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Series 2. Understanding the Church

Episode 9. The Apostasy (1): The Beginning of Sorrows

This article explores the spiritual warfare between good and evil, drawing parallels between historical events like D-Day and the ongoing battle between the Kingdom of God and the forces of Satan. It traces the establishment of the Church as the spiritual "D-Day," beginning with Christ's victory over sin and death and the birth of the Church at Pentecost. The piece examines signs of Satan's counter-offensive, marked by global moral decay, increased hostility toward Christianity, and a falling away of faith within the Church—a time of apostasy as foretold in Scripture. It calls believers to spiritual vigilance, enduring faith, and a return to the true mission of the Church amidst the growing darkness.

Mt. 24.4-14 *"⁴And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for [a]all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against*

kingdom. And there will be famines, [b]pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. 10And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

A Synopsis of Two Wars, One physical and One Spiritual

June 6, 1944 WWII D-Day, the Allies, chiefly the United States and the United Kingdom began their assault at beaches at Normandy, in France. The war against Germany had been raging for five years. The invasion of Europe had begun and all of Nazi occupied Europe laid before the Allied troops. Eleven months later, after many battles and the total loss of about 800,000 Allied lives, with the fall of Berlin and the suicide of Adolf Hitler, Victory in Europe Day (V-E Day) was declared on May 8, 1945.

Sometime in eternity past the devil and his horde of angels rebelled against God in heaven and were cast to the earth. There, a spiritual warfare began between all the principalities and powers of Satan’s kingdom and that of God’s creation. In regards to man, the devil’s initial victory was in the Garden of Eden when he seduced Adam and Eve into disobedience to God; there and then sin as a power entered and infiltrated the human race. Since then a war between the darkness, sin, and death of the devil and the forces of light and life of God has been waged on this earth claiming a countless number of souls. But victory is in sight.

The spiritual D-Day, the assault of the Kingdom of God to retake the earth, began first with Jesus Christ, the Son of God coming to the earth and being born as the Son of Man in the flesh. Thus wherever Jesus went, the Kingdom of God was there also laying siege to Satan’s Kingdom. Jesus’ personal divine victory over Satan occurred when He was crucified, His blood shed for the redemption of man, and He rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. As it is written, Col. 2.14-15,

“¹⁴having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

Thus Jesus Christ is spiritually victorious over the devil; for He now has been given all authority and power in the heavenly places. His seat at the right hand of God the Father became, in terms of the great war with Satan, a spiritual command center—for what had been gained in the Spirit must now be fought out on the earth. The first decisive move of Christ was to send back to the earth the promise of the Holy Spirit to infill the lives of believers in Him, those washed by the

blood of the Lamb, those who would be born again of this Spirit. This act was the initial preparation of the Church, the army of Christ upon the earth. The victory that Christ gained over Satan and his demons will now be waged on the earth through His Church, the Body of Christ. As it is written in 2 Cor. 10. 3-5.

3For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

And so, the spiritual D-Day for the assault on the Kingdom of Satan on the earth began with the birth of the church. This happened some 50 days after the crucifixion of Christ, on the day of Pentecost, around late May AD 30; an event was marked by supernatural signs. Some 120 disciples of Christ were gathered together in Jerusalem, and the Church was born.

Acts 2. 1-4 *1When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2Suddenly a sound like a mighty rushing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

This is the birth of the Church, and the entrance or invasion of the Kingdom of God on the earth to retake the earth and the souls of man. The assault on Satan's kingdom had begun. Where the church is, there is the Kingdom of God; where the Church is not, there no kingdom of God, only the presence of the devil's Kingdom of Darkness. The presence of the Spirit of God now not only occupies heaven, but has now also crossed the threshold upon the earth. As prophesied by Isaiah 60.2,

"For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you."

Jesus Christ, who now sits at the right hand of God in Heaven, now also reigns as the Head the Church upon the earth. For 2000 years the church advanced the Kingdom of God overtaking Satan and the Kingdom of Darkness and establishing light and life, bringing all things into all it embraced. It has made great advances overtaking Satan's Kingdom while bringing eternal life and light to countless souls across the globe. Today, Christianity is the most widely practiced "religion" in the world. (Note, Christianity as a religion is one matter, Christianity as a way of life is another matter. This argument is taken up elsewhere.)

However, something spiritually ominous has been happening in recent years. There has been a renewed surge of activity from Satan's camp, as the devil is launching a counter-offensive against the Church. This is mindful of the Battle of the Bulge in WWII.

In analogy: The Battle of the Bulge. Last offensive Nazi surge. Hitler and his military were desperate; his defeat was looming. Closing in were the Russians on the east and Allies on the west. Hitler made one last desperate attempt by launching all the manpower and fire power he could muster on a counter-offensive against the allies to the west. This surge westward in the battle front became known as the Battle of the Bulge as a westward bulge occurred along the war front line. Though lasting only a little over one month, this offensive cost the United States alone well over 80,000 casualties, including nearly 20,000 dead.

Satan knows his time on earth is short and his defeat is close. As it is written,

Rev. 12. 12 *“Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”*

The painful consciousness of defeat has roused a deeper and more obstinate rage that was in Hitler is now also seen in Satan. *Because he knows that he has but a short time* - That is, he knows that the time is limited in which he will be permitted to wage war with the saints on the earth. There is allusion elsewhere to this fact when the demon responded to Jesus, Mt. 8.29 *“What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”* That time, as determined by God alone, is nearer than before. Jesus said, Mt. 24.36, *“But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”*

Within this limited remaining time, Satan knows that he must do all that he ever can do to destroy and gain souls from God. He is attempting to spread woe through the earth at an accelerated pace, and hence, it is not unnatural that he should be represented as being excited to deeper wrath, and as to rousing all his energy to destroy the church and in a counter-offensive, to retake the parts of his kingdom lost.

Many think that believers will be “raptured out” of the moral and physical decadence to come upon the earth, this time of great tribulation (aka Pretribulation Rapture). But I see nothing in scripture that truly testifies of this. All that is written speaks of a time of great adversity on the earth, and tribulation upon the saints. In Mt. 24, our opening scripture, Jesus speaks of this time and warns to let no man deceive you; that there will be wars, persecution, killing, betrayal, false prophets, and even the *abomination of desolation* standing in the holy place. (Daniel) And then, Jesus warns of the “apostasy” in verses .9-11,

*“**9**Then they will deliver you over to be persecuted and killed, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. **10**At that time many will fall away and will betray and hate one another, **11**and many false prophets will arise and mislead many.”*

This “*falling away*” is the time of “**apostasy**” in the Church. See also 2 Thes. 2.3 that speaks of the same thing, the apostasy: Gk. *apostasía* meaning defection, falling away, to depart, implying

a falling away from the truth, a deliberate abandonment of our faith. After this Jesus promises His return and the catching up of the saints,

Mt. 24.30-31 “³⁰At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. ³¹And He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

And then will come the day of judgment. Jesus follows,

Mt. 25.31-32 ³¹When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne. ³²All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will place the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.

The Beast and the Dragon

From a spiritual viewpoint and in parable fashion this time of tribulation and apostasy upon the Church is described in the Book of Revelation. The two main evil characters described here are the *beast* and the *dragon*. The *dragon* is Satan, the devil,

Rev. 12.9 “So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

and the devil gives power to the *beast*, who is to Satan what the Church is to Christ.

Rev. 13.3-4 “And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴So 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?”

It is important to note that, as the Church is to Christ, the *beast* is to the *dragon* (who is Satan.) In other words, as Christ is the Head of His Church, which is His many membered body on the earth, this *beast* is to Satan, his body of many members also upon this earth. Rev. 13.1 begins, “¹Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea,” The apostle John in vision sees the *beast* rising up out of the **sea**— the “sea” is a Biblical symbol designating a numberless mass of people. And so the *beast* is seen rising up and taken out of this mass of fallen humanity in this world; they are swayed by the devil, to obediently do his evil deeds.

Thus the *beast* is those who work in conjunction with Satan upon the earth enforcing his will and his ambition to sit in the place of God. These are chosen from the pool of fallen humanity to do his perverse bidding. They are easy to spot, from the most evil and inhumane world dictators to the columnists who spew the devils thoughts to the minds of men, women and children; from the rich and powerful (and famous) who have given sway to the evil one and consort to dominate the world; to the lowly and poor who are ambitious for wealth and

power; from evil governments and powerful organizations who want to control and manipulate the people for their gain and perverted ideologies; and from the professionals in health care, education, and corporations who are duped in believing Satan's lies and become a part of the beast to put the devil's desires and ambitions into the hearts, minds and lives of the people. Do not be naive and do not be deceived, the devil is mustering his body of cohorts in a final great offensive on the earth—this day of tribulation for the Church.

Signs of The Devils Offensive

Until the coming of Christ into this world, and the birth of the Church some 2000 years ago Satan has dominated this world, making it his kingdom of darkness, sin and death. And so there has always been down through the ages wars, murders, all manners of lasciviousness and sexual perversions, false gods and deceiving spirits, and corruption in governments and leaders of nations and tribes. Presently, the only light upon the whole of the earth is the Church, which is now under attack. Col. 1.13 *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."*

But in more recent times these attacks of the evil one upon the earth and the Church have not just increased but are accelerating at an alarming rate. Never before in the history of mankind has his work of decadence and evil perpetrate and infiltrate in such increasing violence upon the souls of man; for he knows his time is short. The signs are obvious and foreboding to the saved, but embraced as life as normal and progressive by the fallen world, as it is written, 2 Thes. 2. 9-12,

"9The coming of the lawless one (the beast) is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

In brief fashion, some smithereens of his evil work include: world governments have become increasingly corrupt in their quest for power and control, and many making new laws particularly hostile to Christians; the cultures of the world have grown increasingly wicked with abortions, homosexuality, transgenderism, (a new emergent term for queers, cross-dressers, and other perversions that no longer want to be associated with their birth sex); the world-wide trafficking of women and children to satisfy the perverted sexual lusts of men and women; liberalism in societies have always existed, but suddenly today liberals have become aggressive, vociferous, demanding, and coercive to where if a different opinion is expressed, like the word of God, it is subject to ridicule, defamation, shunning, and even forceful attacks. Conservatives are known to lose their jobs or business, all because of ideology differences.

There is a sense of entitlement, the right to have something you did not earn, of deserving special treatment for all sorts of sorted reasons: race, wealth, family name, cast, etc. There is an alarming breakdown in the family unit as marriage is not an option with no real

commitment, and the family bonds have been weakened to the point of independence. Laws of governments protect, encourage, and in many cases pay for the murdering of the unborn, better known as abortion; woman claiming it is their right and choice to do this unspeakable act of killing their own child, some even at birth. New diseases fabricated by man under the oversight of Satan have been unleashed and people coerced to be injected with very questionable serums;

In a few short months transgenders and homosexuals were so widely accepted they were granted by society carte blanche acceptance extending to them the freedom to act publicly as they wish, even to the deplorable permission, or actually invitation, to enter elementary schools for special sessions to interact with little children. There is a global proliferation of all kinds of drugs in all parts of societies, and new drugs are being invented. The fabricated disease Covid hit the world, and people stopped going to Church. With lifting the ban on gatherings, a large portion of Christians remain at home getting their “religion” from TV and Zoom meetings, falling short of God’s intention for the Church. Churches are closing at an alarming rate, and their buildings are being turned into warehouses, factories, and mosques.

The worldly decadence that I have witnessed in my lifetime, from my youth until now, is sickening to the core. I share, with my wife and church fellowship, a deep anguish in our souls for our children and grandchildren, our community and country...and the failing Church.

Ask yourself, “is the Church that we see today, still the Church that was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the Church that down through the ages was filled with light and imparting life into the souls of its people; Is it still that Body of believers pulling down the strongholds of darkness that surround, liberating souls from spiritual bondage and making spiritually strong a Church capable of withstanding the wiles of the devil; is sin and darkness being purged out of the Church, making for a holy bride, prepared for the return of Christ? O’ a remnant, a small remnant, stands strong, but so much has been lost.

Today deceptive RELIGION prevails, that “system” of faith and worship, filled with laws and rituals and customs, that can only mimic in the natural things of the spirit, that in which duty and obedience out of fear of loss and hope of gain has replaced *life, and life more abundantly* found in that renewed and regenerated fellowship with God our Father and Lord Jesus Christ.

“gAll these are the beginning of sorrows.”