

9.

IMPORTANT SIGNS

We have been speaking about the Antichrist and his rise to power. But what are the signs for which we should look? How can we identify such a person when he arrives on the world scene? One of the main clues is that this man takes over three countries. When the “little horn” arises, three of the other ten horns fall before him (Dan 7:8).

Now we know clearly from what part of the world the Antichrist will arise. We have also been shown where his ten nations will be. So what we have to look for is some relatively minor individual rising up to seize power in three nations of this region. This is a very important sign. Keep your eyes out for it!

Next we would expect to see seven other countries joining with him to form an alliance to make a total of ten. These countries will proba-

bly include Libya and Ethiopia. We read: "...the Libyans and Ethiopians shall follow at his heels" (Dan 11:43).

These ten nations will probably include a good part of the oil producing regions of that area of the world. These would be Muslim nations and it is likely that some of them will have nuclear capabilities. When you see these things come together, it is a sure sign that the end is upon us.

We should expect this ten nation confederacy to be somewhat shaky. As has been stated, although all these countries will probably be Muslim, not all Muslims agree with one another. In fact, some hate the others and even have fought wars against them. There are many different Islamic sects and factions. These would include the Shiites and the Sunnis.

While it seems that the Antichrist will be able, through his popularity and Satanic anointing, to unite these countries and groups, it will be an uneasy alliance.

We read: "Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, *the kingdom shall be divided*; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so *the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile*. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not

adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay” (Dan 2:41-43).

This section which mentions mingling with the “seed of men” could refer to the fact that although many nations will ultimately submit to the Antichrist’s rule, they will not really like each other. So we see that, even though the Antichrist succeeds in bringing together ten nations and eventually subduing the world, his kingdom will be fragile and not very unified.

Another part of the picture for which we should watch is that when the Antichrist first takes control of three nations he will not do this by force. He will probably “...come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue” (Dan 11:21). Somehow, he will probably be able to assume power without a fight.

Once again, this future world event should be an important signal for us. This is an occurrence for which we should watch carefully. The taking control of three Middle East nations by one individual without a military confrontation is a crucial sign. When the Antichrist finally comes to power, we should immediately put into action any plans which we feel God has given us if we have not already done so.

WARS WITH EGYPT

Still another identifying event for which we should look is that, after taking over the ten

nation confederacy, the Antichrist will have conflicts or wars with Egypt. Egypt will not join in with the Antichrist. She will not be part of the ten nations. In fact, it seems that Egypt attacks the Antichrist and is defeated.

We read: "At the time of the end the king of the South [Egypt] shall attack him; and the king of the North [Antichrist] shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through" (Dan 11:40).

It may be that the Antichrist's victory over Egypt will involve nuclear weapons. This conjecture is based upon the fact that Egypt will be uninhabited for 40 years after this time. This could be the result of nuclear fallout and contamination.

In Ezekiel we read: "And the land of Egypt shall become desolate and waste...and I will make the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate, from Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of Ethiopia. Neither foot of man shall pass through it nor foot of beast pass through it, and it shall be *uninhabited forty years*" (Ezek 29:9-11).

Not only does the Antichrist fight a war with Egypt at the end, but it seems that he has some previous conflicts with Egypt. It should be remembered that Egypt today is one of the nations of the Arab world which is most friendly toward Israel. This is not to say that they are

friends, but at least Egypt does not appear as hostile as the other Muslim nations.

Also, Egypt has cracked down on and even persecuted some of the participants in the recent radical Muslim "revival." She has imprisoned and/or expelled many of the leaders involved. So, it is very easy to believe that the Antichrist could try to punish Egypt for these positions and actions. Daniel 11:25-27 describes some events surrounding this previous war if you are interested.

Returning from his first defeat of Egypt, the Antichrist also appears to attack Israel. He is puffed up by his conquest and tries to defeat the Jews as well (Dan 11:28). Perhaps it is after this conflict that he will make some kind of agreement with Israel which he later breaks (Dan 9:27).

Another interesting fact is that on still another expedition against Egypt, "...ships from 'Kittim' (KJV) [this word means western lands] shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant" (Dan 11:30). These ships could be from almost anywhere "west" of the Middle East, including the U.S. or parts of Europe.

The attack on the Antichrist by ships from the west, along with the fact that he fights wars with Egypt, indicate that his government is not as "one world" as many have thought. His direct rule is over only ten nations. The rest of

the world will cooperate with him only by being forced into subjugation.

Even so, his domination of the world is not total. Returning from his final war with Egypt which is "at the time of the end," "...news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with a great fury to destroy and annihilate many" (Dan 11:44).

One explanation for this passage could be that Russia, because she produces enough oil to meet her needs, will not be completely subject to the Antichrist. Also, Russia has plenty of nuclear weapons and would not be easily cowed into submission to any Middle Eastern figure.

It is possible that Russia will become troubled by the situation and begin threatening some kind of action. This could be the "news from the east and north." Of course from this distance, we cannot know exactly what will occur. This is only being mentioned to show that the Antichrist is not the absolute ruler of the entire world. He too will have his troubles.

SITS IN THE TEMPLE AS GOD

At one point, it appears that the Antichrist enters the Jewish temple and proclaims himself God. In II Thessalonians 2:4 we read that he "...sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

This verse has been the subject of much speculation. At this writing, there is no Jewish temple in Jerusalem. Since there is no temple, people have created many fantastic interpretations to explain the meaning of this verse. However, it seems quite possible that before the occurrence of the end-times scenarios which we have been discussing, the nation of Israel will build a temple.

Where this temple would be built and how this might work is impossible to predict. The problem of having a Muslim shrine at what seems to be the site of the ancient temple appears insurmountable. However, God has His own means and ways. If this is His will, it will come to pass.

It is very possible for this scripture to have a literal fulfillment. The actual construction of a temple could take place very quickly. This would be especially true if materials are already being stockpiled as so many Christian rumors insist.

THE END OF THE ANTICHRIST

Eventually, the Antichrist will make a final effort to wipe Israel off the map. To do this, it seems that he will enlist the aid of many different nations. Perhaps he persuades them that Israel is really the cause of all the trouble over oil. If only they were out of the way, the "black

gold” could flow freely again. So he convinces many countries, possibly including China and India, to join him in attacking Israel.

He is helped in recruiting these other armies by three evil spirits “...like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev 16:13,14).

After crossing the Euphrates river, which will be dried up especially for this event (Rev 16:12), this tremendous army of several millions arrives at a place called Megiddo. It is a place called Armageddon in the New Testament. This seems to be a large flat area near some hills upon one of which stands the ruins of a city called Megiddo.

It is a place also called “the winepress of the wrath of God” (Rev 14:19). It is here that God will execute his judgment against those who have come to attack Israel. Probably this very place was prepared by God for this event when He made the world (Mt 21:33).

When this enormous army arrives there, we can imagine they are tired, thirsty and just longing to set their up tents and rest a little. We don’t know how long they are camped there, but sometime after their arrival it begins to rain.

Much to their disgust, they have to live in mud and water.

But the situation gets worse and worse. The rain becomes stronger. Soon it begins to hail. The lightning is terrible and frightening. It almost seems as if it runs along the ground. Finally, the size of the hail increases until each hailstone weighs about 100-200 pounds (Rev 16:21).

It is with these hailstones that Jesus “treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev 19:15). The “grapes” in this case are human beings who are squashed by the hailstones until the blood runs out in such great quantities that it reaches the incredible depth of “the horses’ bridles” and flows for a great distance (Rev 14:20).

The Antichrist himself and the false prophet are captured alive. Then they are thrown into the lake of fire which God has prepared for the devil and his angels (Rev 19:20, Mt 25:41).

So the Beast will end his reign ignominiously, being defeated and judged at the coming of Christ. His armies are destroyed and he is finished. All his proud boasting against the Lord Jesus is ended. His rebellion is over. His error regarding who is really the God of the universe has been exposed as a great lie. Those who sided with him will also be ashamed and punished.