

Daniel's Vision Of Chapter Seven V

Valley Center Seventh-day Adventist Church

October 4, 2008

**This Sermon is available for listening or download on our Audio Sermons web page*

Someone sent an email about scientists who wanted to test the ability of honeybees to locate their food source. After the bees had familiarized themselves with a certain food source, the scientists moved it about 150 feet away and timed how long it took the bees to find it. In only a minute or two the bees had discovered it. They tried again, and moved it another 150 feet away. Again, within only a minute or two the bees were there. One more time they tried. Another 150 feet away the food source was moved. This time it was different, though. The bees had figured out the pattern and were waiting for the scientists! How amazing is our God! We hear "but a whisper" of His wisdom!

God's wisdom not only engineered things on the small scale like the activities of bees, but on the large scale too. He was not caught off-guard by the entrance of sin, but had a plan of restoration by which mankind would be given another chance to choose. The devil hates God's Gospel plan and has done all he can to derail it.

The prophecies of Daniel and Revelation pull the curtain back so that we can obtain an insight into what is happening "behind the scenes" in this great battle between Christ and Satan. As we continue our study in Daniel 7, we'll take a few minutes to look back and see what we've encountered so far. Remember that in the vision that was given to Daniel, he saw four ferocious beasts emerging from the sea. This we understood to represent the four world empires that strode across the stage of earth's history, namely, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. That they came out of the "sea" meant that they had their beginnings from populated areas, since "waters" symbolize "people" in prophecy. Revelation 17:15.

The fourth beast was particularly awesome, not like anything Daniel had seen. On its head were ten horns. This beast stood for Rome, the fourth empire in the sequence, the ten horns representing those tribes which would bring about her downfall. Then from the fourth beast, Rome, we saw that an unusual horn power would arise, transplanting three of the ten horns. This horn power would persecute God's people, speak pompous words against the Most High, attempt to change God's law and reign for an uninterrupted period which, using the prophetic yardstick of a day in symbolic prophecy standing for a year of literal time, amounted to 1260 years.

I remind you that when we study the details of prophecy, it is most important to realize God's mind set toward these things. Back in the garden of Eden, we're told that the devil succeeded in deceiving Eve, whom he then used to mislead Adam. Her ignorance was not an excuse, but God looked upon the woman with pity and love. How Eve was saddened later, as she realized how she had been duped into being the tool of the enemy of God! Waves of horror and regret must have crossed her soul. She had not properly appreciated the necessity of believing and obeying the word of God, even in what the devil told her was an insignificant detail. But she repented of her sin and we look forward to meeting her in heaven.

The devil was able to deceive another "woman," the Church of Jesus' day so that they rejected Him as the Messiah and crucified Him on a cross. Their ignorance was not an excuse, but Jesus looked on them in pity and love and said, "Father forgive them; they do not know what they are doing."

So likewise the devil was successful in deceiving the "woman," the Church of the middle ages, into doing his work in combating God's plan outlined in the Gospel. The Church of the middle ages must be the horn of Daniel 7, for it fits all the prophetic criteria. What was it that came up in the place of Rome, when civil Rome fell? What was it that persecuted and killed those who did not conform to her doctrine? What was it that suppressed the

Scriptures and exerted untold energy to keep the Bible from the common person? What was it that has made outrageous claims to being equal with God and having authority to forgive sins and tamper with His holy law? What was it that continued for more than a millennium during which she reigned as monarch and kings bowed to her will?

There can be only one answer to these questions, brought to light by the vision of Daniel seven, and that is the Church of the middle ages. Nevertheless, as always, God looks with pity and love on those who have been deceived into doing Satan's work. He calls for us to repent and return to Him, just as Peter, who had denied his Lord with cursing and oaths, appealed to the Jewish leaders to repent and accept as Messiah the Jesus they had killed.

We noticed also that, just as the story of Jesus' mission is told by four witnesses, the four Gospel writers, so also the story of Satan and his objectives is brought to view by four witnesses. Daniel seven's "horn power"; the "man of sin" of Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians; the "antichrist" of John's epistle and the "leopard-like beast" of John's Revelation all tell a similar story. They don't all cover the same details, just as the Gospels don't have exactly the same material in them, but together they give an accurate and faithful account of what the enemy's plan is and how God is going to win in the end.

Today we consider the last two of those pictures. John wrote, "Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour." I John 2:18.

Let's think of the term "Antichrist." If I were to say to you, "I'm anti-war," you would understand me to mean that I'm "against" war, wouldn't you. That is the meaning that is most often applied to the term "anti." But, as applied to the title "Antichrist" as used in Scripture, this has resulted in much confusion, or at least incomplete understanding. When coming from a Latin

background, *anti* primarily means "against." But remember that the New Testament was written in Greek, not Latin. We must appeal to the language in which John wrote to gain a correct or fuller knowledge of the term he used.

By comparing Scripture with Scripture we come to a better understanding of the words used. Let's compare two passages in the Bible to better understand the flavor of the word *anti* in Greek, the tongue in which John wrote. The first comes from the story of how Joseph was led to take the infant Jesus to Galilee when they came up from Egypt. "But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead.' Then he arose, took the young Child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee." Matthew 2:19-22.

The phrase I want you to focus on in that passage is the phrase "Archelous was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod." Those two words in English "instead of" are from the Greek word *anti*. What does the word *anti* mean in that verse? Without question it means just what the New King James Version has as "instead of". Every Bible translation will bear out that meaning. The New American Standard, New International and many others have "in place of" his father; the King James has "in the room of" his father; the Message Bible has it "Archelaus had succeeded" his father. The concept is basic and easy to understand; one had stepped into the place and office of another. Plug that meaning into your mind as you consider the term *Antichrist*.

Let's look at the second Scripture containing this word *anti* in Greek. It's a text familiar to many. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." Mark 10:45. The English word "for" is *anti* in Greek. What is the primary and obvious meaning of that word in this

text? Did Jesus give His life “against” us, “opposed” to us, or “for” us? It was as our divine Substitute, wasn’t it. These words, from the mouth of Jesus Himself, tell us that He took what we deserved when He died on the cross. It was in our place, in our stead that He hung on Calvary.

Now translate that concept of *anti* into the term Antichrist as used by John. The basic concept is that of replacement. Archelaus took the place of his father Herod. Jesus took the place of the sinner when He died on the cross. *The term Antichrist describes an attempt to take the place of Jesus.* It is true that often when one seeks to take the place of another it is because he is opposed to or against him. And *anti* can have that meaning. But it would be a huge mistake to overlook the basic idea, as we have seen illustrated in parallel Bible texts, which emphasizes the concept of *replacement* first.

God’s Book makes it clear that there is one who has sought to take the place of Jesus, and his name is Lucifer. He was created a beautiful, wise and talented covering cherub, but somehow, in a way we can’t explain, he coveted God’s throne. The Bible calls this the “mystery of iniquity,” as we studied last time in Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians.

What does the Scripture reveal about Lucifer’s intentions? “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart; I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” Isaiah 14:12-14.

What Lucifer wanted was God’s power, not His character. Self promotion and ambition led him to desire to be worshiped as God. He wanted the place, the glory and adoration that belongs only to the sovereign Creator. When Jesus was on earth, Satan

tempted Christ to worship him. *Satan is the original and ultimate Antichrist*, the one who has wanted to take Jesus' place.

As we've seen, though, Satan seeks to work within and through people, often the very people that call themselves "God's people," to accomplish his designs. Thus Satan inspires mortals to apply to themselves titles and abilities that belong only to the Ruler of the universe. When Pope Leo stated, "We hold on this earth the place of God Almighty," little did he know that he was articulating the aspirations of the arch deceiver, and by his very words fulfilling the concept of *Antichrist*; that is *one who takes the place of Christ*.

One of the titles of the pope is "Vicar Of Christ". Here is what Catholicism itself says: "**Vicar of Christ** . . . Title used almost exclusively of the Bishop of Rome as successor of Peter and, therefore, the one in the Church who particularly **takes the place of Christ**; but used also of bishops in general and even of priests. First used by the Roman Synod of A.D. 495 to refer to Pope Gelasius; more commonly in Roman curial usage to refer to the Bishop of Rome during the pontificate of Pope Eugene III (1145-1153). Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) asserted explicitly that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ; further defined at the Council of Florence in the *Decree for the Greeks* (1439) and Vatican Council I in *Pastor Aeternus* (1870). The Second Vatican Council, in *Lumen Gentium* , n.27, calls bishops in general "vicars and legates of Christ." All bishops are vicars of Christ for their local churches in their ministerial functions as priest, prophet, and king, as the Pope is for the universal church; the title further denotes they exercise their authority in the Church not by delegation from any other person, but from Christ Himself." Source: *Catholic Dictionary*, Peter M.J. Stravinskis, Editor, published by Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, 1993, pp. 484-485.

When the pope writes his messages, he usually writes them in Latin, the language of the Catholic Church. We have seen that the papacy is not reticent to claim the title "Vicar of Christ." Think of

how astounding this is: From the Latin derivation the title the pope claims is "Vicar of Christ," which according to their own explanation means "One who takes the place of Christ." But notice this: if that title were expressed by the Greek language, in which we've seen that the word meaning "in the place of" is *anti*, that same title "Vicar of Christ" would be "Antichrist!" By the very usage of the term "Vicar of Christ," the papacy has effectively fulfilled the specifications of prophecy.

The title Vicarius Filii Dei ("Vicar of the Son of God") is one which has provoked much discussion. Catholics today deny that this title was ever used in an official way, but there is strong evidence against this denial. See for a full discussion of the matter.

<http://www.aloha.net/~mikesch/666.htm>

<http://biblelight.net/envoy.htm>

The fact is that the concept that the pope occupies a role in which he acts as "one in place of Christ," is confessed by the Vatican without hesitation. His claim to be able to forgive sin justifies the application of the title.

Let's look briefly at the fourth prophetic picture of this system, given by John in Revelation 13. Because this is the last of our four pictures and many of the specifications have already been encountered, we won't go into great detail in this chapter.

John saw a beast rise from the sea. "Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power, his throne and great authority. I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast? Who is able to make

war with him?’ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue and nation. And all who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.” Revelation 13:1-10.

That this represents the same entity as the horn power in Daniel 7 and the other passages there can be no doubt. We find the same

Mouth speaking great blasphemies, brought specifically to view in Daniel 7, II Thessalonians 2 and implicitly in the term Antichrist. Here we’re told that she blasphemes God’s name (in the titles used by popes), His tabernacle (by claiming to be able to forgive sins and obscuring the ministry of Jesus) and those who dwell in heaven (by claiming to elevate mortals to sainthood by her decree and by claiming authority over angels).

Period of duration, the 42 months or 1260 days (“years”) which are equivalent to the “time, times and half a time” of Daniel 7 (see Revelation 12:6, 14 for a comparison). This represented the period of papal domination from 538 A.D. through 1798.

Persecution brought to bear against dissenters, which resulted in the martyrdom of millions during her reign.

Consistent with the pattern of prophecy, new details are added for confirmation and information. We are told that this power

would undergo a lethal setback, but that she would recover from it. This is why we have been addressing the period of 1260 years as representing "uninterrupted reign." It is altogether true that the papacy ruled for these centuries, but then received a severe setback, from which she later recovered.

This was fulfilled in 1798, 1260 years after the armies of Justinian had removed those who opposed the papacy in 538 A.D. It was in 1798 that the papacy received a "mortal wound" at the conclusion of the French Revolution. He who had led into captivity must himself go into captivity. Berthier, the general of Napoleon, was instructed to take Pope Pius VI captive, who later died in exile. Try to imagine something like that happening today! Many thought the power of the papacy had been broken forever. Within a relatively short time, however, she began to revive. In 1929 the Lateran Treaty, or Concordat of 1929 was enacted. On February 11 of that year Benito Mussolini, on behalf of King Victor Emmanuel III, signed the pact giving the papacy a temporal realm and making the pope the sovereign ruler of the Vatican. Cardinal Gasparri signed on behalf of Pope Pius XI.

The very next day, February 12, newspapers around the world, such as the San Francisco Chronicle headlined the event as "healing the wound" of many years, reflecting the very words of Revelation. For more information click on link.

<http://www.biblelight.net/lateran2.gif>

Today the papacy stands virtually unchallenged. The recovery is nearly complete. She exercises almost all the power and authority of her former regime. In 2008 the prophetic questions, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" have basis in reality. President Bush received many heads of state during his eight years in office, but in only one case did he go to the airport and meet his visitor, and that was when Pope Benedict XVI came to America in April of this year on his plane Shepherd 1.

Another point that needs to be stressed is the startling language of verse 4. "So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast." We are told previously that the "dragon" is "the devil and Satan." Revelation 12:9. By paying homage to the "beast" men effectively worship the "dragon," for it is the visible expression of Lucifer's designs.

Moses reflected on Israel's departure from true worship with these words, "Then he forsook God Who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons, not to God." Deuteronomy 32:15-17.

Men would cringe at the thought of bowing in worship before the originator of sin, but could the curtain be removed so they could see the reality of the warfare between the agencies of good and evil, they would see clearly that by giving allegiance to the system that Satan has deceived into doing his work of attacking God's government and His law, they are doing just that.

If ever there were a time when we should be seeking the Lord, it is now. If ever there were a time when we should be asking Him to take sin out of our lives, it is now. If ever there were a time when we should be looking for the City with foundations, instead of the crumbling institutions of human making, it is now.

Whom shall we obey, whom shall we serve? Christ, the Giver of life, the Savior of the world? Or Lucifer, the producer of death, the destroyer of the world? To whom shall we give our loyalty? To God Whose Gospel gives us the freedom to choose life? Or Satan, whose objective is our slavery and damnation?