

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, June 28, 2015.

Good afternoon, beloved friends. On February 22 and March 1 of this year I spent time expounding the import of the 12th Chapter of Revelation. That passage closes with the scene of Satan furiously seeking to locate and destroy the redeemed 144,000 Jews – who are miraculously taken into a state of preservation, protected by a returned Christ. I want that framing to remain in your minds, as we open the next passage:

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." (Revelation 13:1-10)

The subject matter for today and for next week, Lord willing, is the beast of this passage. He is discussed in many places in Holy Scripture, and there have been many things written of him by expositors throughout history. My duty, as an elder in this church ... at this hour in history, when we have substantive proofs that we are on the very eve of Christ's appearing ... is to give a clear understanding of this wonderful and terrible event which unfolds just shy of the crescendo; which is Armageddon.

Being so thick and substantive a subject matter, significant framework needs to be put into place so that we here in this house might have some view from pure Scripture -- without the prolific white noise where expositors have strained to attach these precious matters to their temporal understandings of world history and the conclusion or the wrapping up of things terrestrial.

One part of that framework is to get a solid grasp on the Scriptural notion that there are details about the rise of this beast -- called Antichrist -- that are expressly hidden from human cognizance until a determined period of time. In this context, consider these two passages:

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." (Daniel 12:4)

and

***"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. ... But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son."* (1 John 2:18, 20-22)**

I think there is no confusion in this assembly that the passage in Daniel is expressly dealing with these matters of the ***"time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time:"*** (Daniel 12:1), which is at the pinnacle of Antichrist's reign of terror upon the ***"children of thy [i.e., Daniel's] people"***, the Jews.

It may be less clear, however, that John -- who also wrote the words under consideration in this sermon -- was likewise talking about this pending apocalyptic destruction of the Jewish people at the direction of Antichrist. That is, speaking to those church-age elect who will be coming upon that day and hour, he tells them plainly that they will have an "unction" or "anointing" by which that group will be given the ability to ***"know all things"*** about that matter that was theretofore obscure.

This language, ***"[l]ittle children, it is the last time"*** (1 John 2:18), written in the first century AD, did not import that the day of John's writing was "the last time", as it clearly was not. On this point consider this same author's words in the opening chapter of the Apocalypse: ***"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day"*** (Revelation 1:10). This language -- as exhaustively and satisfactorily expounded in Seiss' *Apocalypse* -- means that the Holy Ghost took John ***"in the Spirit"*** forward in time to that "day of the LORD", so he would see what was to come to pass in the last days. Similarly, I submit, John is writing to the church in ***"the last time"***, being directed by the Holy Spirit to speak to that unique group of Saints who Daniel describes as ***"run[ing] to and fro"*** (Daniel 12:4).

The primary point I make here is that we should not (a) rely too heavily upon the writings of ancient expositors who were not yet given to see these things written by the prophets clearly or (b) fear that if we are those Christians who will be brought to that hour, we will be without a clear understanding of what is prepared to unfold; for how does John finish this passage?

***"But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. ¶ And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."* (1 John 2:27-28)**

Such language could only be relevant to that group of ***"little children"*** who will be present in the earth ***"when he shall appear"***, because all other Saints will be beyond the ability to ***"be ashamed"***, having already been placed into that company of ***"ten thousands of his saints"***, with whom ***"the Lord cometh"*** (Jude 1:14).

This is not to say, however, that we may expect any liberties to be allowed with respect to what is revealed in those days before His second advent, for we are given quite literal caution from Christ himself against those who would in such manner seek to deceive His elect:

***"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."* (Matthew 24:23-24)**

Rather, it is our solemn duty to be clear on what the Scripture has testified regarding these matters, without fanciful speculation. We must speak only as our God gives us light; but speak most certainly as that light is given us as we walk in:

"the path of the just [which] is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."
(Proverbs 4:18)

It may, in fact, be that we will know only imperfectly what things will specifically come to pass until -- like was done on the eve of Sodom's destruction -- it is revealed by the God of Heaven:

"And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; ... I will go down now, and see whether they [i.e., Sodom] have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." (Genesis 18:17, 21)

Or it may, rather, be more like what was done ***"as in the days that were before the flood"*** (Matthew 24:38), when Noah was expressly told:

"For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth." (Genesis 7:4)

So we should not find it particularly curious that we would understand generally what the end would be -- and even understand many of the facets of that beautiful work of our King -- and yet not know the specific execution of it until it is near upon us. One final expression in the book dedicated to these wonders, which further suggests that key details will be withheld until we are at the cusp of the issue, is found in the tenth chapter:

"And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. ... And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." (Revelation 10:2-4, 11)

These things uttered by the seven thunders are in direct time-context to the presentation of Christ's return at the blowing of the seventh trumpet. How could you get any closer to the issue -- and specifically at is pertains to the how, when, why, what, and where -- than in the thundering expressions from heaven as an echo from the roaring cry of the Angel of the Lord that ***"there should be time no longer"***? Yet those things are sealed in the wisdom of our God until -- in accordance with His glorious providence -- He brings to pass what he intends in the expression: ***"Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."***

Another key piece of this framework is the proper understanding of ***just how bad things will get***. We, in this house, have testified to a generation that appears for all the world to be so froward ... so abominable ... so filled with working iniquity ... that it out-fathoms the mind's capacity to conceive how it could be worse. Two

days ago, the conscience of this vile nation -- the only existing world power in this generation -- has taken the scriptural symbol of Christ and His Bride, anchored in the dawn of the race itself, and shat upon it; wiping their collective black-robed and black hearted backsides with the pages from this blessed book! Fags now marry by fiat in this country; God's Word be damned! And soon, these beasts will use their inexplicable fulcrum to leverage laws circumventing the First Amendment and lawfully make preaching a crime.

In such a milieu, it is easy to get into a state where you may be inclined to see embodiments of what we perceive to be Antichrist. Indeed by the pedestrian description of the "a"ntichrists (i.e., "**even now there are many antichrists**") we know of a certainty that we are in the last times. But what can we find about this subject in Scripture, so that we can avoid the wild speculation of expositors past about when we are in fact in this place our Savior described:

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors."
(Matthew 24:32)

A passage that has many times eluded my comprehension, as being almost too dramatic for the context ... and yet mysteriously substantive, begins our journey into this profound examination. Here is the passage:

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. ¶ And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. ¶ And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." (Genesis 4:3-8)

Here we have, in the earliest history of our race, the first event where a rebel human presented himself to the King of Eternity and demanded that his will be respected. Not merely did this presumptuous fool commit an act of sin, consistent with that nature which indwells all of the race due to his father's sin ... he audaciously challenged God on the most vital of matters; salvation by grace! In response, he is told that if he does not repent he will launch himself into a permanent state where the pursuit and work of sin will dominate his existence. He would be much more than a mere sinner after the flesh -- he would be what is known throughout Holy Scripture as a "worker of iniquity"! The **first** "worker of iniquity"! In response, he stiffens his brutish neck and throws down with his brother on this blessed point ... and kills him!

We have, in Cain, the beginning of the work of iniquity in the human race. We have the beginning of that "**mystery of iniquity**" that our beloved friend Paul told the Thessalonians "**doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.**" (2 Thessalonians 2:7) This iniquity -- all the workers of which David tells us God hates (Psalms 5:5) -- had a beginning, and it will have an end ... a pinnacle ... a zenith!

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." (Isaiah 60:2)

Look at the sequence in this passage ... tucked into the midst of Isaiah's eschatological prophecies. A time of such complete darkness and iniquity we have not yet experienced; though we are no doubt getting there. Then ... after the darkness has reached its apex ... and only then, we will see how the LORD shall arise upon Israel; assuming his earthly throne for His millennial reign!

Christ, when he was introducing the Gentile Christian church dispensation, begins his sermon on the mountain with what are known as *the beatitudes* (Matthew 5:3-12), and then another oracle begins:

***"Ye are the salt (noun 1) of the earth (noun 2): but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it (pronoun 2 -- the earth) be salted? it (pronoun 1 -- the salt) is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."* (Matthew 5:13)**

Salt preserves from putrefaction. Salt -- here intending the preaching of the pure word of the Gospel -- will preserve the earth from full and final rot; from the completion of the mysterious work of iniquity; from gross darkness fully and completely covering the earth and the people of it. But, when that salt has lost its savor -- when the blazing hot truth is no longer preached, but is (at best) only the lukewarm bilge of faux-Christians -- that sickly form of religion will be ***"good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men"***, no longer capable of withstanding the flood of iniquity that will consume it on the appointed day.

And, with that understanding, consider the import of these words about that great whore -- who represents the antithesis of Christ's church, just as the Antichrist answers to our Saviour:

***"And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire."* (Revelation 17:16)**

These kings who have given their power to the Antichrist -- having had their fill of the pretense to any religion at all, as represented by this monstrous whorish woman -- turn on that Savorless Salt and trod her under foot. I ask you here today, is this not what we hear from the growing voice of the "freedom from religion" crowd, whose worldwide numbers are even now growing at a pace that no religious sect can approach unto?

So we know that there is prepared a day when the earth dwellers will be fully turned to that darkness that they even now love, as our beloved John spoke:

***"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."* (John 3:19)**

That day is referred to specifically in these passages about this beast:

***"And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end,"* (Ezekiel 21:25, 29)**

and

***"And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."* (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7)**

A day that is so dark, so corrupt, so abysmally wicked that it is suitable for this beast to come and have his "**day**", or "**his time**" when iniquity will come to its full. But, until that day there is a staying influence that prevents it from reaching a condition that can accommodate the fullness of darkness that is this Antichrist! What is that staying influence, and what does Scripture instruct us about its removal?

"And now ye know what withholdeth that he [Antichrist] might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8)

There is a force that withholds the full onslaught of iniquity -- of darkness -- of wickedness. That force is called "**he who now letteth ... until he be taken out of the way**". Who is this "he" and when will he be taken out of the way? Another passage helps us to understand when "**he**" will "**be taken out of the way**", properly understood. It comes from our beloved friend Paul, in his epistle to the Romans:

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:" (Romans 11:25-26)

This is an amazing passage, which crystallizes in very few words the rapid-fire sequence of events about which this Antichrist monster will be engaged; and tucked into the midst of it is the hint of when this "**he**" of Thessalonians chapter two will be taken out of the way. These are synonymous events, my dear friends. The same event that brings in the full measure of the crop of Gentile believers will simultaneously take out of the way that which "**now letteth**", or "prevents" the fullness of the work of iniquity.

The return of Christ, at the sounding of the Seventh Trumpet!

Consider it. It is the Holy Ghost who presently -- through the working of the light of truth in the Elect Gentiles who are plainly told by Christ:

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14)

-- I say the Holy Ghost presently ensures that our gospel preachments are holding at bay the breaking forth of that consummation of wickedness. The Holy Ghost was sent, if you recall, at the ascension of Christ into the Heavens:

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. ... Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. ... A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. " (John 16:7, 13, 16)

This Comforter -- who guides us in truth and energizes us to the preaching of this Gospel -- will be taken out of the way when our Christ returns ... when He takes us into the air with him ... and when He then begins the work of the final trying (through the short reign of Antichrist) of the Jewish rebels and the redemption (at Armageddon) of the Jewish remnant, who are **"grafted into their own olive tree" the "root of Jesse"!** (**Romans 11:24, 15:12**)

While the light shines in the current darkness, the darkness is unable to comprehend, or overcome it, as our friend the Apostle wrote:

"In him [i.e., Christ] was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." (John 1:4-5)

But with that light being taken out of the way, the Holy Ghost no longer withholds the full expression of the darkness that dwells in this earth. The day has come, the cup of the iniquity has but a few drops to the full, and the only hope of life has been removed out of the way. Darkness, in the form of this spawn of the dragon, receives his call to the stage.

The third matter to be examined is to know to what end this blasphemous beast is brought to the earth. While we may expect that many things are yet to unfold that bring us to this time, can we confidently find in Holy Writ an inkling of the purpose this eighth iteration of Satan's superman has come to fulfill? Yes, you heard me correctly. In this beast that John was given to see, we have the eighth and final attempt of Satan to galvanize a human king to bring him the throne of the earth.

Let us begin this examination with a review of another perspective that John has of this beast:

"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." (Revelation 17:8-11)

Seven mountains -- whereby is signified great world power. Not necessarily possession of all the world's resources or territory; but wielding worldwide influence as the dominate power in existence. To qualify as one of these mountains mentioned in this passage, there are two other characteristics that must exist; in addition to being a world power. First, that idolatry and pursuit of filthy abominations became the character by which the nation was known; for what else could be meant by the great whore riding on it, when she is thusly described:

"And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her

forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (Revelation 17:4-5)

So, the mountain must be rode upon by this filthy antithesis to the righteous seed that is characterized by scripture with this glorious description:

"And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:" (Revelation 12:1)

The final character of these mountains is their uniquely grotesque oppression of the righteous that dwell within the sphere of their power and authority, in league with that great whore. It is therefore that she is further described:

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:" (Revelation 17:6)

So, while there have been many nations of great population and world influence that have risen through the ages, the focus of this prophecy and vision is upon these unique seven, which have the Antichristic character that is fully and finally represented in this beast that rises up out of the sea in this darkest of hours in the human experiment.

The language in this description of the beast being expounded to John includes an oft-misquoted clause, "***and there are seven kings***". This clause is quoted and expounded as though it said "***and they [as in the seven heads] are seven kings***". This might lead one to conclude that there is some mystery regarding the use of the same word "***heads***" to describe both a mountain and a king. In fact, the language is intended to say that during the reign of each of the "***mountains***" there was a specific king that exercised the power of that kingdom to do particularly wickedly against the people of God. This exposition is key to understanding how the beast is "***of the seven***"; that is, he is the full and final expression of what the previous kings designed and attempted, just as he is the first who will actually be king over the whole earth.

I freely admit that I have had a great deal of confusion as it pertains to this fascinating and descriptive passage, much for the reason that I was marinated in the confusing morass of expositions, and did not simply consider the necessary conclusions that must be drawn from the words before me. For example, I wondered how there could be "***seven mountains***", when by all indications we are talking at least in part about the same world powers that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his vision that Daniel opened for him, to wit:

"This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, His legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay." (Daniel 2:32-33)

As you can count, there are five kingdoms -- or mountains -- here; not seven. Why would one version fail to encompass two kingdoms that another includes? The answer lies in the description that John gives in the 17th chapter. John is viewing the whole of the relevant historic picture, whereas Daniel is given to see the vision from Nebuchadnezzar's time forward, as it was the king's dream being interpreted. If the examination of this

beast is placed into proper view, we better understand why seven -- and why this supreme expression of Antichrist is the eighth.

Satan, who has been keen -- since the opening salvo in his attempted coup in the Garden of Eden -- to take the kingship of the earth, has been moving in the hearts and spirits of great tyrants throughout history. Remember, although he was called "***the anointed cherub***" (Ezekiel 28:14), he is not given any more understanding of that mysterious day when our LORD is revealed than we are, as Christ told us:

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matthew 24:36)

This dragon does not get to know the mind of God and Christ with regard to the providential march to the fulfillment of the Covenant of Grace. So, he has blindly raged from Cain forward ... moving in the spirits of select men to stamp out the remnant of God's elect people in every generation. As this satanic violence reached its apex in the days of Noah -- including a world of humans who would openly defy God's commandments and embrace the epitome of blasphemy against that glorious sign of affection between bride and groom (i.e., same sex marriage) -- the world was destroyed, as we read:

"By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." (1 Peter 3:19-20)

Since Noah's ark landed -- unto the days in which we currently dwell -- there has been seven true ***world*** powers that, in the expression of a specific "king" openly defied God -- particularly in the areas of spiritual and physical fornication and adultery (i.e., carried the great Whore) -- and oppressed His people: Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian (or Chaldean), Medo-Persian, Grecian, Roman, and American.

These were not historical happenstance. As promised in the Garden of Eden:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis 3:14)

This warfare between the seed of Satan and the righteous seed of the woman -- including with that returning Christ who took on the seed's form and stands for that seed's interests in all things related to the Covenant of Grace -- has ebbed and flowed through all the generations of man. Through those millennia, Satan has sought to energize men of the earth to rise up beyond an earthly throne and take the kingdom of the earth from Christ.

That these "***heads***" or "***mountains***" are previous iterations of Satan's superman is further illustrated in the form that the beast takes as he rises up from the sea:

"And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion:" (Revelation 13:2)

This trilogy of characteristics is repeated in two other passages where our monstrous antagonist is presaged:

"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; " (Daniel 7:4-6)

and

"Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them: I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them." (Hosea 13:7-8)

These passages, in discussing the punishing treatment that will befall the rebellious nation of the Jews, identify the character of the nations who will be utilized by God to execute his judgment. The leopard represented the swift and voracious nature of the Assyrian; the lion the bold and stately courage of the Babylonian; the bear the less graceful but the more terrifying disposition of the Medo-Persian empire. The Hosea passage closes the question by articulating what will be the final end of the rebellious nation: ***"the wild beast shall tear them"***, expressly utilizing the literal translation of the Greek word in our text passage ***"beast"***, and making reference to the prime vocation of the final Antichrist, once his kingship is established.

Returning to the image shown King Nebuchadnezzar, we find another passage that further indicates the embodiment of former iterations of the Antichrist beast in the final monster:

"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: " (Daniel 2:44-45)

The Stone that does this breaking, of course, is Christ setting up His Kingdom -- having put down Antichrist and the armies of the earth's kingdoms at Armageddon. The nature of the kingdom is that it contains not just the character of the final kingdom (e.g., the feet and toes of iron mixed with miry clay), but it still contains the character of all the kingdoms, ***"the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold."*** That is, the Antichristic character of those kingdoms (which answer to the seven mountains of Revelation 17) are all concentrated in this final iteration that goes to battle with Christ at Armageddon; else why is not only the feet and toes of iron mixed with clay what is destroyed by the stone ***"cut out of the mountain without hands"***?

Interestingly, in the reading of expositions on the apocalypse generally, and regarding the Antichristic beast more specifically, I find that there are prophetic writings that expositors identify as being "expressions" of Antichrist. In these writings, consider how they are introduced or identified:

"Speak, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself. But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy rivers to stick unto thy scales, and I will

bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales. And I will leave thee thrown into the wilderness, thee and all the fish of thy rivers: thou shalt fall upon the open fields; thou shalt not be brought together, nor gathered: I have given thee for meat to the beasts of the field and to the fowls of the heaven." (Ezekiel 29:3-5)

"I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped." (Isaiah 10:12-14)

"That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! ... For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High." (Isaiah 14:4, 13-14)

"Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come." (Daniel 10:20)

In this last quoted passage, Daniel begins the description of his prophetic vision of the succeeding kingdoms from Grecia to the Antichrist. As we know from recorded history, Antiochus Epiphanies (Grecian ruler) and Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (Roman ruler) were renowned expressions of murderous hostilities against the Saints of God, were libidinous beyond expression, and are identified in many of the expositions as whom God intends to bring from the dead to express Antichrist:

"And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast." (Revelation 13:3)

The Antichrist beast, displaying those characteristics of former iterations of Satan's human plenipotentiary, is said expressly to be "***of the seven***" (Revelation 17:11), intimating that he is of the same character and design as those "***seven kings***" (Revelation 17:10) who ruled on those former "***seven mountains***" (Revelation 17:9). This language could also intimate that this Antichrist is "***[one] of the seven***", which is a common exposition given to the words related to this beast. That is not the focus of this specific discussion, so I will leave it for a later analysis.

So we know that it is -- as it has been from the time of Creation -- the intent and purpose of Satan to dethrone the Christ and assume supreme rule over the kingdoms of the world. In this scene, the time has finally come. Christ has descended and removed his Christian elect from Satan's rage and hidden his 144,000 children of the seed of Abraham from the dragon's reach. The Holy Ghost removed, darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people of the earth. The rot has set in, and the whole of the Earth's population is ready to be presented with a bold, courageous advocate for their bloody and abominable ways; one who they can own as

their saviour from the binding, insufferable words of Scripture. They're in a rage -- a complete and utter tumultuous fervor, the world over. The Jewish nation dwells upon the imagination that their Messiah will come and show himself to be that well-favoured champion of their traditions, as Christ told them:

"I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." (John 5:43)

So, this rising superman brings with him the fulfillment of the psalmist's most chilling eschatological prophecy:

"Why do the heathen [Gentiles] rage, and the people [Jews] imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." (Psalm 2:1-3)

The time we know is near, though we cannot yet know all of those details of how near. The world's population is in darkness -- indeed the behaviors in the wake of the Supreme Court's abominable ruling demonstrate we cannot be far from the apex of darkness, as they boldly proclaim that there is no going back! We have a world power, and a most arrogant "king" over that power who openly calls ***"evil good, and good evil; that put[s] darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put[s] bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter"*** (Isaiah 5:20), and has all the presumption needed to assume the role of Satan's last superman.

We will continue our examination of this beast next week, Lord willing, where we might know what will be his legacy and what amazing things will befall this earth and its inhabitants, before he is put down. At the rate things are moving to apocalyptic closure, I will be equally joyful if our King takes us before we meet again.

Thank you for another opportunity to feed you, and I love you all most dearly.

Amen.