back for Christ. We will bring it under Mother Church. We will cast out the Jew. We will cast out the infidel Muslim, and we will restore the land of Christ." And the first crusade was born. And, boy, people rallied to it because the pope put a little bit of sweetening in the pot. He said, "Every Jew you kill, you can have whatever he owns. And for every Muslim you eradicate, you can take what he owns." Now, that's a good deal. You can't beat that.

The result was that everybody said, "I'll go for that. Count me in. I'm one of the crusaders." They moved down upon that land, and indeed they took it. The first crusade was enormously successful. It was about 100 years that they held it. You can go back there today, and see the structures; the buildings; and, all of the influence of the crusaders. There were many subsequent crusades after that with less success. There was even one that the crazies got hold of where they sent children in. They said that God was going to have a child lead them to success.

The result was that the Jewish people were now really restricted. When the church had possession of the Holy Land, the Jews were forced to live in ghettos. They were forced to wear clothing that identified them as Jews. Periodically, they were persecuted, and even massacred. The crusades of the Roman Catholic Church, after 1096, led to the destruction of a great number of Jews. So, the Jews had to flee eastward into Europe. The Roman Catholic Church tried to put restraints upon the abuse of the Jews, but when people were benefiting by their possessions, even the pope could not restrain his crusaders.

The Roman Catholic Church continued this non-literal interpretation of Scripture, which caused it to see its mission as establishing the kingdom of God on this earth itself. It saw itself as the kingdom of God, as the new Israel. And the Cardinals were seen as the new royalty of God's kingdom.

So, the Roman Catholic Church tried to conquer the new world by imposing Roman Catholicism by force on it. Satan perpetrated many lies about the Jews, which justified destroying them here in the new world.

**The Reformation**

When the Protestant reformers came along, they did not live long enough to be able to resolve prophecy, even though they returned to literal interpretation of Scripture. The result was that they continued the basic principles that caused the spirit of anti-Semitism. I showed you in previous session, how, in 20 years, Martin Luther changed from a devotee of wanting to save the Jew, to a man who could list the things that he listed that should be done to the Jews. There was only one thing that Luther left off that Hitler had on his list. Did you notice that? The only thing Luther didn't say was, "Put them in the crematorium, and burn them." But everything else that Hitler proposed for the Jews, he got from Martin Luther. Luther's antagonism toward the Jews was so great because the Jews would not turn to Christ, so he changed him mind about them. And that was because he did not understand that God had a plan for the Jew; he would yet be restored, and, he would yet have his blinded eyes restored to see Christ as Savior. So, even Martin Luther fell into the trap of Roman Catholicism's spiritualizing method of interpreting the Bible.

Well, the current postmillennialists are all guilty of the same allegorical error, and they are guilty of creating the anti-Semitism which brings such suffering upon the Jewish people.

So, when this woman cries out in pain, I hope you have a little better picture and appreciation of how historically this came about, and how this pain for the Jewish people is very real.

**The Red Dragon**

Another personality introduced here in Revelation 12:3 is the red dragon: "And another sign appeared in heaven." This is another sign similar to the sign of the woman; that is, that the dragon is not really a dragon that is represented. The dragon is a sign. It represents something like the woman represents something. Suddenly, John looks up, and he sees this red dragon, and the attention focuses on this creature. He is in heaven; he is great; and, he is red. The word "dragon" is the Greek word "drakon." That is a word for a hideous reptile-like creature.

**Satan**

Obviously, we know who this is. A little later on, in Revelation 20:2, he is identified: "And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan." So, what John sees here is a symbol for Satan. He is red, probably signifying what a bloody character Satan is. He deals in death.

**Seven Heads and Ten Crowns**

This dragon has a peculiarity of having seven heads. The seven heads have upon them ten crowns. And these are not crowns like God gives you as a victory. It's not the "stephanos" victory crown. This is the other word for crown in the Greek Bible. It is "diadema," the diadem crown. This is the imperial crown that a ruling king wears. And Satan, as you know, wants to be like Jesus Christ.

In Revelation 19:12: "And His eyes (describing Jesus Christ) are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems." Satan wants to wear royal ruling diadems such as Jesus has.

Notice verse 16: "And on His robe and His thigh, He had the name written 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords,' and as such, He has the right to wear these diadems.

This dragon figure is similar to a figure that we see (for our interpreting of it) in some detail in Daniel 7:7-8: "And this I kept looking in the night vision, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong. It had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. While I was contemplating the horns, behold another horn, a little one, came up upon them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it. And, behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great boasts."

**The Confederacy of the Antichrist**

Daniel 7:24: "As for the ten horns out of this kingdom, ten kings will arise, and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones, and will subdue three kings." What Daniel is telling us here is that he sees a fourth world empire. This is a world empire that is terrible; it is dreadful; it is powerful; it crushes; and, it tramples down. Then he leaps over the centuries, and he says, "I see this world empire," which is Rome that he's talking about here. He says, "I see this world empire in a state where it has ten crowns," and then explains to us a little later that these are ten kings, meaning ten different nations: "I see it in the form where it has ten nations, and out of the ten nations arises one little horn (that is, one political ruler), referring to the antichrist. He moves in on these ten nations, a confederacy of Western European nations, and he conquers three of them. The other seven become so frightened that they say, "We'll join you." He brings all ten of them together under his authority, and the confederacy of the antichrist is born here.

Here we have, in the book of the Revelation. John seeing a sign of a dragon, who is Satan, and who is the power behind all these world empires. He is described in exactly the same way – having seven heads, and ten horns on his head. And there were seven diagrams. This empire is empowered by Satan. He rules through the antichrist. The dragon represents both Satan and the restored Roman Empire.

**The Ten Horns**

In Revelation 12:9, we read, "This great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old, who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world, and was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him." So, here you have an earthly ruler who is pictured in this way. The ten horns refer to the ten countries of Europe, which the antichrist will rule. The little horn is the antichrist. He is referred to in Daniel 7:7-24.

In fact, in Revelation 17:12-13, we have this little horn referred to also: "And the ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast (the antichrist) for one hour (for a period of time). These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast." These ten horns correspond to the ten toes of Daniel's figure that he saw of world empires in Daniel 2:42-44. These are ten heads of state. They live in the tribulation era. They form an empire under the antichrist. They become the United States of Europe. Satan is the real power behind these political authorities, and they will proceed to attack the Jews.

**The Seven Heads**

The seven heads are something else. On these seven heads we have imperial ruling crowns. Therefore, they again represent political entities. What these seven heads represent are the preceding entities (political powers) that preceded this revived Roman Empire. It developed by a series of stages. Specifically, the first head was Egypt. Egypt became a powerful empire. Egypt was replaced by Assyria, but a log of the big benefits (culture and knowledge) of Egypt was also absorbed by Assyria. The third empire was Babylon, which took over what the previous empires had developed. It was building on these previous empires. The next was Media-Persia. Then came Greece. All of this explicitly is explained to us in the book of Daniel.

Now, in John's day, when he's writing the book of the Revelation, he is in the sixth stage of the seven heads. He is in the stage of the Roman Empire, who built upon the previous empires of the world, and absorbed all of their benefits and capacities and culture and knowledge. Now, what John is saying is that there is a seventh head. It also has an imperial royal ruler's crown, and this one is in the future. It is going to be one that is made up of ten nations ruled over by the little horn, the antichrist. This is going to be the United States of Europe, and this is still in the future.

So, what does John see? He looks out there, and he sees a dragon representing Satan. So, he knows that Satan is the ruler of this world. The Bible is very clear about that. He took away domination from Adam. He claims to be the power of the authority in the air and in the spaces of the earth. He is explicitly the one who walks this earth, and is dominant over it. He rules the nations of the world. The Bible says that John sees Satan. He is the world ruler, but he can only work through human beings. He sees him working through a political structure – a political structure which has been the beneficiary of past political empires. He is now talking about the seventh one, which will exist in the tribulation. He also has a specific entity of ten nations which are the power base of the antichrist in Western Europe. John sees this dragon. He understands from Scripture that this is a political power, and he sees this creature now on the scene as one of the personalities of the tribulation era of the antichrist himself.

In the Old Testament, I should tell you that the dragon is a symbol of Israel's enemies (Psalm 74:14). We will close with just these few Scriptures on the dragon: "You did crush the head of leviathan. You did give him as food for the creatures of the wilderness." Here, leviathan is another name for the dragon. Leviathan is here a symbol for Egypt, the enemy of the Jews. In this context, he's speaking about Egypt. He calls them the Leviathan.

In Ezekiel 29:3, this dragon is called a monster: "Speak and say, 'Thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh King of Egypt, the great monster that lies in the midst of his rivers.''" This is again referring to the dragon. Here he is called "the monster," and referring to Pharaoh: "I am against you, Pharaoh, King of Egypt, the great monster that lies in the midst of his rivers, that has said, 'My Nile is mine. I myself have made it.'"

Interestingly enough, in Psalm 74:14, leviathan is said to have several heads: "You did crush the heads of leviathan (of the dragon). You did give him as food for the creatures of the wilderness." So, the dragon that dominates all nations on the earth is indeed Satan himself.

Luke 4:6: "And the devil said to him, 'I will give you all this domain and its glory, for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.'" Here he is trying to tempt Jesus to worship him by offering Him authority over the kingdoms of the world. He says, "They are mine to give whomever I wish.

1 John 5:19: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (referring to Satan). So, when, in our world today, political leaders govern on biblical principles, the evil of Satan is restricted so that the nation can be blessed. That's why when you vote for a politician, you should consider very seriously what his biblical moral beliefs are. You are voting for your blessing or for your destruction. If he's an anti-Semite, you should consider that, because you're asking for the curse of God. If the person is an abortionist, that should settle it. That is bringing blood upon the land, and God said, "I will curse a land that has murder upon it."

Just go right down the line. You as a Christian are going to be responsible. You can be devoted to a political party and say, "I've got to vote for this guy because this is my party." Or you can say, "Man, when I have to answer to God for this (and you will, I assure you – at His Judgment Seat, you will answer), you better take it seriously. When you have the power to place in authority men of God or men of Satan, you better take it seriously. We can't quite exactly find men and women of God. That's true. We have to do the best we can with what is offered to us. We should take a look at biblical beliefs.

When I went to vote for this recent election, an elderly gentleman passed me just as I was going in the door. He said, "Well, who are you going to vote against? I know that you're not going to vote for anybody." How true! How true," as Gomer would say.

So, anyhow, the problem is there. But there are certain key features. When you go around murdering unborn children, that's a pretty high factor to make a decision. When you are against the Jewish people, that's a pretty high factor. You should consider that. When you think that homosexuality is an OK lifestyle, that's big. These are all the big things about which God says, "I'll shred your nation over this if you do not obey Me in these things.

So, when political leaders govern on biblical principles, the people are blessed. Satan, therefore, does his best to keep godly men from political power, so that they cannot give doctrinal leadership to a nation. A nation with laws which are based upon God's laws brings respect and blessing from God, and rage from Satan. Which do you want?

Dr. John E. Danish, 1990

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