

THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST 6: THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL

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We've been on this subject regarding *the spirit of antichrist* and of course, at the end we're going to look at *The Antichrist* himself. We don't know *who he is* yet, as far as the individual, but we see the rate at which things are happening in the world and I have to say: it's not going to be very far off. I'm not prophesying here but if it was to happen during *this year* that would not surprise me.

We just see how quickly the changes are coming about. We see especially how President Trump has taken office and how blazingly quickly things have been changing. Some were even asking: *does he sleep?* because of the volume of work that's getting done. Of course, we know it's not really *the man*, or that *the man* deserves credit, but when God decides to do a work, He knows which man to choose. And then: how to *use* that man and how to *anoint him* for His purpose.

We know last night came one of the major challenges, something of course we would never hope to happen: we had the tragedy of that plane crash. It's been fifteen years or more since we had a similar accident in the United States. It's really something absolutely tragic – we pray for the families – but in the end we know that God is in control and He has a purpose for everything that He allows. Praise the Lord.

Last Sunday I had a subtitle, and if somebody was watching online, maybe they wonder: *when did he get to that?* [laugh] Well I really *didn't* get to it on Sunday, but let's go now to Matthew chapter 16.

There's a very beautiful scripture here. We've read it many times. I'll start in verse 13.

Matthew 16:13

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

I've spoken about the last time I was in Mexico. I had asked one minister and another Brother – I don't know if he was a minister or not – but I had asked them *directly*: according to your understanding, who is the Son of man?

One of them said: Mexico sees him as a great evangelist. He looked at me, he paused, and I don't know how many seconds went by but then he began to say: this was a big controversy many years ago. He began to explain *that*, and finally he did get to the point, he said: Jesus Christ is the Son of man. But then right away he said: but Brother Branham revealed him.

I want to say tonight: first of all, that wasn't the question. All I asked was: who is the Son of man? It should be an easy thing to say: that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yes Brother Branham had his ministry and it was great. God used him in a wonderful way but he was *not* the Son of man.

Now, I don't know exactly what they mean when they say that he *revealed* Christ.

We know that God used him to *characterize* Christ, if we can say it like that. God put a special anointing on him that he could portray the image of Christ far more than any other minister – we can say – in this age. But at the end of the day, if we *know Christ*, it's the Holy Ghost that reveals Christ – the truth of Christ – to us. Praise the Lord.

He says here:

Matthew 16:13

Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

That should make it pretty simple: *Jesus is the Son of man.*

Matthew 16:14

And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist:

Of course, John the Baptist had already been killed. So here they thought maybe John the Baptist had resurrected. We see the same spirit today, they say: Brother Branham has to resurrect. Both of them had that *Elijah Spirit* and in both cases, the people thought they had to come back from the dead.

Well we know there *is* a resurrection, but it's *not* a private resurrection.

Matthew 16:14

Some Elias;

That's *Elijah*, of course.

Matthew 16:14

others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

Matthew 16:15

He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

Matthew 16:16

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Praise the Lord.

As we mentioned before, the safe thing Peter could have said is: we say that you're the Christ. That would've been the safe thing to say. But Peter was *inspired of God* that he *knew* it. It was *revealed in his heart*. Praise the Lord.

He said:

Matthew 16:16

Thou art the Christ,

Matthew 16:17

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

In other words, it wasn't that Andrew came and said: *we found the Christ* [John 1:41] or whatever any of the other disciples may have said, but this was something that *God dealt directly with Peter*.

It also wasn't that he was taught it and had learned it, even though many times that *is* the avenue God uses. In fact, I will say: most of the time *what we know*, we have learned because we were *taught it* through the preaching of the Word.

But we still have to have the Holy Ghost and we still have to discern that we are following the ministry that has the Holy Ghost. If that is in place, then when we hear the Word preached, first of all, our spirit will be at peace, and the Spirit can open up to us the truth of what we're hearing.

If the same Spirit that inspired the Word is inspiring the ministry, and *that same Spirit dwells in us*, then it's all going to come together and we are going to receive *a spiritual understanding* of the Word.

But here, Peter received this *directly* from God.

Let's keep reading.

He says:

Matthew 16:18

And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter,

Now, does *Peter* mean a *rock*? Yes, of course it does.

God saw his *personality*. As an individual, Peter was solid, he was stable, and he was not easily moved. I'm talking about his personality.

Maybe we have a modern-day example: I was just talking about President Trump. Now please don't misunderstand me. I'm *not* saying Trump is spiritual like Peter was, not at all. But that man has a personality: he is *solid*.

When he said: I'm going to bomb Syria, he bombed Syria. When he said: I'm moving the Embassy to Jerusalem, the whole world started screaming: you can't do that! He said: I said I'm going to do it, and he did. There is a certain *solidness* about his character.

Again, I'm not glorifying the man, I'm using him as an example of what the Lord was looking at in Peter. I'm not saying that Trump is spiritual on the level of Peter, but the Lord recognized that Peter was a man who was going to be *solid*.

Then he says:

Matthew 16:18

and upon this rock I will build my church;

Well first of all, we absolutely know that he was not speaking of a building. They could've very much been out in a grassy field. There was no rock that Jesus was standing on, or if there was, it was just a coincidence.

Peter and the rest of them knew exactly what he meant: he was speaking about *the revelation*, praise the Lord, of *who Jesus Christ is*.

That's why I just said: people say that Brother Branham revealed Jesus Christ but Brother Branham wasn't even around when Peter said this.

God revealed to Peter by the Holy Ghost *who Jesus was*.

I'll go even further and say: those who are saying today that Brother Branham revealed Jesus Christ – or *the Son of man*, that's how they say it – don't even know themselves *who Jesus is*. Their understanding is that Jesus is God – we can say – just *veiled* in a human body.

We've heard them many times praying to the Lord Jesus. Now I know sometimes we might feel to express things that way, but that's the *only* way they pray.

One time, many of them were sitting around talking and they said: God thinks it, the Prophet speaks it – speaking of Brother Branham – and that settles it. Something like that. And I said: you are all skipping right over Jesus Christ. Where is Jesus Christ? You say: God thinks it, the Prophet spoke it, and that settles it. They said: no, we're not skipping over Jesus Christ, we said: God thinks it – Jesus Christ is God – God thinks it. That was their explanation.

I don't say this to criticize people. I have to say: the fact that we understand this does not make us *one cent* more intelligent than them. They may be more intelligent than us. That's not the point. But I thank God that He has opened this to our understanding. Praise the Lord.

He says here:

Matthew 16:18

upon this rock I will build my church;

What's *the rock*? This is what the whole question was about: *who do men say that I am?* [Matthew 16:13] *Who do you say that I am?* [Matthew 16:15]

The question is: who is Jesus Christ? Or maybe I should better say: who is Jesus of Nazareth? Because when we say *Jesus Christ*, we're already partly answering the question.

He says here:

Matthew 16:18

I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I have to say: praise the Lord! Because on the day the church was born, the devil began to fight. *All down through time*, he has been doing everything in his power to try to put the church out of existence by fighting against it with that *spirit of antichrist*. And *still today*, he's going strong.

So Jesus did *not* say that it would not be a struggle, that it would not be a battle, but he said: *the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church*.

What is *the church*? It is the group of *all the Bride Saints* down through time. God knew who they were *before the foundation of the world*. [Ephesians 1:4] Praise the Lord. And He has destined that *the enemy will not overcome*.

Now the devil, or we could say *the gates of hell* have prevailed against those who are *not* in the church. The devil has not been working in vain: if somebody is not a predestined seed, the enemy will be able to have the victory over them.

Of course, we know there are those who *are saved* – I'm talking about *the great multitude* [Revelation 7:9] – but really, they die before they have a chance to go further in the Lord.

But there are *millions* who have lived their full life and have been *deceived* by the enemy. That's not God's fault and that doesn't mean Jesus was wrong here. But the *true Church* has had the victory all down through time.

There's been a lot she has had to suffer but in the end, *the gates of hell have not prevailed and will not prevail against the true Church*. [Matthew 16:18]

When we look at the *spirit of antichrist*, even at the time of Christ when he chose twelve disciples whom he named *apostles*, one of them – *Judas* – was a traitor. [Matthew 10:4] That's what *Iscaiot* means: *traitor*.



Just think of it: Judas was the same or *he seemed the same* as the other eleven.

Like Cain and Abel: until something *came to test*, it *seemed* that they *both* loved God and were worshipping God. We already spoke of them.

Judas followed the Lord Jesus. Somehow he even got the confidence of all of them that they entrusted him with the treasury. He was the one who *kept the money* as they went on their journeys and the different – we can say – ways that the Lord worked. [John 13:29]

But there was something in the heart of Judas that was not right.

At the end of the day, the money was *more important to him* than this beautiful gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ himself who had done everything – we can say – preached his heart out and had never made a false move. He was the perfect example, yet somehow Judas allowed the spirit of Satan to get a hold of him.

He probably became offended at something. Maybe Jesus said something about one of his uncles or I don't know what, but *bitterness* began.

At the end of the day, *thirty pieces of silver were more important to him than the life of Jesus Christ* and he became *a traitor*. [Matthew 26:15-16] That's the way the spirit of Satan worked through him.

It ended up with Jesus being turned over to the Roman Army.

This is another area where the devil began to work: through armies and especially the Roman Army. Jesus was turned over to the Roman Government and we see the support of the Roman Government in the torture and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

First of all, the devil wanted to get rid of Jesus himself. That's the way the devil has worked from the beginning: he wanted to get rid of Abel so he inspired Cain, and *Cain slew Abel*. [Genesis 4:8]

But when he inspired Judas, and the Pharisees, and even the Roman Government so that Jesus was killed, praise the Lord, Paul said: *the blood of Jesus speaks better things than the blood of Abel*. [Hebrews 12:24]

And *Jesus Christ rose again*, so the devil was *not* triumphant.

In fact, Jesus Christ had the victory and crushed the effort of the serpent. It was through his death, burial and resurrection that the way was paved so that man could once again have a way back to the tree of life. Praise the Lord.

I have to say: the victory of Jesus Christ was astounding. We are still benefiting *today* from the victory of the cross. Praise the Lord.

Let's go back to Daniel chapter 9, and I'll start in verse 25.

This is the *Seventy Weeks* of Daniel. [Daniel 9:24]

The angel tells Daniel:

Daniel 9:25

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Daniel 9:26

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary;

God gave the Jews a *time factor* for the first coming of the Messiah. He said: *after seven weeks and sixty-two weeks*. That's *sixty-nine weeks*.

He told what would *start it*, He told what would *end it*, and He said it would be *sixty-nine weeks*.

So the Jews – those who were spiritual – could look back when Nehemiah received the order from King Artaxerxes [Nehemiah 2] and they could say: where does that put it *in time*?

We have to understand that Peter, James, John, Andrew, and the others *were looking at that* and they were saying: the *time* is drawing close, we need to find the Messiah. And the day came, they said: *we have found the Messiah!* [John 1:41]

They knew it was *time, by the Word*.

There are voices today saying: don't look at things like that. But I have to say: if it's *in the Word*, why would I *not* look at it?

The Word says *for us* [Gentiles] that *after Two Days, the Israeli Nation is going to be revived*. [Hosea 6:2] Praise the Lord. You and I know that's the 70th Week. [Daniel 9:27]

Did God just put *Two Days* out there for nothing? I have to say: it has its purpose, just like the *Seventy Weeks* did here.

We have to be spiritual enough to see what God shows us. Yes, until we can see the full clarity of it, that barrier is there. But once God lifts that – which He has, I have to say, in a divine manner – then we are *responsible* to be able to look at that and *see its importance for our day*. Praise the Lord.

So let's go ahead now.

Here it speaks of *a prince that will come*. [Daniel 9:26] Amen.

We saw – maybe we can say – *the first outstanding manifestation* of that *spirit of antichrist* with what we just read here, which is: *the prince shall come*.

But it says: *the people of that prince shall come and destroy the city and the sanctuary*.

Looking back at history, we know that to be the *Roman Army*, there is no other thing we can look at. We also know that it was the *Roman Government* – *through Pilate* – that gave the green light and turned Jesus over to the Jews.

Pilate said: do what you please. [John 19:6] He knew Jesus was not guilty but he saw the great uproar of the people, and as *Governor*, he knew *politically* he would never survive.

They were even saying: *we're going to go and tell the Emperor or the Caesar that you are not respecting the Government of Rome*. [John 19:12] He may very well have been killed. So Pilate was not able to resist the pressure and *he gave Jesus over to be crucified*. [John 19:16]

Pilate represented that Roman Government.

Now when we go to Acts chapter 2, here the Holy Ghost was poured out. I know we've all probably read this chapter multiple times. We know the hundred and twenty were in the upper room and there was a great manifestation of the power of God.

We get to verse 4, and it says here:

Acts 2:4

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Praise the Lord.

Then in verse 7, it speaks about when everybody began to hear this. It says:

Acts 2:7

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

Acts 2:8

how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

So clearly, this had to be the work of God. Amen.

It speaks of the different ones, their different languages [Acts 2:9-10] and it ends in verse 11. It says:

Acts 2:11

Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

Acts 2:12

And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

This was the birth of the church. This was the Holy Ghost being poured out on the day of Pentecost. Amen. What a glorious day!

Nonetheless, verse 13:

Acts 2:13

Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

How could they be full of new wine, and speaking languages they didn't know? Amen. There was nothing the devil could say here except: *they're drunk*.

He always has some kind of criticism, some attack. This was not just the people speaking but the spirit of Satan was seeing this. *Oh no! God is filling these people with His Spirit!* So he came on the scene to try to stop it.

And don't think these people who were mocking were bank robbers, drunkards, and that class of people. I have no doubt they were those who had showed up, maybe they were dressed better than the others because they had come for this religious event: to honour the Law that God had given them.

But now they were seeing something that didn't run *according to their interpretation* of things. And here came the enemy to put a thought, accusing them of being drunk.

Thankfully, Peter had the valour and the inspiration, and he basically said – well I don't know if people will like it if I say what I'm thinking. I'll say it nicely, he basically said – *stop talking! That is a ridiculous statement! People don't get drunk at nine o'clock in the morning, but this was spoken by the Prophet Joel.* [Acts 2:14-16]

And he began to preach the first gospel message of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord.

Notice: Peter could not even begin his message before the devil *first* came and attacked. And he's tried different ways all down through time.

Lord willing we'll look at those different ways as we continue to look at this subject.

We'll go ahead and close tonight.