

Marvel at the Genuine Jesus

LHC: Message Thirty-Three (980726PM)

Week 33: Marvel at the Genuine Jesus

(Revelation 13)

As the end of days approaches, you can find hope as you marvel at the genuine Jesus!

SUNDAY: How to Escape the Mark of the Beast

[He] is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.

—Jude 1:24, emphasis added

As the end of the world approaches, so does earth's darkest hour. Hell will soon open, and the pit will vomit out its demon hordes to run wildly throughout humanity. Other beasts from the abyss will globally wreak death and destruction. Satan himself will invade the earth and seemingly conquer it at last.

At the helm, the visible leader of the world will be the long promised man of sin, the lawless one, the beast, the coming world leader—commonly known as the Antichrist. But behind him, the real power will be the god of this world, the dragon, old Lucifer, the lying serpent of Eden.

Imagine what it would be like if that perfect leader were to step forward tomorrow—a man who appears to seemingly come out of nowhere—almost a person from the past who rolls into one all the great leaders of the world. Imagine one man with the strength of a Caesar, the military genius of an Alexander, the mesmerizing oratory of a Hitler, the warmth of a Ronald Reagan, the ruthless determination of a Ghenghis Khan, and the apparent compassion and tenderness of Jesus Christ!

John Phillips writes: “In 1 Timothy 4:1–3, the Bible clearly teaches that we can expect this invasion from the pit in the last days. During the final days, most people will be led astray by evil spirits and occult teachings. The shadows of these times are already darkening the world. Nothing but the restraining presence of God the Holy Spirit is holding back the floodgates of this time of evil. . . . Advanced demonism was the mark of Noah's day; [and] it is becoming an increasingly evident characteristic of the age in which we live.”¹

Revelation 13 explains (as do other scriptures) what I consider to be one of the saddest doctrines in the Bible—the teaching about the Antichrist, which tells us that the FALSE Christ will be universally embraced by the world after the TRUE Christ has been rejected! (Emphasis added to the verses below.)

“Therefore **when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’** spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” (whoever reads, let him understand) (Matthew 24:15).

“For false christs [pseudo-christs] and false prophets [pseudo-prophets] **will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect**” (Matthew 24:24).

“I was watching; and the same horn was **making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, . . . He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time**” (Daniel 7:21, 25).

The coming of the lawless one is according to **the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders** (2 Thessalonians 2:9).

Far more lethal than rampant viruses, far more poisonous than radioactivity or toxins, a counterfeit Christianity is seeping into our world. Jesus warned of a coming day of deception that was so intoxicating that without His intervention even God’s children would succumb. Revelation 13 shows the second flood, which will destroy our world. The first flood in Genesis was with water from God to judge sinful humanity. This second flood is with deception from Satan to seal the doom of humans unwilling to follow the Lord.

Perhaps the Antichrist will step into the world from a battlefield or maybe from the United Nations. Very possibly, a glowing metallic UFO will slowly descend in a globally watched spot and, before the wondering eyes of all the inhabitants of the earth, out will step the ultimate Superman—the first beast! In concise word pictures, John describes the culmination of the lies of Satan. Mankind needs to beware of Satan’s counterfeit authority (Revelation 12:17–13:2), counterfeit resurrection (Revelation 13:3–5), counterfeit citizenship (Revelation 13:6–10), counterfeit worship (Revelation 13:11–15), and counterfeit security—the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16–18).

How can you escape these counterfeits of Satan? The only place of safety is to have the security that the *real* Christ gives. May the wonders of this chapter cause you to seek God’s mark—and not the mark of the beast!

My Prayer for You This Week: *Oh Lord, as we read the words in Revelation 13, we are grieved to think of someone who will blaspheme Your name, Your dwelling place—the very God of heaven! We are grieved that he will be allowed to parade and march up and down on this planet for forty-two months, imitating Your three and one-half years of ministry—even imitating Your resurrection from the dead, Lord Jesus—and imitating Your power from heaven. We love You, so our hearts are grieved to think that mankind and humanity would stoop to the depths to be led by this monster from the pit! We want to magnify Your name, for the world is coming to a day when it will seek to obliterate the name of the true and living God—the Creator, the Redeemer, and the righteous Judge from the very consciousness of this planet. We pray that You might be praised through us, and that we might be among those who turn many to righteousness that we might all shine like the stars forever. May*

we have Your compassion, Lord Jesus, to tell everyone about You, and earnestly plead, like Paul, with them so that they might be reconciled to God and avoid the terror of the Lord. Give us an insatiable desire to win souls to You, Lord Jesus. Help us to faithfully tell people that before them is a choice, a destiny, and a destination that is either blessed or horrible, and that they must choose life and look at the Savior. Enable us to see You clearly! We pray all these things in Your precious name. Amen.

MONDAY: The Ultimate Superman — the Beast

*I was considering the horns, and there was . . . a little one . . . before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were **eyes like the eyes of a man**, and a mouth speaking pompous words.*

—Daniel 7:8, emphasis added

Impossible? No. He is coming. He may well be walking around today. Ever since Eden, mankind has sought to be “*like God*” and in this insatiable quest has come the glorification of the “*creature more than the Creator*.” This exaltation of man has allowed men of strong persuasion to be able to rise to extreme heights of power. In history these have been the Ramses, Alexanders, Caesars, and Napoleons. But there is a man on the horizon whose rise shall be as the sun’s rays across the earth; he shall be the embodiment of such power and personage that the entire world will be astounded by him. Thus, he will be sought after like no other leader before.

He will be one who seems to stop all threats from weapons of mass destruction. He will take charge and bring an end to the simmering hatred and volatile ethnic conflicts around the planet. The global fear of terrorism, biological warfare, and food shortages will cease through his leadership. He also seems to triumph in a global form of religion that the world can finally agree to. It may even be a counterfeit version of Christianity because “anti” means “in place of” Christ.

Here are some of the attributes that the Antichrist—this Superman of evil—possesses: (Emphasis added in the following verses.)

The Antichrist is Super-intelligent. He is portrayed as a Superman of intellect: “*In this horn, were **eyes like the eyes of a man***” (Daniel 7:8).

The Antichrist is a Super-communicator. He is notable as a Superman of communication: “*a mouth speaking **pompous words***” (Daniel 7:8).

The Antichrist is a Super-politician. He is a Superman of politics who has unusual abilities to lead and persuade, and seems to conquer in peace: *he shall come in peaceably, and **seize the kingdom by intrigue*** (Daniel 11:21). In Revelation 6:2 he will ride a “*white horse*” and go out “***conquering and to conquer.***”

The Antichrist is a Super-businessman. He possesses extraordinary business abilities, and is a Superman of money: “*He shall cause deceit to **prosper under his rule; . . . He shall destroy many in their prosperity***” (Daniel 8:25; see also Revelation 18.) He will organize or just use a global digitalization of commerce.

The Antichrist is a Super-general. He is the ultimate military strategist, a Superman of the military: “[He] shall **devour the whole earth, trample it and**

break it in pieces” (Daniel 7:23). We see the same power revealed in Revelation 13:4 and 7: *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 authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.* He rules the world!

The Antichrist has a Super-ego. He is the Superman of megalomaniacs who lust for great and grandiose performances: *The man of sin . . . opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that **he sits as God in the temple of God**, showing himself that he is God (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4).* From this, we clearly see his yearning to be *“like the Most High God”!*

Would it surprise you to know that Americans are actually looking for an ET (extra-terrestrial being) like this “Superman” to come and help? According to pollsters, 72 percent of Americans believe that there is life beyond the earth; 48 percent believe UFOs are real; and 15 percent have seen one, with 3 percent of Americans (that’s almost nine million of us) being abducted by aliens into a UFO.

One noted journalist, after studying UFOs and those in contact with them, concluded: “The earth is not inhabited by them, it is infested.” What do UFOs do to the Word of God and our faith? I have concluded that UFOs are demonic!

UFOs would support naturalistic evolution to the point of believing that perfection would overcome death, disease, and so forth. When people believe in extra-terrestrial intelligence, that would mean that evolution has gone on for who knows how many billion years and, somewhere out there, life has ascended higher than here on earth.

ETs lessen the incarnation of Jesus. If there really are many all-powerful aliens out there, this would be the common thinking: *What if Jesus did come? What difference does that really make? After all, it may be possible to overcome death and disease because all these beings that can fly around are superior to us, so they have obviously found the answer!*

That erroneous thinking would lead to this conclusion:

- The earth is just an insignificant dot in the universe.
- Man is not the crown of God’s creation.
- Sin is just our problem, or not even a problem at all.
- Hope lies in contact with some of these “higher” life forms.
- Christ’s death was a local rather than a cosmic event.
- The Word of God is anachronistic, local, and out of touch with the big picture of the cosmos.
- We are not in God’s image.

That is what evolution, science fiction, and UFO-ology teaches! And those lies of Satan are deceiving mankind and thus determining their eternal destiny—separated forever from God in the lake of fire with the devil and his angels. We need to spread the Truth to the perishing every chance we get!

TUESDAY: The Person of the Antichrist

*And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring who . . . have the testimony of Jesus Christ. . . . 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. **The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.***

—Revelation 12:17–13:2, emphasis added

As we examine the person of the Antichrist, drawn in the words of the Apostle John, and see him whose cause is not only to be “anti” (opposed), but also “anti-” (the exact inverse of) Christ Jesus the Lord of glory, there are five horrible lies that this beast (the Antichrist) will foist upon the earth as he carries out his counterfeit operation of imitating Christ.

Lie One: The beast will offer a false authority. In Revelation 12:17–13:2 “*the beast*” is imitating the Kingdom of God, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Creator. Satan’s counterfeit authority is rebellion against God, which actually started in the Garden of Eden when Eve questioned the goodness, authority, and right of God to limit. You can escape his false authority by keeping yourself under the authority of God.

Lie Two: The beast will offer a false resurrection. In Revelation 13:3–5, the beast causes the whole world to marvel at his counterfeit resurrection as he imitates the prince of life, the firstborn from the dead, the empty tomb, the way, the truth, and the only hope: *And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. . . . 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 authority to continue for forty-two months.*

God allows the beast to be brought back to life after being mortally wounded. In every point, the beast will be mirroring the Lord Jesus Christ. He will be allowed to rule three and one-half years, which is the length of Christ’s ministry, and he will counterfeit Old Testament miracles as well.

Lie Three: The beast will offer a false citizenship. In Revelation 13:6–10, he offers a counterfeit citizenship to the earth dwellers as he imitates the wonders of our Father’s house He’s preparing, the heavenly city, the streets of gold, and the Water of Life—making them here on earth and telling those people that they are not to wait for the Son of God from heaven: *Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God. . . . It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over . . . All who dwell on the earth . . . whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. . . . Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.*

In this passage, the beast starts a deadly rampage on the earth that causes a counterfeit citizenship. Those whose names are not in the Lamb’s Book of Life will worship the beast. But Christians know that *our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ* (Philippians 3:20).

Lie Four: The beast will offer false worship or religion. In Revelation 13:11–15, the second beast, the false prophet, affirms his false message that imitates the true worship of the living and true God in spirit and in truth, not self-styled but biblical: *Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast . . . and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, . . . And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs . . . , telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image . . . , that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.*

The term “*another beast coming up out of the earth*” is the same term used when Saul got the witch of Endor to conjure up Samuel. I am not sure how much God will allow here, but this second beast is an amazing creature. He will lead false worship. It is hard for us to comprehend right now, but we have become such a globally linked society that we know about things around the world as they are happening. As events happen, it will touch the whole world. This false resurrection will cause everyone in the world to be in wonder, because in the back of everybody’s consciousness is the story of Christ. John 1:9 says: *That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.* There is a basic awareness of the true living God. When people see this, most of the world without loving the Truth will start falling for the lie—because they have never known the Word of God.

Lie Five: The beast will offer a false security. In Revelation 13:16–18, through the “*mark*” he is imitating the Holy Spirit’s sealing of those in the Book of Life, betrothed to Christ, His very bride, kept and protected by the power of God unto salvation: *He causes all . . . to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.*

So then, how do we live in hope as we approach these fearsome days?

Examine your address label. Make sure you are addressed to the right destination. *Ask yourself: Am I really a citizen of heaven, or just an earth dweller?* Philippians 3:20 says that the born-again Christian’s *citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.* In light of that verse, step back and look at your direction. Honestly ask yourself: *Where am I really headed?* For God says: *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith* (2 Corinthians 13:5a).

Turn on your security system. Ask yourself: *Have I really turned on my security system? Am I an authentic, signed original? Am I a sealed and secure container of heavenly treasure?* One way to know if your security system is turned on is to watch what comes out of your life as your body ages and weakens. Is it the treasure of the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control—that spills forth from inside? Or is it the works of the flesh that ooze out from within your soul? Second Corinthians 4:7 says, *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.* The

weaker we get, and the shorter our time on earth, the more the treasure of Christ should spill out of our lives. Oh, how we should allow our weakness to show the righteousness of Christ coming out of us! So the next time you are sick, let the treasure of Christ come out instead of being irritable and angry.

Investigate the real thing. How well do you know Jesus by personal contact? How quickly do you recognize Him in His Book? Have you begun a lifelong pursuit of Jesus Christ in the Bible? Do you know the *real* well enough to recognize the *counterfeit*?

Let me remind you again that, to escape Satan's counterfeits, the *only* place of safety is to have the security that the *real* Christ gives! Have you fled to Him as your eternal refuge? If not, don't delay—He could come back *today*!

WEDNESDAY: The Prince That Shall Come

“The prince who is to come . . . shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.”

—Daniel 9:26a, 27a, emphasis added

The coming world leader, commonly known as the Antichrist, has thirty-three titles in the Old Testament and thirteen in the New Testament. One of these titles, “the prince who is to come,” is from Daniel 9:26–27 where it was prophesied that the people of this “prince” would destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its fulfillment occurred in history when the Roman legions under Titus Vespasian destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. This reflexive reference to the Romans in Daniel 9:26 is one of several reasons why many Bible scholars view the future “*prince who is to come*” as a Roman or European.

- **The Beast from the Sea—Revelation 13:1–10:** He is the Roman prince of Daniel 9 who will break his covenant with the Jews at the middle of the week. He is the Antichrist, the man of lawlessness (Pentecost, Seiss, Newell). Some think that verse 3 means that he will be raised from the dead (Seiss, Newell).
- **The Beast from the Earth—Revelation 13:11–18:** He is the false prophet—apparently a Jewish religious leader who causes men to worship the first beast. He has the power to do miracles to deceive men (vv. 14–15). Some interpret the Antichrist as “the one instead of Christ” (Scott, Ironside, Gaebel, Kelly); others see him as the “one opposed to Christ” (Pentecost).

These beasts make war with the saints and overcome them (v. 7). All who are not of the elect will worship the first beast (v. 8). By economic warfare they can starve out those who will not worship the first beast (vv. 16–17).

Point by point, the beast is a poor imitation of Christ. As we examine him in his falseness, gaze at Christ's beauty and see Him more clearly for who He is today! Here are some interesting insights on the beast.

The Peacemaker—Revelation 6:1–2: Certainly, this man will be on the scene before the Rapture occurs. He will be a peaceful political leader who unites ten nations of Europe into a strong power bloc (see Revelation 17:12–13). The rider on the white

horse will imitate Christ (Revelation 19:11ff). He will go forth to conquer peacefully, and will have a bow, but no arrows. He will bring a brief time of peace to the world (1 Thessalonians 5:1–3) before the storm of the day of the Lord breaks loose.

The Protector—Daniel 9:24–27: Although we examined the exciting details of this prophecy in Week 31, it is important to recall certain facts. First, the prophecy applies to Israel, Jerusalem, and the temple, and not to the church. Second, it announces the time when Messiah will come and accomplish certain purposes for the Jewish people. The word “week” refers to a period of seven years; seventy weeks are equal to 490 years. Note that these 490 years are divided into three parts: (1) seven weeks or forty-nine years, during which the city would be rebuilt; (2) sixty-two weeks or 434 years, at the end of which time Messiah would come and be cut off; and (3) one week or seven years, during which a “prince” would have a covenant with Israel. The seventieth week will start with the arrival of Antichrist. He will make a covenant with Israel to protect her and permit her to rebuild her temple. This covenant will be for seven years. He will temporarily solve the Middle East crisis. Israel will rebuild her temple in peaceful times. It is the signing of this covenant, not the Rapture of the church, which signals the start of Daniel’s seventieth week, that seven-year period known as the day of the Lord.

The Peace-Breaker—Daniel 9:27: After three and one-half years, Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews and take over their temple. This was what Paul termed “*the falling away*” (2 Thessalonians 2:3b). A better translation would be “the rebellion, the apostasy.” Not simply *a* rebellion, but *the* rebellion. Up to this point, Antichrist has been a peacemaking leader of ten European nations, obligated to protect Israel. But now he will reveal his true character by taking over the Jewish temple and demanding that the world worship him (see Revelation 13). Since the Antichrist will be energized by Satan, it is no surprise that he will seek worship; Satan has always wanted the worship of the world. In church history, there have been various apostasies when groups have turned away from God’s truth, but this final rebellion will be the greatest of all. The man of sin will oppose everything that belongs to any other religion, true or false. He will organize a world church that will, by worshiping him, actually be worshiping Satan. Our Lord predicted this apostasy: He called it “*the abomination of desolation*” (Matthew 24:15), a clear reference to Daniel 9:27. The world will wonder at this great leader who, with Satan’s power, will perform signs and wonders and deceive the nations.

The Persecutor—Revelation 13:15–17: Most prophetic students agree that the abomination of desolation will occur three and one-half years after the Antichrist makes his covenant with the Jews (Daniel 9:27—“in the midst of the week,” or three and one-half years). This will usher in a period of intense persecution and tribulation. Jesus said, “*For then there will be great tribulation*” (Matthew 24:21a). Satan will vent his wrath against Israel. He will so control the world’s economic system that citizens must bear “the mark of the beast” to be able to buy and sell (Revelation 13:16–17).

The Prisoner—Revelation 19:11–21: Keep in mind that God has a timetable. Satan will not be permitted to control the world forever. Jesus Christ will return “*in power and great glory*” and take the Antichrist, his associates, and Satan prisoner and cast them into the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1–3). This will be the climax of the

great Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16), during which the nations of the world unite with Satan to fight Jesus Christ. This leads to our next event.

What insights can we glean from these interesting statements about the beast? We are reminded of these truths: only Jesus is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6); only Jesus is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; only Jesus keeps all His promises; only those who come to Him have peace—the rest are like the restless sea; only Jesus gives true rest for the souls of those who come to Him (Matthew 11:28–30); and only Jesus can set you free (John 8:32–34)! A God like this deserves our *all!*

THURSDAY: Completely Confusing Times Are Coming

*And **the dragon** was enraged with the woman, and he **went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.** . . . 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.*

—Revelation 12:17; 13:7, emphasis added

When Christ returns there will be powerful, pervasive, and universal lies backed by the most believable signs and wonders ever witnessed on planet Earth. What will life on earth be like during these dark times? Let's look again at the verses from Revelation 12 and 13 above to remind us.

When Jesus came to earth, He was God in human flesh; as the Christ, He was the expression of all the promises of God. To think that **the Christ** in all His grace and beauty came to earth, stayed for thirty-plus years, was rejected as false and fake, and **almost no one followed Him**, is bad enough. But to know that Satan is going to send to earth the expression of all of mankind's desires in the person of **the Antichrist**, and in a very short time **almost all the earth will follow him**, is absolutely heart wrenching!

Imagine a leader as winsome as Reagan, as fearless as Alexander the Great, as mesmerizing as Hitler, as beloved by his people as George Washington, as great a leader as Moses, as unstoppable as Genghis Khan, and as spiritually charismatic as David—all in ONE man.

Now imagine that man openly displaying supernatural power in public, and being seen worldwide by way of the electronic media! It will appear that he is from heaven, and he will claim to be God. He will do miracles that everyone can see and believe in, and then offer himself to the world as their Christ.

There is a day coming soon when most people on earth will want to follow this ultimate "Superman." That is the saddest commentary on the fallen heart of humanity there could ever be—always wanting the wrong choice!

We have had several warm-up acts by Satan for this future main event of the final Antichrist. We can see the way Satan works most clearly in the life and accomplishments of Adolph Hitler. Hitler showed the world how just one man can lift a nation from the depths of economic ruin to the heights of power in a very short time (1933–1939)—and then lead the world into the deadliest war of all time (1939–1945). In six years Hitler

came uncomfortably close to conquering the world, which is a vivid example of how Satan can indwell and completely harness one man.

Hitler was an Antichrist. Rick Warren writes, “People who had personal contact with Hitler often spoke of the strange hypnotic power he was able to exert. In 1943, 100,000 young people in brown shirts filled the Olympic stadium in Munich, Germany, the largest stadium in the world at that time. They formed with their bodies a sign for a fanatical man standing behind the podium. The message read, ‘Hitler, we are yours.’”²

At the monument to Hitler’s evil, the death camp Auschwitz, are the words of Hitler’s vision of a generation of young people without a conscience. These words are aptly hung on a wall, grimly reminding the visitor of the hell unleashed when this goal was realized: “I freed Germany from the stupid and degrading fallacies of conscience and morality. . . . We will train young people before whom the world will tremble. I want young people capable of violence—imperious, relentless and cruel.”

On display for all to behold are thousands of pounds of women’s hair, retrieved and marketed as a commodity by the Nazi exterminators, architects of the final solution that sent multitudes to the gas ovens. The incredible reminders cast an overwhelming pall of somberness upon the visitor.³

But how did Satan find and use Hitler? Find out in tomorrow’s lesson!

FRIDAY: Satan Was the Original Antichrist

*“You are of your father **the devil**, and the desires of your father you want to do. He **was a murderer** from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for **he is a liar and the father of it.**”*

—John 8:44, emphasis added

Lucifer was the original Antichrist. Isaiah 14 reveals that he wanted the power of God and the worship of God for himself. He demanded equality with the Lord God Almighty. In fact, according to Ezekiel 28, he was “*the anointed cherub [angel].*” He was “*full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.*” His response to his endowment by God was one of pride and rebellion.

God rejected his power play and promised his doom in hell in the future. But until that time, Lucifer (Satan) is on the prowl, seeking likely candidates he can lead into occult worship. Rebellion gives Satan an open invitation to establish a stronghold in the rebel’s life. Understand this: occult involvement is actually worship of his infernal majesty—Satan!

Satan looks for rebels. Lucifer was the original rebel, and he is looking for rebels to enlist for his own selfish purposes. Rebellion against authority makes a person a prime target for satanic attack.

Hitler is a prime example of the rebellion-occult connection. His early life could be characterized by one word: failure. He had a meager existence while living on his dead mother’s limited savings and an orphan’s pension which came from his father’s service in the Customs Department. His attempt at higher education was thwarted. He

wanted to be an artist, so he applied at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts, but they refused to accept him because his sketches were not up to required standards. Next, he applied to the School of Architecture and was refused. Author Trevor Ravenscroft observes that because Hitler was unable to make friends, he became a more solitary and embittered figure.

To make a long story short, Hitler was angry at God and society because of his plight in life, so he rebelled against both. In his quest for power to change his plight, young Hitler turned to the occult. He began by spending all his free time in the Hofberg Library in Vienna, Austria. He read books on the history of the occult and Eastern religions, but the occult seemed to offer the power for which he was searching.

Demons controlled Hitler. The demons that controlled the demented soul of Adolph Hitler lured him and Germany into World War II, and then abandoned both him and his country to their fate. Hitler and his fellow conspirators came close to succeeding. They failed because the time was not yet ripe in the counsels of God for the forces of Satan to triumph. However, the whole Nazi era was a dress rehearsal for the coming of the beast and the consequent baptism of unregenerate mankind into just such a religion.⁴ **Hitler—like Satan—was a destroyer.** He found that Satan lived up to the titles given him in Revelation 9:11: *And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.* The translation of both words is “destroyer.” Hitler was used by Satan to destroy six million plus of God’s chosen people. Multiplied thousands more were destroyed in war. Then in mockery of Hitler himself, Satan motivated him to commit suicide, destroying himself.

One of the primary characteristics of those who get involved in the occult, like Hitler, is rebellion against authority. This rebellion is usually evident in one or more of the following three areas: (1) rebellion against parents; (2) rebellion against society; and (3) rebellion against Christianity.

Why do many of those who rebel against parents, society, and Christianity often end up involved in the occult? Those who know the Bible can tell you: rebellion and occult involvement are linked, *“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry”* (1 Samuel 15:23a).

Beware of giving place to the devil. Listen to Paul’s stern warning to Christians in Ephesians 4:27, *“nor give place to the devil.”* “Everywhere and always demons have lurked in the dark for the moment when a person becomes weak, when he arbitrarily abandons his human situation in the world order founded by God for him. . . . After the first voluntary downward step he is compelled to the second and third with rapidly increasing speed. . . . Man is unprotected against evil without the living God; he is like a boat without oars, exposed to the tempest, or like a baby without a mother, or like a cloud which dissolves.”⁵

Today, thoughtfully and carefully read Ephesians 4:27–5:8 and note each area Paul describes. These are the potential places Satan starts devouring us spiritually. Avoid allowing him to find these “landing spots” in your life.

SATURDAY: The Only Protection from Satan — God’s Signature

[You] are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

—1 Peter 1:5, emphasis added

When you call upon Christ in repentant faith, God saves you. Salvation is the greatest work of God in the universe. Some years ago a man in a penitentiary studied a Moody correspondence course. He found Christ. In answer to one of the questions, which gave him an opportunity to express where he stood in relation to his newfound faith, he wrote down: “I am a new man in an old body.” It was a most perceptive remark. For that is what salvation is. But salvation will go even further than that prisoner realized. One day he will be a new man in a new body. I like to call the work of salvation the signature of God—when God writes himself across our lives. Listen to this summary of what happens to each of us who come by faith to God through Christ: (Emphasis added to the verses below.)

- **Regeneration—when God changes my heart:** *“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; . . . and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them”* (Ezekiel 36:26–27).
- **Conversion—when God changes my life:** *“Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 18:3).
- **Repentance—when God changes my mind:** *“Bear fruits worthy of repentance”* (Matthew 3:8). When God transforms our minds we change. When we believe right, we begin to behave correctly.
- **Adoption—when God changes my family:** *You received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God* (Romans 8:15–16).
- **Sanctification—when God changes my behavior:** *For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us . . . : “I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them”* (Hebrews 10:14–16).
- **Justification—when God changes my state:** *Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ* (Romans 5:1). What does it mean to be “justified”? In popular, everyday language, the word can be paraphrased: “just as if I’d never sinned.” It means that God has no record of anything ever having gone wrong in our lives.
- **Glorification—when God changes my place:** *“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world”* (John 17:24).⁶ I encourage you to write these in your Bible, then believe them, live them, and share them as you act on the reality of God’s signature across your life!

Make a choice to live in hope: When God writes himself across your life through faith in Jesus Christ, you have the enduring hope that one day you will behold the brightness of Christ's face for all eternity! No matter how dark it gets in the meantime, Jesus will whisper to your soul: "Fear not, I am with you—peace, be still!" For He has promised to never leave or forsake you; nor will He ever test you beyond what you can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). And every time you recall that *greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world* (1 John 4:4, KJV), it gives you cause to keep singing His praises! Therefore, I hope that you can joyfully sing this song to the Lord today, thanking Him for His faithfulness in giving you such sweet hope in these bitter times.

He Keeps Me Singing

*There's within my heart a melody;
Jesus whispers sweet and low,
"Fear not, I am with thee, peace, be still,"
In all of life's ebb and flow.*

*Tho' sometimes He leads thro' waters deep,
Trials fall across the way;
Tho' sometimes the path seems rough and steep,
See His footprints all the way.*

*Soon He's coming back to welcome me
Far beyond the starry sky;
I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown,
I shall reign with Him on high.*

*Refrain:
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest name I know,
Fills my ev'ry longing, Keeps me singing as I go.*

—Luther B. Bridgers (1884–1948)

¹ John Phillips, *Exploring the Future: A Comprehensive Guide to Bible Prophecy* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1992), pp. 227–28.

² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), p. 357.

³ Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God?* (Dallas: Word, 1994), p. 23.

⁴ Drawn from Phillips, *Exploring the Future*, pp. 227–28.

⁵ Quoted in Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1994), p. 197–98.

⁶ John Phillips, *100 New Testament Sermon Outlines* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), p. 100.