

### 11. *Who is the Antichrist?* (2 Thess. 2:2, 3)

In the Book of Revelation we are told that a world dictator will arise who will be endued with the power of Satan himself and will claim for himself the prerogatives of God (Rev. 13:1-18; 2 Thess. 2:4). Assisting him will be a False Prophet who will do signs in this dictator's name (Rev. 13:13-15; 19:20).

We do know that the Book of Revelation was written during a time when Christians were being persecuted in the Roman Empire. We also know that the Roman emperors liked to think of themselves as gods, making statues of themselves and requiring worship of themselves. I believe those earlier dictators were representations of the final world dictator. There is always the possibility that the Antichrist is already in the world. This man will appear as a great leader, speaking great words of wisdom, and will draw all of the non-Christian people to worship him. To them he will be the sum of wisdom, with the answers to all their problems (Rev. 13:18).

For an antichrist figure to come into the modern world, there must be a breakdown of the world system as we know it now. There would have to be breakdowns in currency, in law and order, and in the power structures of national states.

A financial panic could help pave the way for him. So could a nuclear war. Such disasters could leave people crying out for a man of peace, who will be Satan's counterfeit to Jesus Christ. This man will seem to be like Jesus, until such time as he is ready to show his true self. Then he will be incredibly cruel (Dan. 7; 8). The Antichrist will be the most hideous example of dictatorial power that the world has ever known.

Remember that the antichrist spirit is in anybody who tries to draw people away from Jesus, saying, "Worship me." The antichrist spirit is often present now in the worship and veneration we give to governments, dictators, military leaders, and various other human figures. Systems being taught in our schools, media, and intellectual circles are often much like that which will ultimately lead people to the Antichrist, because he will be the consummate figure of humanism.

### 12. *What is the mark of the Beast?* (Rev. 13:18)

In the Book of Revelation there is reference to the number of the Antichrist, which is 666 (Rev. 13:18). *Six* in biblical numerology is the number of man—just short of perfection, whereas *seven* is the number of perfection. So 666 may refer to the quintessential humanist. Revelation tells us that the number 666, or the mark of the Antichrist, is going to be stamped upon the hand and the forehead of every person in the world during the reign of the Antichrist.

The forehead represents our wills, our volition, while the hand represents our activities. Somehow the Antichrist will get his imprint on people everywhere, causing them, through their wills and their actions, to serve him. It is not farfetched to think that the Antichrist could impose population control by some global means (Rev. 13:16, 17).

The Bible warns us that if we have the mark of the Beast, we will then share the terrible fate of the Beast (Rev. 14:11). No one should fear "accidentally" taking the mark of the Beast. To do so involves "worshipping" the Beast (Rev. 13:15), and the decision will be clear enough that it will be a life-and-death matter. However, we should still be sensitive today, for if we regard the forehead as the center of the will and the hand as being symbolic of what we do, it seems that the mark is more than some technological device. What we are really talking about here is who gets our allegiance. In a real respect the spirit of antichrist is active already (1 John 2:18). Will we give the spirit of the world our minds and our work? If our allegiance is to God, we will not serve the Antichrist, and we will not take his mark upon us.

### 13. *What is the Millennium?* (Rev. 20:2, 3)

A millennium is one thousand years. The biblical Millennium will be a period of peace, love, and brotherhood when all nature lives in the harmony that was intended in the Garden of Eden. The Book of Isaiah (11:6-9) speaks of a time when the wild