

the

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“Do the work of an evangelist” - 2 Tim 4:5

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The New World Government and the Rise of the Antichrist

by the Rev. Archimandrite Fr. Eusebius Stephanou, Th.D.

To imagine that the late Fr. Eusebius Stephanou had written these articles during the 1980's is truly astounding and a prophetic insight. This subject no longer takes a great imagination in our own day since we can now witness the

setting in order of the events leading up to a one world government. May you be inspired and strengthened in your faith through these insightful writings. Sincerely, *Joseph Abbate*

Even a mere acquaintance with Bible prophecy will convince any Christian believer that we are presently living in an apocalyptic age. It can no longer be business as usual for us as individual Orthodox and as a Church as a whole. **You have to be blind not to see the “signs of the times” on the world scene.**

It is time to get serious about the Bible if we are not to be caught unawares and end up being confused and demoralized over the outcome of present day developments in the world. Jesus said: *“When you see these things begin to come to pass, then look up, lift up your heads, for your redemption draws near”* (Luke 21:28).

The Rise of the Antichrist

It is not fashionable to talk on the subject of the Antichrist in the Orthodox Church today. It is sad that those who should be exercising the ministry of preaching and teaching the flock of Christ are mute. They think it is apocalyptic sensationalism to warn God's people that the time of the

Antichrist is drawing near.

In contrast with our present-day pastors, the Church Fathers, who lived more distant from the end-time, did their utmost to alert those they shepherded and to warn them that the day of the Antichrist could be at the door. They put us modern day Orthodox to shame. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (of the fourth Century), for example, teaches the following: *“Most have departed from the right words, and rather choose the evil, than desire the good. This therefore is the falling away (apostasia) and the enemy is soon to be looked for; and meanwhile he has in part begun to send forth his own forerunners, that he may then come prepared upon the prey.”* *“Look therefore to thyself, O man, and make safe thy soul. The Church now charges thee before the living God; she declares to thee the things concerning Antichrist before they arrive..... knowing these things, you should make thyself secure beforehand”* (Catechetical Lecture 15).

The Church Fathers as shepherds were motivated out of pastoral concern to teach about the Antichrist and about the need to prepare in vigilance and repentance. **If we are the Church of the Fathers, why don't we speak today the message they had spoken.** Those in our own day to whom the souls

of God's people have been entrusted must show the same pastoral sensitivity and must enlighten their flock, lest they be taken by surprise and be found unprepared for that evil day. **It is simply a matter of compassion!**

Author Ray Brubaker in his book *Is the Antichrist here now* wrote: *“Writing in the fifth Century, Jerome expressed the same sentiments of Cyril, Chrysostom, and Augustine when he explained, 'let us therefore say what all ecclesiastical writers have delivered to us, that when the Roman Empire is to be destroyed, ten kings will divide the Roman world among themselves, and then will be revealed the Man of Sin'.”*

The Final Kingdom of Christ

The Roman Empire will be replaced ultimately with the Kingdom of Christ. We are told in Daniel that *“the God of heaven will set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.”* This did not take place in the first phase of the Roman Empire. Consequently, we must look for a revived form of the empire to fulfill this in the very last days just prior to Christ setting up His everlasting kingdom.

Antichrist will exercise his authority for seven years (Rev. 13:5, Dan. 7:25), *“Until the Ancient of days came that the saints possessed the Kingdom.”* The kingdom of Jesus Christ eventually prevails over the earth, destroying all previous kingdoms. The obliteration of Antichrist with the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory is foretold by Daniel (7:11). St. Paul confirms the prophecy of Daniel in his second epistle to the Thessalonians: *“And then shall that wicked one be revealed whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of His coming”* (2:8).

The days of Satan are counted.

The final victory will be Christ's who will come to destroy the Antichrist, chain Satan, for one thousand years, and set up His visible kingdom upon earth. The saints will sit together with Jesus, the King of kings, to reign with Him during the Millennium of His earthly rule.

O! What glory and exaltation await those of us who will endure to the end in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ! The Lord has made a provision for His elect. He will protect those who remain faithful in their commitment to the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

There is nothing to be fearful about, dear reader. ***“Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars,”*** Jesus told us about the last days. ***“See that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass”*** (Matt. 24:6). The word of God is one of consolation for the saints. Get your eyes off of this world. Set your eyes on the skies. ***“When ye see these things (signs of the times) begin to come to pass, then look up, lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth near.”*** †

It is time to get marked. It is a time of decision. Each of us will have to choose which mark it will be. Will it be the mark of the beast or the mark of God? Everyone is to get marked. No one can avoid making a choice: which of the two will it be? The last days in which we live are days of expectation and preparation. God is calling upon us to accept that supreme heavenly provision. The message from heaven is the message of repentance. Those inside the church, as well as those outside the church, must repent, and repent they must especially from their sins of indifference and religious shallowness.

Those who will refuse God's mark on their forehead will in effect be exposing themselves ultimately to the

temptation of receiving the mark of the beast during the reign of the Antichrist. Satan will have his own seal for those who reject God's final anointing. Scripture foretells the day of the Antichrist, a world Dictator, who will place an indelible impression upon all those who will worship his image.

“And he causeth all. Both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads. “And that



no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:16).

The Mark of the Beast

When Jesus appears in glory both the Antichrist and those ***“that had received the mark of the beast and them that worshipped his image will be cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone”*** (Rev. 19:20). Each man and woman will have to suffer a martyr's death in order to be saved. It will be a period reminiscent of the age of the early Christians when large-scale persecutions swept through the church and when martyrdom was almost a certainty for every believer.

Those who will be faced with a decision to accept the mark of the beast will be those who did not make the rapture of the Church. They were left behind. They had not gone all the way for Christ. They could have been

baptized members of the Church, but they were simply nominal Christians with no personal experience of salvation and of the Holy Spirit baptism. They had not received the end-time mark of Jesus Christ in order to be caught up to the clouds to meet the Lord in the air at the last trumpet. When you miss out at the Rapture, your only hope for salvation is to endure martyrdom during the Great Tribulation.

There are indications on the world scene which tell us that the rise of the World Dictator is not very far off. The social unrest and increasing disorder and terrorism will gradually bring the western nations together into a federation. They will be looking for the one outstanding man who can exercise the leadership needed for the restoration of law, order and peace. The Common Market is the first stage in the emergence of the Federated States of Europe. The instability and uncertainty in the economy of western countries will necessitate a closer unity in which there will be a common currency and an international monetary system. They will find that genius for urgent leadership in an hour of critical need in the person of the Antichrist.

Those upon earth who refuse to receive the mark of the beast will find their eternal reward. They will pass on into the glory of Christ's heavenly majesty. Revelation 14:1 records the vision of the hundred forty-four thousand who surround the Lamb, that stands on Mt. Zion, and who have ***“his Father's name written on their foreheads.”*** These did not receive the mark of the beast. Rather, they preferred death instead of taking the mark of the Antichrist. On their unmarked foreheads the Lord placed His own mark: ***“His Father's name, written on their foreheads.”*** Those who ***“were redeemed from among men,***

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being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb” escaped the everlasting punishment that fell upon those who received the mark of the beast. We read in Revelation 14:9 the warning of the third angel:

“If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead, or in his hand, “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.”

“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

To receive **“the mark of the beast”** is the same as worshipping the beast. These two are always mentioned together in Scripture. To accept his name on the forehead is equal to rejecting Jesus Christ. It is as if a person is saying: “I am one of his, I belong to him. I am his property. I have handed myself over to his control, and he has put his mark of ownership and lordship upon my body.”

In the closing days of the age, the influence of the “dragon” will not be one of moral and spiritual temptation. It will be an age of direct intervention of spiritual agents into the world from Satan's kingdom. The Antichrist, as Satan's counterfeit of the Messiah, will exercise absolute lordship over the bodies and souls of men and woman and over every aspect of their life.

Forerunners of Antichrist

The predicted eschatological great apostasy is already upon us. We see it in all the mainline churches. Satan already is at work, seducing and deceiving “even the very elect” in the church, ordained clergy, as well as the laity. Is it any wonder secularism and humanism are afflicting most of the mainline, including the Orthodox Church? The spirit of the present world system has already infiltrated the churches and caused the gospel to be hidden or embellished. It

comes as no surprise that apostasy is rife among the sons of the kingdom, that is, among baptized members of the church.

It is not enough, however, to warn our Orthodox people against the danger of religious deception. It is not enough to caution them against church politics and religious phonies who play church and use their office and rank to serve



their own personal interests and petty ambitions. It is not enough to alert them to the peril of treating religious functionaries in the church as authentic shepherds.

The need of the hour is to introduce our people to the chief shepherd of their souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. The urgency of the hour is to bring our people to the foot of the Cross that they might know their true Messiah and the soon coming King. The mandate of Christ for this last hour is the re-evangelization of our people. We can no longer take for granted that they are in a right relationship with God. The need is to proclaim afresh the unchanging ***“gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.”***

God Prepares His Remnant

Ezekiel records the following: ***“He cried also in my ears with a loud voice, saying, cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand (Ezek. 9:1).*** Here is God's plan, He commands five of his six city leaders to

go out with their deadly weapons and kill “old and young”, but He instructs the one man who was clothed with linen to mark those whom He decided to spare.

“Go through the midst of the city, through the Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof” (9:4). It is interesting that they are spared not for their righteousness and faithfulness to God, but because they ***“sigh and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst”*** of Israel. Of course, they were righteous and faithful to God. However, what the Lord appreciated in them was their sensitivity to the wrong doings of the others.

What made them find favor in God's sight was the fact that they grieved in the Spirit and that they cried out to God and cried in righteous indignation against the people. They expressed their godly sorrow and they cried out against the sins of Israel and warned the people to repent and be spared God's wrath.

The same thing can be said about the attitude of those in the church today who have an experience of salvation and go all the way for Christ. They are not only faithful to God, but they sigh with godly sorrow over the predicament in the church and they speak out against the collective sins of God's people.

The Man Clothed in Linen

Who is the “one man among them clothed with linen” that was instructed by God to mark the righteous ones? He is the type of Jesus, the only righteous One without sin and in whose righteousness the believer is saved from divine wrath. In Revelation we find that the fine linen is the ***“righteousness of the saints” (19:8).*** We read that the ***“armies which were in heaven followed Him (Jesus Christ) upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (19:14).***

The man clothed with linen was commanded by God to **“Set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.”** The other city leaders were told to slay old and young, but not to touch those who had received the mark of the man dressed in linen. **“But come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary” (9:6).**

The man clothed in linen who marked the foreheads of the remnant represents Jesus Christ whom the Father has sent to seal those who accept His salvation. Like that man who reported back to God, saying, **“I have done as thou hast commanded me” (9:11).** Jesus reported back to His Father and said in the high priestly prayer: **“I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:4).**

As it was in the days of Ezekiel so it will be in the last days just prior to the return of Jesus. God will mark all the just and faithful ones in preparation for the last judgement of the world. He is already marking them with the seal of the Holy Spirit in a major intervention of His sovereign grace. Even in the book of Ezekiel we find God's promise that he will do a special work of restoration among His people in a new endowment of power in the Holy Spirit. The prophecy resembles Joel's prophecy that **“In the last days I will pour of my Spirit upon all flesh.”**

It points to an event in the future when God will move in an extraordinary way to infuse supernatural power into His remnant. **“And I will give them a heart of flesh” (Ezek. 11:19).** When God executes judgment upon His people and destroys the unrighteous, He works out a new dealing with His remnant. He renews His covenant with them. He reaffirms His past promises and reassures them with His love and favor. He continues the above prophecy with the following words: **“That they**

may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances, and do them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (11:20).

The Marking of God's People

The baptism of the Holy Spirit then is the mark that every believer will receive from the Father in the last days. It is the final gift God bestows by grace and by His good pleasure for the purpose of restoring apostolic power to the church. It is a supernatural endowment that will miraculously bring believers together from every mainline church and progressively lead them into that unity intended by Christ for His church. The final seal of the Holy Spirit will enable such believers to share a commune experience that



they were unable to experience before. It defies human explanation. It is simply the mystery of God's mercy and love manifested in an hour when the Christian world faces an impasse.

I do not understand everything about this apocalyptic phenomenon. I don't have all the answers. All I know is that this experience of the Holy Spirit in a deeper dimension creates a passionate love in your heart for Jesus and a new desire to praise and worship Him. It gives you a fresh capacity to glorify and exalt Him. You always want to give Him the pre-eminence in all things and to declare His lordship over your personal life and over the life of the church. You begin to minister to others in a supernatural power you did not have before.

For me this matter is not mere theory nor theological speculation. I am not simply trying to be different or to engage in religious adventure. It is too awesome for me to take lightly and merely be controversial. It is a matter of personal experience for me. Though I was unworthy of anything from Heaven, the Lord blessed me with the Holy Spirit baptism in 1972 after several months of seeking and waiting upon God in prayer and supplication.

In our own day God is raising up a remnant. He is raising up a people who will walk in His statutes and who will keep His ordinances. He is gathering the remnant from all nations and all churches in final readiness for the return of Jesus. He is preparing a people that will live in perfect obedience to His will. He is generating sons and daughters who are willing to be zealous for Christ and “aglow in the Spirit.” They are not interested in the applause of men. They oppose compromising the standards of the Gospel. God is bringing into existence a Church in which there will be no bingos, Greek Nights, Bazaars and Fashion Shows. It is a church and a people that are passionately consumed with Jesus and the Great Commission.

The day of Pentecost, did not exhaust the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel and Ezekiel. The natural disasters foretold by Joel were not evident on Pentecost. **“And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke”. “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come” (2: 30, 31).**

The complete fulfillment of Joel's prophecy is reserved for the final stage of the **“last days,”** that is, just prior to the second coming of Jesus. Similarly, at that time the outpouring of the Holy Spirit **“upon all flesh”** will be on a worldwide scale.