***The Ecumenical Movement

RV173-01***

We are studying Revelation 13:11-18. Our subject is "The False Prophet." This is segment number 2.

**The Second Beast**

We have seen that John, in his vision of tribulation events, sees a second beast-like personality arise in that era of history. This second beast is just like the first in that he is also a human being, and he is also empowered by Satan. This second beast is identified elsewhere in Scripture as the false prophet. The origin of the false prophet is said to be the earth, which may imply that he is a Jew from the land of Israel. We cannot, however, speak with any definiteness about that. The false prophet appears with the horns of a lamb on him, which immediately associates him with religious matters. His lamb-like appearance indicates that he will present himself as a man of gentleness, meekness, and humility. He will come across as humanity's friend. The true nature, however, of the false prophet will be revealed when he opens his mouth and spews forth the doctrines of demons given to him by Satan.

So the Bible tells us in Revelation 13:11 that he will speak as a dragon, referring to Satan. The false prophet himself, of course, will be a very sophisticated person, but he will be a religious con man whom all the world will believe. This false prophet will head up a final form of the ancient Babylonian mystery religion which is now so prominent in Roman Catholicism.

**The Ecumenical Movement**

The ecumenical movement today, the attempt to bring all churches together into one organizational structure, is laying the basis for this unified world religion of the false prophet.

**A False Trinity**

Satan is going to create his own infernal trinity as well in his last-ditch stand against God, in his attempt to defeat God. It will be a counterfeit to match the eternal Trinity of the living God. In the infernal trinity of Satan, Satan acts as the Father, the antichrist acts as the Son, and the false prophet acts as the Holy Spirit. These three also have a unity in the fact that they are the epitome and the epitome and the essence of evil which they share in common.

We now move to verse 12. The false prophet is described in this verse as exercising all the authority of the first beast, and he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. The word "authority" is the Greek word "exousia." "Exousia" here refers to religious power over people. It will be the culmination of today's ecumenical movement. The false prophet is going to head up an imperial religion which the antichrist needs.

It has been historically demonstrated that no powerful movement (no powerful governmental movement) can stand without some kind of a philosophical base, (some kind of a religious base), even when the French Revolution took place, and the leaders of the French Revolution even completely wanted to disband all religious concepts, they threw the Bible out, and they told people not to fear the superstitions about the God above that they had always been told; even they could not refrain from creating a statue of the nude woman that they called "freedom, equality, and liberty," and to place her, in fact, of all places, in the Notre Dame Cathedral, so that they (the leaders of the nation) could bow in respect for her. What were they doing? They were creating a religious base for an atheistic, non-religious governmental system.

When Napoleon finally took over the disastrous results of the French Revolution, he immediately recognized that he could not control this nation or its empire without some kind of religious ground, so he immediately proceeded to make accommodations with the Pope to come under his favor, and under his approval, so that the nation would have a comfortable religious relationship.

Now, the antichrist is going to be against the same thing. As Saint Augustine has said, "There is a vacuum in the heart of man that can only be filled by God. There's a longing for something that is greater beyond man." That longing is being sought to be fulfilled today in a lot of false ways, not the least of which is the drug routine. But there is, in the heart of man, a sense of something that he is to be subject to. This is exactly what Paul says in Romans 1: Anybody who's got any sense must look out at creation, and must look at the world around him, and say, "There is somebody up there who is responsible for this; who has brought me into being; who is infinitely greater than me; and, to whom I must be in subjection. And man's heart naturally reaches out for some kind of religious expression. That's why you can be in some darkest corner of the earth, with the most primitive kind of people, and whatever else you find among them, you will always find that they have a religious system. They have to have some kind of philosophical religious base upon which they build values: what's right; what's wrong; and, how they will function.

So, the antichrist is no different, and he knows that he can't just wipe God out of the picture. So, what he's going to do, under Satan's guidance, and through the agency of the false prophet, is produce a totally different kind of religious system which is integrated with his government.

**The Harlot Church**

The false prophet is going to be a powerful figure comparable to the role that the Roman Catholic Pope plays in the world today. This false prophet is going head up the church which is described in Revelation 17. That church is called the harlot church, because it has prostituted its spiritual relationship to God with its relationship with Satan. The false prophet is in fact going to be the world's last great religious leader before the arrival of the Lord Jesus Christ. This false prophet will be in league with the demonic world, and therefore, he will possess great occult powers. And as we shall see in time, he has capacity to perform fantastic miracles.

The power of the false prophet over people is given to him by Satan. It is the kind of authority, really, that Satan offered to the Lord Jesus on the occasion of the Lord's temptations, where, in Luke 4:6, we have recorded that Satan told Christ, "I'll give You this authority over all the nations of the world if You'll only do what Satan always wants people to do – if You'll only worship me." From the very first, you must remember that the thing that has always motivated Satan was to get people to worship him.

The false prophet will gladly subject himself to the worship of Satan, and therefore, he will be, in exchange, given great power. However, 1 Corinthians 15:24 also tells us that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, He's going to terminate all of this satanic power that has been given to certain individuals. This is power over the creation that Christ made, and He's going to take it all back. Paul says, "Then comes the end when He (Jesus) delivers up the kingdom to God the Father when He has abolished all rule, and all authority, and all power." So, all this authority and power that Satan has given to various agents will be abolished, including that of the false prophet.

**Religion and Government will be Joined**

This false prophet, the second beast, is related to the first beast, the antichrist. And he operates, we're told, "In his presence." The Greek word for "In his presence" is "enopion," and it means "to exercise authority in the service of someone." So, the false prophet is going to exercise his authority from Satan in the presence of the antichrist in the sense that he will be in the service of the antichrist. These two beasts are going to create an alliance where they join religion and government. It may be that they knew each other before the tribulation. It may be that the false prophet is already a prominent religious leader in our day now. And it may be that the antichrist, when he comes to power, has previously known of the false prophet. In any case, at the beginning of the tribulation, they join forces, and they become allies. The antichrist enforces the religious authority of the false prophet, and the false prophet directs mankind in the worship of the antichrist as God. This union of religion and civil government will form, as it always does, a powerful combination.

Adolf Hitler knew the principle of having a religious base for a governmental structure that people would relate to. And when he found that there were elements of the Christian church that he could not subject to the Nazi system, he neutralized those people and those preachers, and what he did was form the German church. He formed the Church of Germany. It was pure Nazism; it was pur paganism; and, in fact, it was very much like what the church of the antichrist and the false prophet will be, because Hitler was deep in the occult, and he created a church that would lend itself to supporting all of the things that they were doing in Germany that were condemned by the Scriptures, not the least of which was the genocide of the Jewish people. You can see what a stretch of the imagination it took to be destroying Jews, and yet to be doing it under the support of the German national church. Where does Jesus Christ, the Jew, fit into that picture? Well, He wasn't in there. The word "church" was used, and the meanings and the content was completely changed.

It seems that the false prophet may probably head up an apostate church during the first three-and-a-half years of the tribulation. And then, when the antichrist becomes the world ruler, it seems that, at that time, that the false prophet will turn against the church that he has set up, and that's the description that you have in Revelation 17 of the destruction of the church that exists. And at that point in time, the antichrist and the false prophet will join forces and create their own religious system. At the heart of that system will be the worship of the antichrist.

So, verse 12 says, "And he (the false prophet) exercises all the authority of the first beast (all the powers that the first beast has) in his presence (in his service)." And in the process of this, he proceeds then to make the earth, and those who dwell in it, do something. He makes the earth, and those who dwell in it, perform an ancient ritual which the Roman Caesars to demonstrate your loyalty. We're going back to the revival of the Roman Empire. The Roman Caesars declared that they were divine, and that they were gods, and therefore, you had to make an act of worship at least once a year to the Roman Caesar. Here we're told that the false prophet will head up a system of religion where he forces all humanity to worship the first beast; that is, the antichrist – this beast, who had the fatal wound which was healed.

This word "worship" in the Greek Bible, I remind you, has an interesting connotation. It's made up of two words: "proskuneo," and "proskuneo" means "to kiss" ("to come to kiss" – "to blow a kiss"). It's an expression of bowing in subjection. So at a future point in time, all worship will be directed by the false prophet to the antichrist. The antichrist, here again, is equated with the political system. You remember that we showed you how sometimes the term "beast," in terms of the antichrist, applies to the empire, and sometimes it applies to the head of the empire, and they're used interchangeably. It is the empire (the Roman Empire) that seemingly received a death blow because once the barbarians came down from the north, the old Roman Empire broke up into a bunch of separate nations. But the Roman Empire, in God's order, still exists today. It exists as separate nations, and it is these nations that are going to be brought back together again, and they're going to be eventually united once more as a world empire, and they will be under the new emperor, which is the antichrist.

**World Empires**

Please remember that in the Bible, we have the progression of world empires that has been very explicit. From the time of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel was given the revelation: First comes the Babylonian Empire. Secondly comes the Medo-Persian Empire. Thirdly comes the Greek Empire. Fourthly comes the Roman Empire. And then there is a fifth empire. And I'm talking about a world empire. And that is the one which is described as the stone which is cut out – that suddenly leaps from the mountain and destroys the image that is the previous four empires – that stone representing Jesus Christ. So, that's why we have always known that the communists would never rule the world. We have always known that Russia would never be a world empire, because the last world empire is the Roman Empire. That is the one which is going to be brought back into being – not a different, but still empire number four. And the antichrist here is referred to as being equated with that empire – that empire which seemingly had a fatal blow, suddenly, has been resurrected, and is once more alive – first of all with the union of ten nations in Western Europe around the Mediterranean Sea, and then gradually upon the total destruction of whatever is left of Russia and her allies, the antichrist moves into the position of being a world ruler.

**The Healing of the Fatal Wound**

So, the destruction of the Roman Empire is described as having been healed, and this is going to come to pass at a certain point in time; namely, during the tribulation era. This dead empire is revived, basically in the form of this ten-nation confederacy. Then the false prophet, at the midpoint of the tribulation, when the antichrist becomes the world ruler, will lead all the world in the worship of the antichrist. And please remember that the reason Satan has set this up is because when you worship the antichrist, you will be worshiping the antichrist, who is incarnated now in the antichrist.

The religion of the false prophet will be very attractive to people because it's going to appeal to everything that's in the sin nature of man. The false prophet is going to make lofty appeals to humanitarianism and to compassion. He's going to play upon the emotions of people. His oratory will bring them into a hypnotic frenzy. The masses will react with a mindless devotion to him.

**Albert Speer**

You just have to realize that this has happened before, in the lifetime of some of us here. There were men like Albert Speer, who was the armaments director for Adolf Hitler, and who was the architect who was building the New Berlin with Hitler. Albert Speer came from a very high German family. He was highly cultured and highly educated. His father was an architect, and when his friends told him about this man called Adolf Hitler, and what his dreams were, he just laughed. He though Hitler was a clown.

**Adolf Hitler**

Finally, one day, his university friend said, "Just come and listen to him." And so he attended a rally where Hitler got up and spoke. Hitler was such a preview of the antichrist, it is amazing, because he knew just exactly how to manipulate the emotions of people. Hitler's custom was to always start in a low-key with a few basic statements, and then to begin touching on the issues more and more such that people would sit up and listen and say, "Yeah, what about that?" Then the tempo would build up, and pretty soon he was in a frenzy of speech, and the crowd was reacting. And Albert Speer said, I could not believe that I had found myself leaping to my feet, screaming with enthusiasm, and applauding, and sometimes I wasn't even sure what he said. That is oratory. That is what false prophet is going to do, carrying people along with a mindless enthusiasm, and directing it all in devotion to the antichrist.

**Miracles**

The false prophet is, furthermore, as we will see later, going to provide some exciting experiences for people, because he's going to expose them to some very dramatic miracles. This will be the final factor to convince people that the antichrist is not just human, but that he is also a divine person. By that time, the basic doctrine of the New Age movement will be generally accepted – that every human being has within him a basic potential for deity. Everybody is born as a potential god. And if you follow the right course, that deity will be turned loose, and you will become a god in your experience.

What the false prophet says will sound so right to people. Do you know why? Because it's going to indulge the lusts of the old sin nature. If you tell people what their sin natures would like to do, and you give them justification for doing it, they'll listen to you. If you give them a reason for feeling that it's OK to do the evils of the sin nature, you're going to be a very attractive speaker to them. And that's exactly what the false prophet will do. He will project this public image of an enlightened, sweet soul, but his sweetness-and-light show is going to be dissipated very quickly when he opens his mouth, and he reveals that he speaks the doctrines of Satan.

The Lord Jesus warned about the antichrist and the false prophet in Matthew 24:24, where he warned the people of this era to be aware that there are going to come false Christs and false prophets.

So, what we have seen here is that the Bible predicts that there is a coming a one-world religion which will dominate all the earth in the years immediately preceding the return of Christ to this earth. That is during the period of the seven years of the tribulation.

Not so many years ago, people in various areas of life – the intellectuals scoffed at religion. The scientists scoffed at religion. Now, there is an enormous interest in religion. Even in the scientific realm, they have concluded that there is something beyond what they can weigh on their scales, and put in their test tubes. There are some forces out there. This religious pursuit and interest is finding expression in the form of astrology; spiritualism (talking with demon spirits); and, the pursuit of drugs, in order to have an extrasensory consciousness, and to expand the consciousness itself. The demonic world is becoming very active.

**A Speaking Statue**

A little later, we will read in the passage that, when the false prophet makes a statue of the antichrist, and puts it in the Jew's temple, for all the world to worship, that the statue will speak. Those of us who are fans of Disneyworld have seen a whole roomful of former presidents stand up and speak. And as one president speaks, another looks at him and nods, and they smile at one another. And it's hard for you to sit there and say, "Those guys are just manikins. They're not real.

You can't get away with that. The false prophet is not going to do that. Everybody would know that Disneyworld's deception. What is going to impress is that it's not a Disneyworld exception, and that this statue will really will convey the qualities of being alive, and of speaking with communications from above, because a demon spirit will be operating in the statue. Is that surprising? No. Behind every idol, you remember, the Word of God tells, is a demon spirit that represents that idol, and through which favors, or disasters, or whatever are dealt to the people who worship that idol. This is the oldest trick in Satan's book, but it's going to seem very real. The demonic world is increasing active, and you can imagine how active they're going to be when they know that they have only three-and-a-half years left to make it.

**The Ecumenical Movement**

Well, the ecumenical movement that we have referred to has laid the groundwork for what the false prophet is going to do. And I'd like to give you a little background on that, because this is the movement that is moving more and more to the public fore because this present Roman Catholic Pope is doing his best to find himself acceptable to Protestant believers, and to the Greek Orthodox Church. He wants to get everybody together. And this is the exact purpose of the ecumenical movement. This is the movement to bring all churches into one universal church throughout the whole world, and eventually to bring all religions into one unified organization. The word "ecumenical" or "ecumenicism" comes from a Greek word that literally means "inhabited earth." It means the whole inhabited earth unified in one religious system. It is used for total inclusiveness.

The Vatican II Church Council of the Roman Catholic Church was an ecumenical council in that it brought together Roman Catholic bishops from all over the world to discuss church matters relative to appeal to protestants. The origin of the ecumenical movement actually goes back to the year 1910. This is not a new thing. In 1910, the World Conference on Missionary Cooperation met in Edinburgh, Scotland. This conference set the goal to evangelize the world in one generation. And they were going to do it by uniting all churches in the grand effort. This was 1910. In order to do that, they established an organization called the International Missionary Council, and the goal of this movement was to get all of these churches to unite together in evangelism – in missions.

Now, you can get every color of church to unite in a missionary evangelistic effort. No one has demonstrated that better than Bill Graham. Billy Graham's meetings and campaigns have regularly been the unity of the most mongrel types of religious groups who would rally to support his campaigns because it was an outreach of evangelism. They all go for that. And, of course, what they had in mind was that they would benefit by new members by that cooperation. But that's why you find that it's shocking to realize that, for example, in England, while Billy Graham is conducting his great campaigns there, he did not find it offensive to ask a leading English ecclesiastic to lead in prayer one night. This ecclesiastic has written a book in which he said, "Jesus Christ was the bastard son of Mary and a passing German soldier. Now, I would find it hard to ask somebody who that of the Lord Jesus Christ to come up to this pulpit to lead us in prayer Sunday morning. And some of you probably would be upset about that too. But when you run these evangelistic efforts, that everybody and his brother is in, they'll all come in.

One of the greatest liberal unbelievers was Bishop Kennedy of the Methodist Church on the west coast. He was also one who did not believe in the virgin birth of Christ. Yet, he was the chairman of Billy Graham's campaign on the west coast. Dr. J. Vernon McGee, of the Church of the Open Door was also on that committee. And when he came to Dallas Seminary, we had to say to him, "Dr. McGee, how can you be on that committee? You know what Kennedy stands for. How can you sit there talking about reaching souls for the Lord Jesus Christ with a man who believes that Christ is a human being without a virgin birth?" Well, he said, "I'm interested in the fact that Graham has the gift of evangelism; can preach the gospel; people come and listen; they'll be reached; and, I am not associated with that man. He comes in one door, and sits at that end of the table, and I come in the other door, and I sit at this end, and I never talk to him, and he never talks to me."

Well, you may have justification, and maybe it's to be united with unbelievers who degraded the person of Christ. Everybody has to make his own decision, but you see in their ecumenicism. The thing you have to do is quit having these distinctivenesses of doctrine. You have to keep reducing it. The basic doctrine to be part of the World Council of Churches, which is where the ecumenical movement finally went, is something to the effect that we accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as He is portrayed in Scripture. This lets you free to say what part of Scripture you believe; how He was portrayed; what was said about Him; and, how He was the Son of God. The whole thing was left open. You can make it mean anything you want, which is what they intended to do, so that churches of every kind of belief could come together.

**The Social Gospel**

So, in 1910, this thing was put on its way. They had the international missionary movement to cooperate in evangelism. The came down to the year 1925, and out of this previous work, came another work called the Universal Church Council of Life and Work. They met in Stockholm, Sweden. This organization was sponsored by liberals, and its gospel was the social gospel. The term "social gospel" is one that we don't hear much today. In the days of my youth, we used to hear it all the time. The social gospel is simply this: – that the way you get into heaven is by meeting the social needs of people: their food; their clothing; their housing; their equality; and, whatever. That is the social gospel. And they say that if you will devote yourself to that, then you will learn eternal life. And great denominations like the Methodist Church are, to this day, deeply involved in social actions. Why? Because that to them is the way you get into heaven.

Now, that, of course, is not the way the Bible says you get into heaven. The Bible calls that human good. It's a product of the sin nature, and therefore, it is evil in the sight of God.

So this organization, the Universal Church Council on Life and Work, organized in Stockholm, Sweden in 1925, by these liberals, had the social gospel as its agenda. Their thesis was that if we could get all the churches cooperating to help the poor folks, and to help the needy folks, we could get Christians working together.

Two years later, in 1927, the World Conference on Faith and Order was held in Switzerland. Their thesis this time was that they needed to rethink the doctrines of Christianity and of traditional beliefs. Anytime someone comes along and says, "I want to rethink something about the Bible," it is a pretty good clue to you that what they mean is that they want to get rid of something in the form of a fundamental principle of the Scriptures.

**The World Council of Churches**

Well, all of these efforts finally climaxed in Amsterdam, Holland on August 23rd, 1948 when the World Council of Churches was organized for the explicit purpose of bringing all Christian groups under one organization. The function of the World Council of Churches was stated in its constitution:

1. They sought to carry out the work of the two world movements that had preceded it, and to go this through social action, and by redefining what they really believed the Bible taught.
2. They sought to facilitate common action among the churches in any place the churches could operate.
3. They sought to promote in study of the Bible.
4. To promote the growth of an ecumenical consciousness in all the members of the churches that would join the World Council of Churches.
5. To establish relations with denominational groups on a worldwide scope, and with other ecumenical movements. The whole point was not unity of faith, and not unity of beliefs, but a unity of an organization. I want you to be sure that you understand that. The unity was an organization.

So, hundreds of churches, and millions of members became part of the World Council of Churches to this day. It includes churches which have all kinds of theological differences. And the fad is dialog – to get together and chew the fat, and discuss these things. They have a central committee that tightly controls the organization. It is in the hands of the most extreme kinds of liberals. It has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, and its leaders have intense powers in influencing what takes place in the churches that are members of the World Council of Churches. They take their cues from the World Council of Churches.

Now, the objectives of this organization are really pretty startling. I'll just give you a little sense of what that is. Back as far as 1968, the general board of the World Council of Churches adopted a statement of what their objectives would be. Even Gus Hall, who is the head of the Communist Party of the United States, observed that what the World Council of Churches has as its agenda is exactly what the communist party as its agenda. Here is what the World Council of Churches wanted the churches to do:

1. To create in the United States a guaranteed annual income as a matter of right.
2. Vast liberalization of welfare laws.
3. Expanding government job training in public works programs, and government hiring of unemployables.
4. Increase government-financed housing.
5. Open housing in private, as well as public housing.
6. Expanded urban renewal.
7. Substantial increase in federally-financed education at all levels.
8. Expanded federal Medicare.
9. Truth in lending legislation.
10. Tighter firearms control.
11. Extension of the right of conscientious objection to those opposed to a particular war.
12. Rural anti-poverty legislation.
13. A federally-financed TV network.
14. Increase federal spending, and increase federal taxes.
15. An intensified federal program for assisting family planning; that is, birth control, both at home and abroad.

In terms of international matters, they said:

1. They want to increase foreign aid to four times what it was then.
2. They want a liberalization of trade policies in favor of underdeveloped nations.
3. They want interest-free loans, and removal of any restrictions that you have to buy American goods.

Now, that's just a little bit. I'm not trying to get into quoting a lot here, but just a little bit of perspective of what the World Council of Churches is promoting, and, of course, those things are all familiar to us. The Socialist Party of the United States has pursued exactly those, because they have controlled Congress, and they have pursued exactly those objectives, and many of those things are now in place.

So, the World Council of Churches has a movement destined to bring the world together on social objectives. Here are the steps to worldwide union of religion. First of all, they want to unite all Protestant churches. Secondly, they want to unite Protestant churches and the Eastern Orthodox Church. Thirdly, they want to unite Protestant and Eastern Orthodox with the Roman Catholic Church. And, number four, they want to take the union of these Christian groups and unite them with all the other major religions of the world.

The Roman Catholic Church has constantly sent observers to the meetings of the World Council of Churches because the Roman Catholic Church is interested in union, but they've also made it clear that, to them, "union" means coming back to the mother church. That means that you're going to admire Mary. That means that you're going to be seeking salvation through performing the sacraments, and the World Council of Churches is saying, "We'll try to work it out." The ecumenical leaders attack divisions in Christianity and Christendom as we know them today, and there are many divisions with denominations and churches.

Their ground for justifying what they're doing in coming together into a religious union is based upon John 17:22. This is part of the high priestly prayer of Jesus the night before he was crucified. Jesus says in his prayer, "And the glory which You have given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one just as We are one." Isn't it incumbent upon Christians to be unified (to be united)? Should Christians be one as God the Father and God the Son are One?

There are some divisions among Christians that we would have to admit are clearly on the basis of false doctrine. We divide ourselves from Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses because they have some grossly false doctrines that not only are not simply found in Scripture, but violate what Scripture teaches. And it is proper that that separation should be there. In 1 Corinthians 1:11, Paul says, "For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. I mean this: that each of you is saying, 'I am of Paul;' 'I am of Apollos;' 'I am of Cephas;' and, 'I am of Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he, nor were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

Here, the apostle Paul is saying that there are areas where Christians separate from one another that are illegitimate. You should not be squandering over trivial matters, and breaking fellowship on those accounts. But what kind of unity was Jesus referring to in John 17:22? What He was referring to was a spiritual unity. It was the spiritual unity that has to be based upon true doctrine. This spiritual unity, however, of all believers, is not something that we can create. We cannot agree to be spiritually unified with one another. It is the product of God the Holy Spirit. It is what 1 Corinthians 12:13 describes as the result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit: "For by one Spirit (one Holy Spirit) we were all baptized into one body, the body of Christ, the church, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

What this verse is telling us is that there is a spiritual unity that exists within the church. And who made it? The Holy Spirit. It already exists. It is the unity where every Christian is joined to every other Christian. So, the unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17:22 is already in effect. He was praying for a spiritual unity on the part of believers. That does exist.

In Ephesians 4:4-6, this spiritual unity of Christians is emphasized where Paul said, "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord; one faith; one baptism; and, one God and Father of us all who is over all, and through all. So, there is a spiritual unity that already exists. Therefore, Christians are never told in the Word of God to create a spiritual unity.

Look back up to Ephesians 4:3. Paul says, "Being diligent to" what? Create a unity in the Spirit? No. "To preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." You don't have to go about creating a spiritual unity among believers. God has already done that. He did that through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. But there is the duty upon us, as believers, that we respect that spiritual unity, in that we do not do things that fracture the unity of believers, because we're out of temporal fellowship, or we're into false doctrine. The spiritual unity of all saved people is the true ecumenical church.

Now, on the other hand, what does the ecumenical movement want? Well, what the World Council of Churches is looking for is the organization of unity. They want one organizational structure. Now, what is that going to do for you? Look what it does for Roman Catholics. Because it is one organizational structure, and it has at the top the Pope, who is the final authority, whatever he believes; whatever he says; whatever the hierarchy of cardinals says; and, whatever the hierarchy of cardinals concludes, that's what you believe. As a Catholic, you better believe it, or else. You are under a system where your conscience cannot come into the picture. You're subject only to the authority of the system of organization. This is exactly what happens if all nations of the world are under world government. Who can deviate from the authorities that control the world government? No one.

In the Roman Catholic system, you cannot step out of line without paying a price. The ecumenical movement today is controlled by liberals. They are people who deny the fundamental doctrines of Scripture. And what is to be their attitude toward people who deny fundamental doctrines. I don't mean people who say, "Well, I think you're going to be in the tribulation for two years."

There is a Jewish writer who has written a new book. It's called The Pre-Wrath Rapture. Rosenthal is his name. He has created quite a stir because he has decided that the last couple of years of the tribulation is where the day of the Lord begins. He is quite wrong in his conclusion, but he concludes that that's where the day of the Lord begins, and indeed he says the church is to be out of the world before the day of the Lord begins, so he has concluded that for the first five years or so, the church is going to be in the tribulation.

Now, if Rosenthal comes to visit us next Sunday, are we going to refuse to take him out to El Chico's? Are we going to fracture our fellowship with him because he has made such a big mistake on an important doctrine? No. But if the Pope should visit us next Sunday (God forbid), if he shows up, are we going to treat him as a fellow brother in Christ? This man particularly is such a devotee of Mary, and he has made it clear that there is no access to God except through Mary. Are we going to sit down and eat a meal with him, and thus indicate that we are on a basis of fellowship? Not on your life. That is an important doctrine. The ecumenical movement is violating basic doctrines of Scripture. It's trying to push that all aside in order for everybody to be religiously and organizationally united, which is exactly what the antichrist is going to do.

The guidelines for serious false doctrine is given for us in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18: "Do not be bound together with unbelievers." And make no mistake about it, most of these men who lead in the World Council of Churches are unbelievers: "For what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness. Or what harmony has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God. Just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,' says the Lord, 'and do not touch what is unclean. And I will welcome you, and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me,' says the Lord Almighty."

Now, that makes it pretty clear what our attitude should be toward basic fundamental false doctrine. What the ecumenical movement stands for is basic fundamental false doctrine. And what the Word of God says is that we should have no part of it.

Now, the World Council of Churches is in high gear. And when Pope John XXIII decided to have the Vatican II Council, he gave the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement a big boost, because he too was calling for church unity. One day, he just walked out, and told his cardinals, "I'm going to call an ecumenical council (which means that he's going to bring all the cardinals from all over the world), and we're going to discuss how to approach Protestants and other religious groups to make them comfortable with us." So what did they do with the Jew? The Pope said, "From now on, we do not hold the Jews responsible for the death of Christ." What did he do with the Protestants? He said, "From now on, Protestants are not to be called 'heretics.' And to this day, Protestants are referred to as "separated brethren." That was the official pronouncement. The Pope met with the head of the Greek Eastern Orthodox Church, and they have gone a long way toward getting back together.

**The World Council of Churches is Liberal**

There is one thing more in closing that I want to tell you about the World Council of Churches. To summarize it theologically, the World Council of Churches is liberal – liberal to the core. The Bible is not the final authority. Economically, the World Council of Churches is socialistic. And politically, the World Council of Churches is collectivist. It wants greater and greater ecclesiastical ad governmental controls on people so that social agendas can be realized.

It is easy enough, isn't it, to see how this plays right into the hands of the false prophet? These people are theologically liberals so that they're not hindered by some kind of biblical doctrines to restrain them. They want to be socialist economically. They want to avoid private property. And, of course, when you avoid private property, then you cannot have freedom. And, finally, politically, they want to be under a dominant central committee controlling things. Yes, that system has been a big flop in the Soviet Union, but it's not over yet. When the antichrist comes on the scene, he's going to pick it up where the Roman emperors left off, and there's going to be a dominant political unity, and it will be imposed with all the brutality that was imposed upon the early Christians.

Every time the World Council of Churches makes any pronouncements toward the United States, they are antagonistic toward our country. They are anti-capitalistic; they are anti-American; and they are anti-biblical Christianity. Whenever they have spoken about the Russians, or the Chinese, or the terrorist groups in Africa, they speak of them with honor and praise, and they express their sympathy for these poor folks who are just trying to get a fair shake in life.

The World Council of Churches is the enemy of God, and it is going to be the thing that the antichrist needs for his false prophet to use to create the harlot church that God Himself finally destroys, as described in Revelation 13.

If you will pay attention to what is happening in your day, you will see that the World Council of Churches is doing its work behind the scenes, and the idea of unity of Christians (and not separating from on another) is a false call for unity on an organizational level. It is the kind of a unity that will lead to a destruction of our freedoms in Christ.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1991

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