

## **The Kingdom of the Beast**

As a final warning of coming wrath, God will allow Satan to reign for a brief period of time.

*“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world, until this time nor ever shall be.”* Matthew 24:21. At the end of this age, for a brief time, God will allow Satan to reign, on earth. He will reign through a man usually referred to as the antichrist, although in the Bible he is also given a number of other names. Revelation chapter 13 calls him the beast and describes his reign.

Jesus went on to say of this time, *“And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.”* Matthew 24:22. This time of distress will be the final warning that God is about to pour out His wrath on a rebellious world. Three warnings of coming wrath, each brought by an angel, are found in Revelation chapter 14. In the last two editions of *Sword* I have written about the first two warnings. First is a call to worship God the Creator and then a warning that Babylon the kingdom of this world will soon fall. The final warning before the outpouring of wrath is the kingdom of the beast. Satan’s kingdom will follow the rejection of God as Creator and the destruction of the kingdom of this world.

### **The need of a Saviour**

The fall of Babylon will bring considerable hardship and war (Revelation 9: 13 – 21). The peoples of the nations which have enjoyed affluence and security through their allegiance to Babylon will be hard hit. With their hopes of peace and prosperity shattered mankind will cry out for a saviour.

People could turn to the Saviour who gave His life for our redemption. These events take place after the commission to preach the gospel in all the world has been completed. Therefore ignorance will be no excuse.

Instead of Jesus Christ the world will accept Satan’s man. God knows the heart of man (1 Kings 8: 39). He knows that despite all that He has done to save men, He will be rejected by the world.

The plagues of Egypt were devastating. After each of the plagues, once the Lord had given relief, Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people of Israel go. This happened five times. Following the sixth plague the Bible records, *“the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh”*. Pharaoh had been given repeated opportunities to submit to the Lord. His refusal led to God intervening. It would appear that the Lord took away Pharaoh’s freedom to repent. His stubbornness led to his destruction.

In the similar way, because they have rejected Him, the Lord will harden people’s hearts. God will send a strong delusion on those who did not respond to the truth (2 Thessalonians 2: 11). They condemn themselves by believing a lie.

## **The final warning**

The terrible nature of the reign of the beast will be a warning to the world of the consequence of rejecting God. It is the final warning to humanity that the time of God's favour is coming to an end. His vengeance is soon to be poured out. If people choose the rule of Satan instead of God there is no longer any mercy.

## **The mark**

For the Christian there is a warning about the danger of receiving the mark of the beast? The majority of the church has no interest in end time prophecy and has no knowledge of this danger. Among those who are interested in prophecy, it is widely taught that believers will not be on earth during this final reign of the beast. Receiving the mark applies to others and therefore is not a matter of immediate concern. There are a few writers who have speculated on the nature of the mark. But how many warn of the extreme consequences of receiving it?

Whatever its nature, by receiving Satan's mark mankind has sided with the enemy of God and will be treated as His enemies. Those who worship the beast and his image will be tormented and have no rest day or night (Revelation 14: 10 – 11).

## **The Endurance of the Saints**

During these times the saints are called on to be patient and to persevere. Those who keep the commandments of God and faith in Jesus during this time will be blessed (Revelation 14:12 – 13). The striving of this present age will give way to rest.

How will we endure? *".....let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus"*. Hebrews 12: 1. We will complete the race by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. Contrary to our natural inclinations the Bible presents suffering for Christ as a privilege.

From the beginning we have known that the followers of Jesus will be hated by the world. Jesus said that *"you will be hated by all for my name's sake."* Luke 21: 17. He calls on us to be patient and adds that not even a hair of our head will be lost.

God will allow the beast to make war on the saints and overcome them (Revelation 13: 7). In Daniel 7: 25, we read that the saints will be given into the hands of the little horn for time, times and half a time, usually interpreted as a period of three and a half years. The little horn in Daniel is another name for the beast or antichrist.

## **How can they hear without a preacher?**

Warnings mean nothing without a prophet to interpret them. End time prophecy and particularly the book of Revelation remain a mystery to most Christians let alone the unbeliever. It is not necessary to have a detailed knowledge of prophecy to be a

prophet to the world. All that is necessary at this time, when men's hearts are failing them from fear, is always to be ready to give .... a reason for the hope that is within us, (1 Peter 3: 15). We recognise that troubled times are coming even if we do not know the detail. As Christians we have a certain hope. It is not wishful thinking but a certainty. Jesus Christ is coming back to reign. More than that He has promised eternal life to all who believe in Him.

### **On the fall of Babylon**

In the last edition of Sword, having identified Babylon as the kingdom of the world, I wrote that it would fall within 10 years. That article was written in January before there was any hint of the economic mayhem that the Coronavirus would bring.

Is what we are currently experiencing (I am writing at the end of March) the collapse of that kingdom? I believe that what we are witnessing is the beginning of the fall of Babylon. This coronavirus pandemic will pass, but it will leave the nations heavily in debt and their economies weak. The globalist and their institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, will bail the nations out, but at a heavy cost. Because population reduction is one of their primary goals we can expect to see governments giving in to pressure for easier abortions, euthanasia, homosexual relationships as these do not produce children and other measures to cull the population. The panic over climate change will be used to introduce ever more strict controls and limits on personal freedom.

Four decades ago, I was introduced to the concept of government by crisis. Governments use crisis to bring in measures which before the crisis were unimaginable. They use the crisis to present the measures as inevitable. The crisis may be either natural or created for a purpose. I first witnessed this in the education crisis of the 80's. It was predicted that in most western nations there would be a deliberate collapse in standards which governments would use to bring in centralised control. That this frame of mind exists and continues was openly testified to by Rahm Emanuel, [Obama's Chief of Staff] in 2008: "You never want a serious crisis go to waste. But what I mean by that, it's an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before."

The final downfall of weakened Babylon will be brought about by the ten kings who rise up and give their support to the reign of the antichrist (Revelation 17: 16 – 17). These ten nations will, like wolves singling out the injured prey, see the weakness of the west and pounce for the kill. God will allow the downfall because mankind refused to turn to Him but trusted human solutions.

### **A response**

Revelation 14 contains three warnings to the world of impending wrath. These warnings also require a response from us as Christians.

First we are to honour God as Creator. We are created beings who must never allow the pride which corrupted Satan to enter our hearts. Satan fell because in pride he considered himself equal to his Creator.

Second we are to come out of Babylon. We are to live by the values and principles of the Kingdom of Heaven not those of the world. That commitment will be tested in the years to come but we are to hold to it.

Third we must prepare for suffering. Above all we must not accept the mark of the beast. It will be made to seem that there is no alternative. That is false. There is an alternative, which is to **trust in God**.