THE TRINITY FROM HELL

Look for it: as we draw closer to the end of the world as we know it, a three-some from Hell will be the dominate force on this planet:

- Satan, who will attempt to imitate the work of God the Father
- The Antichrist - the Beast - who will try to get the world to worship him
- The False Prophet - who will support and propagate the false world religious system

We read about them in Revelation 13. Since tonight want to dwell primarily on the end-of-the-world religious system, let's check these scriptures:

1 Rev. 13:11-18
2 And I beheld another beast (the false prophet) coming up out of the earth (the
gentile nations); and he had two horns like a lamb (attempting to imitate “the lamb of
God”), and he spake as a dragon. [12] And he exerciseth all the power of the first
beast (Antichrist) before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to
worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. [13] And he doeth great
wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of
men, [14] And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles
which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the
earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a
sword, and did live. [15] And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast,
that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not
worship the image of the beast should be killed. [16] And he causeth all, both small
and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in
their foreheads: [17] And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark,
or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. [18] Here is wisdom. Let him
that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a
man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six (666).
There is a growing teaching today that America - the United States that we love so dearly - will disappear from God’s favor and its leadership in the world. I would challenge that ONLY to the point where it appears to me that the United States will fall prey to false gods, as did Israel in the Old Testament, and God will take His hand off the nation. In other words, it will not be the America we have known in blessed history.

How so? Well, how can God bless a nation that:

- ....has killed over 52 million babies in their mother’s wombs
- ....that has sanctioned officially sexual behavior the Bible calls sin
- ....that more and more turns its official back on Israel
- ....where those citizens who honor God’s house (go to church) becomes a smaller and smaller factor
- ....honors Hollywood’s and the TV network’s smut and mocks the Bible

Do we really expect God to “bless America, land that we love?” But there is yet another factor, so clearly prophesied in Holy Scripture, that occupies our thoughts tonight:

THE COMING WORLD RELIGION AND ITS LEADERSHIP

While the Antichrist could well be a Jew, the False Prophet will be a Gentile. In prophetic scripture when we have a reference to “the land” or “the earth,” it is a reference to Israel. The final world religious leader will be a master of deception. He is coming to blind the eyes of mankind to truth. Note the scriptural description of this one: 2 Thes. 2:8-17 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: [9] Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, [10] And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. [11] And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: [12] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Satan has always been clever in taking God’s Word and twisting it - sometimes seemingly not a lot, but always enough to totally change the meaning. For example, in Genesis how did “the serpent,” Satan, coerce Eve to eat the forbidden fruit? By quoting God but changing it enough to be an out and out lie. It actually contradicted God’s command. Satan said, “Ye shall not surely die....” God said, Genesis 2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.
It is certainly worthy of note here that Eve knew what God had declared and still sinned. Today’s world largely has NO CLUE what God has said about anything; so Satan’s efforts to ensnare them is a simple matter. Today’s world (even the religious one) does not know much about the Bible.

For the life of me, I don’t understand why anyone would attend a church that does not (a) encourage people to read the Bible and (b) preach the Bible when they do attend. But I have people tell me literally every week they go to churches where they never hear the Word, nor are they encouraged to read it. To me, it seems like going to a grocery store where they have no food to sell and yet continuing going back to that empty store again and again. And yet without food you will die. “Well, Pastor, that’s where my family has gone for years.” Or, “I like the liturgy.” Well, liturgy is all well and good; however, if you’re starving to death and don’t know what God has said what conceivable good is liturgy going to do you?

It is so sad that millions are starving to death spiritually and yet they frequent the very places that are denying them nourishment. Sometimes I hear, “Well, perhaps I can change that church.” The truth is, you probably cannot. So Satan is having a field day feeding the populace nonsense about God and eternity which people accept as truth because they don’t know the facts of God.

When this false prophet reaches his zenith of influence, the populace on earth is going through the 7-year tribulation. The horror of it eclipses anything ever known on earth. It will so horrible that God Himself declared if He didn’t stop it no one would be left alive. So we can begin to see why people will turn to any panacea - any words of hope in that awful time. The False Prophet - leader of the world’s religion - will promise something most would consider crazy such as – a thousand virgins waiting in paradise for those who kill people - or a god who vindicates violence, etc. And the world will believe the lie even as it rejected the truth of the Gospel prior to the Rapture of the Church. **We remember Pilate’s classic question to Jesus, “What is truth?”** The world still asks that question today but does not hear reality in the answers it receives.

THE SOURCE OF THESE TWO EVIL FORCES

Scripture makes clear that the source is Satan himself. In his last-gasp effort to control the destinies of mankind, he energizes two entities: Antichrist and the False Prophet (head of the world’s final false religion). Rev. 13:12-13 **And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell**
therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. [13] And he
doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in
the sight of men....

People make several mistakes when it comes to Satan:

- They over-estimate his power and authority and even live in fear of him. The fact
  is that Jesus defeated him once and for all at Calvary and has all dominion over
  him and his works.

- They under-estimate him - or, in fact, deny that he even exists. But Satan is very
  real and has incredible powers.

It seems that in these “end days” his power is amplified. He gets a lot of help from his
victims and his co-workers, the demons. Demons are fallen angels who are not already
imprisoned in hell, in my opinion. However, there remains as fascinating response to
this question of their identity. Some contend that demons are the disembodied spirits of a
pre-Adamic race.

SATAN

Scriptures clearly teach that Satan abundantly testify to his reality. He is known in the
Bible by various names: Satan; Adversary; Devil; Dragon; Serpent; Beelzebub; Belial;
Lucifer; the Wicked One; the Tempter; the god of this world; the prince of the power of
the air and the Prince f ths world.

Satan is a fallen angel, once a glowing personality among the angels. (That means that
Satan is a “created being,” not a god himself. Isaiah 14 tells of his demise:

Isaiah 14:12-15

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut
down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! [13] 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: [14] I will
ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. [15] Yet thou
shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

“I will....I will...I will...I will....” Not what God wills....what “I will.” Satan’s
arrogance and pride made him an adversary of God Himself. A third of the created
angels sided with him and were cast out of Heaven like shooting stars.
The Word speaks of these creatures who made the fatal mistake of siding against the Creator: Psalm 78:49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.

What is the work of these demons among us today:

- They inflict disease. Matthew 9:33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. Not all diseases, mark you. But some.

- They cause mental disturbance although not all mental illness is caused by demon possession: Luke 8:35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

- They are the authors of filthy thinking and speech and conduct: Leviticus 18:6-30

  None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord. [7] The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. [8] The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. [9] The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. [10] The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness. [11] The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. [12] Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman. [13] Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. [14] Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt. [15] Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness. [17] Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness. [18] Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time. [19] Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness. [20] Moreover thou
shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her. [21] And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord. [22] Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination. [23] Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion. [24] Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: [25] And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. [26] Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: [27] (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) [28] That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. [29] For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. [30] Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God.

- They disseminate false doctrine. 1 Tim. 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

- They sometimes possess humans and even animals: Matthew 4:24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. Luke 8:2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

At this point let me point out that there is a distinction between demon "influence” and demon “possession.” The former is a temporary operation of the demons from without; the latter is the more permanent (except for divine deliverance) operation from within.

Let me suggest to you that there are several types or ways in which demons today are
influencing our society:

1. FORTUNE TELLING  Some of this is mere superstition and “show business” contrived behind the scene. In the past some folks believed in “augury” or foretelling the future by means of natural signs such as the disposition of the entrails of animals or birds.  Ezekiel 21:21  For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images, he looked in the liver.  Beware of those who want to “tell your fortune.” Even in religious circles be careful whose “prophecies” you believe.

2. DIRECT WORSHIP OF DEMONS AND DEMON POSSESSION.  Deut. 32:17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

When our son lived in Africa, I would often look upon the hill summits surrounding his town and see strange fires.  I was told it was people calling out to demons and false gods.  DURING THE TRIBULATION PERIOD THERE WILL BE RENEWED DEMON ACTIVITY AND OPEN WORSHIP OF SATAN:  Rev. 16:13-14  And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.  [14] For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

3. SPIRITISM which is the belief that the living can communicate with the dead and that the spirits of the dead can manifest their presence to the living.  This is known as NECROMANCY.  In Scripture is was sometimes referred to as “a familiar spirit.”  1 Samuel 28:3  Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

It is interesting to note that Paul warned believers to “try the spirits to see if they are of God” or not.  (1 Cor. 12:10)

I believe we are going to see a massive emphasis on demonic spirits and their work in the days ahead.  Be careful.  Know the Word!  And cover yourself with prayer.

THIS IS WHERE ANTICHRIST AND THE FALSE PROPHET WILL GET THEIR POWER AND AUTHORITY!  Even performing miracles!  Not all miracles are from God.  Once again - try the spirits.  Are they from God?  Or from man?  Or worse - from Satan?
The False Prophet

Satan is a counterfeiter. Nothing original. Ever. He tries to emulate God the Father, which he cannot, of course. So just as the Holy Spirit lifts up Jesus, the Son, so the unholy spirit, the False Prophet, will magnify the son of Satan - a demon-controlled human - Antichrist. Rev. 13:12 ...and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. Notice again the counterfeit – Jesus cied and was restored to life after three days. Antichrist will be “killed” (not really for Satan does not have the power to give life) and seemingly raised to life once again. Just as the Holy Spirit never makes Himself the object of worship - but always concerns the worship of the Son, Jesus, so the unholy spirit will never make himself the object of worship but will cause people to worship Antichrist. “He does great wonders...he makes fire come down from the sky...he deceives the populace.” The world - totally ignorant of God’s Word - will say, “Wow....look at those miracles! That must be God!”

Malachi 4:5-6 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: [6] And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. That’s the last line of the Old Testament. Satan knows the scriptures. So do his demons. They know that God authenticated His prophet by fire from heaven. Satan will imitate God through the False Prophet to convince ISRAEL that this phony is actually Elijah and the one to whom the phony points, Antichrist, is none other than the Messiah who has the right to be worshiped.

The “image” foretold is Revelation is not - I believe - a statue. It is a concept. An interesting book came out after the election of Richard Nixon to be President, The Selling of the President by Joe McGinniss (1988). It concerned the men and women who developed an “image” or “a concept” of Mr. Nixon that they hoped the populace would accept as the real man. That’s what the False Prophet will do.

One of the choices facing Americans today is that of capital punishment. Should we do it - or not? With Antichrist and the False Prophet in charge, there will be no question about the matter. Rev. 13:15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. This trio from Hell will move against all those in the Tribulation who have accepted Christ and would not bow to Antichrist.
The Mark Of The Beast

Rev. 13:16  And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

Would you take the mark of the beast (his number is 666) if...
....you could not buy or sell without it....
....you could not pay your utility bill without it so your water and electric were shut off:.
....you could not purchases any food at the grocery store...
....you could not go anywhere because you didn’t have gas for your car....
....your children were crying because they had no food....
....you could not get a job without the mark....
....etc....etc.

As one commentator as put it, “....Without this identifying sign, no individual can either buy or sell. And when an individual refuses to submit to the authority of this system, he either starves to death slowly or else he is slain by the representatives of the government who will treat as traitors all who refuse to accept the mark.”

John wrote in Revelation 7 about the multitudes from all over the world who were martyred for their stand. I hear people say, “I can’t give Christ my life and heart now because of this reason or that....but in the tribulation I will.” NO, YOU WON’T! If you cannot live for Christ in the United States of America, you will not be able to live for Him anywhere or anytime.

What does “666” mean. It’s just a number that identifies Antichrist. I am not particularly concerned about it because I don’t believe I’ll be here when Antichrist comes. Thank the Lord, we will be raptured and safe in the arms of Jesus.

Next week - Part 19: WHY CHRIST HAS THE RIGHT TO RULE OVER THE WHOLE EARTH.