

ANTI-CHRISTIAN

PART I

HISTORY OF SATAN'S ANTI-CHRISTIAN ENDEAVORS

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matt. 13:31, 32).

Satan is presently directing his activities against two groups of people in the world. On the one hand he is moving against *ISRAEL*, and on the other hand he is moving against *the CHURCH*. He has been at war for centuries, extending into millenniums, *against BOTH the old creation in Jacob and the new creation in Christ*.

The REASON is very simple and obvious:

BOTH of these creations occupy their place “in time” at the center of God’s preordained activity surrounding His Son throughout the ages (*cf.* Heb. 1:2); and the purpose for the very existence of both, when realized, will result in the end of Satan’s present rule over the earth.

Satan has sought for millenniums to use the Gentile nations to do away with Israel, and he has been following a somewhat similar pattern during the past two thousand years in his efforts to do away with Christianity.

From an early persecution of Christians at the hands of the Gentile power of that day, the Roman kingdom, Satan has used the Gentile nations down through the years as his main instrument to destroy Christianity.

Satan and his angels hold the sceptre in the heavenly sphere of the present kingdom, and the Gentile nations hold the sceptre under Satan and his angels in the earthly sphere.

Within this framework, power from the heavenlies is exhibited through an earthly rule among the nations in Satan's ever-continuing anti-Semitic and anti-Christian endeavors.

In this respect, the Gentile nations are being used by Satan on BOTH fronts, though in different ways; and this is a fact which MUST be recognized.

(For additional information on Satan and his angels' present rule from the heavens through the Gentile nations here on earth, refer to the author's book, *The Most High Ruleth*.)

A Beginning through Rome

During the early years of Christianity, so long as this "new sect" was thought of as associated with Judaism, the Romans had little problem with Christians in the Empire, for Judaism was recognized as "a legal sect."

BUT, once the Romans began to view Christianity as separate and distinct from Judaism, problems arose — major problems.

Christianity, separate from Judaism, came under the banner of the Roman state; and because of the nonallegiance of Christians to the state, it was seen as "an illegal religion."

"Religion" and "State" were *ONE* in the Roman Empire. The people were polytheistic in their worship, and this extended over into the realm of emperor-worship (they deified the emperor); *they worshipped MANY gods, but ONLY one king: Caesar.*

On the other hand, "Christianity" and "State" were *separate* in the Roman Empire. Christians were monotheistic in their worship; they worshipped the *ONE* true and living God, *and their ONLY King was Christ.*

Thus, Christian practices were looked upon as *treasonable* in some quarters, *NOT ONLY* because they spoke of a King other than Caesar, *BUT ALSO* because they refused to join in emperor-worship.

Thus, Christianity gradually became quite unpopular among the Romans; and by the time of Nero (54-68 A.D.), Christians were ready-objects for that which was about to occur — *a long-lasting persecution at the hands of Rome*.

The event that sparked the beginning of the official persecution of Christians by rulers in the Roman Empire was their being accused of arson when Rome burned in 64 A.D. Although this particular persecution was limited to Christians in Rome itself, *the precedent for and manner of persecuting Christians in the Empire was established at this time*.

Christians were burned as human torches, thrown to mad dogs, and slain in other grotesque fashions. And such persecutions were continued at intervals and spread throughout the Empire by nine of Nero's successors over the next two hundred and fifty years.

But just as a persecution of the Israelites in Egypt resulted in their multiplying and growing (Ex. 1:12), thus it was with a persecution of Christians. The Church, during this time, experienced phenomenal growth.

Through the persecution and scattering of zealous, missionary-minded Christians, the gospel message was spread throughout a large segment of the Roman Empire.

Through this means, by the year 200 A.D., Christians could be found in all parts of the Empire; and by the year 250 A.D., it is estimated that Christians constituted five to twelve percent of the population of the Empire, some 75,000,000.

This is what led Tertullian, one of the early Church fathers living during the time of Roman persecution, to say:

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Not all was well with the Church during these years though. Different forms of *false doctrine, building on previous forms*, began to make inroads during about the last one hundred fifty years of Roman persecution.

Gnosticism made its appearance in the Church during this time. *The Origen school of interpretation* then followed (Origen's system of theology resulted in the influence of an allegorical interpretation of Scripture, with its inherent amillennial eschatology). *The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes* (a priestly class elevated to a position over the common people) was also becoming widespread.

Then, toward the latter part of this period (about the last fifty years), the Church began *to become wealthy*. In fact, by the close of this period, Christianity had become the richest religious organization in the Roman Empire.

Thus, as a whole, by the time of Diocletian (the last of the persecuting emperors [284-305 A.D.]), the Church was *NOT at all* the same as it had been during the period of early Roman persecution under Nero. And in one respect,, the Church was ripe *for the greatest tragedy* that has ever befallen Christianity, a tragedy which some historians, who do not understand Christianity at all, have erroneously called, "The Triumph of Christianity."

The persecuting edicts of Diocletian were repealed during the opening years of the fourth century by Constantine the Great after he came into power, and Christianity was then regarded as simply another religion in the countries over which Rome ruled. This move by Constantine set the stage for a succeeding move having far-reaching ramifications: The day came when Constantine (for reasons upon which historians differ) embraced Christianity, an act subsequently followed by his efforts to force Christianity on the Empire as *its one and only religion*.

These efforts of Constantine began a sequence of events

which, during the latter part of the century, ultimately resulted in *a complete merger of Church and State*. In the year 380 A.D., Theodosius I issued an edict that made Christianity *the exclusive state religion*; and in the year 395 A.D., Christianity was finally recognized as *the OFFICIAL and ONLY religion of the Roman Empire*.

Christianity then found itself completely enmeshed within a world power in the sphere of governmental authority over which Satan exercised control, completely out of line with God's plans and purposes *for the new creation "in Christ."*

Rather than Christianity converting the world, the world had converted Christianity.

It is this position, assumed by the Church, beginning during the time of Constantine, that some have erroneously called, "The Triumph of Christianity," when, in fact, it was just the opposite. The "Triumph" *was on Satan's part, NOT Christendom's part.*

Satan THEN had the Church EXACTLY where he wanted it.

Where the pagan persecuting emperors had failed (although not completely, for Christianity was gradually corrupted during their reign), the so-called Christian emperors succeeded.

Satan had attacked the Church *from WITHOUT* during the reign of the persecuting emperors; *BUT*, once the persecutions stopped and Christianity began *to be one with the state*, the attack by Satan *THEN came from WITHIN*.

And that which resulted and how well Satan succeeded — a success which has continued into modern times, deteriorating as it has continued — can be seen on practically every hand today

(The remainder of Part I in this article will deal with *the END RESULT of Satan's work among Christians during the past two millenniums*, and Part II will provide more detail on the historical account, aligning Scripture with secular history, *showing EXACTLY HOW all of this happened.*)

End Result, Christendom in Modern Times

In keeping with *HOW Christendom SHOULD exist* and *HOW Christendom DOES exist*, two things stand out in a quite prominent manner:

- 1) Knowledge concerning and/or attitude toward *the WORD of the KINGDOM*.
- 2) Knowledge concerning and/or involvement in *the WRONG KINGDOM*.

On the former — *the WORD of the KINGDOM*, the central message of Scripture, the message of the hour at any time during the dispensation — *is ALL but ABSENT in the Churches of the land today*.

Christians are *NOT ONLY* talking about practically everything *except the ONE thing* which they should be talking about, *BUT*, if the subject which they should be talking about is ever raised, they invariably speak against it, categorizing it as heresy.

On the latter, an involvement *in the WRONG KINGDOM* — in Satan's present kingdom rather than in Christ's coming kingdom — *is RAMPANT among Christians today* (ref. Part II).

Today's politics and Christian involvement after some fashion therein often occupies a prominent place on so-called Christian web sites. And through this means, along with those in positions of leadership echoing the same or similar thoughts, Christians on every hand are being exhorted to involve themselves in the political structure of this present world system under Satan.

And this isn't happening in just a segment of Christendom. This is happening throughout, in liberal and fundamental (so-called) circles alike.

THIS is where *BOTH* find common ground — *dealing with the WRONG MESSAGE and the WRONG KINGDOM*.

Part II

CONTINUANCE AND END OF SATAN'S ANTI-CHRISTIAN ENDEAVORS

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof” (Matt. 13:31, 32).

It took Satan about three and one-half centuries to bring the Church completely within his sphere of governmental control.

Then, what is referred to as “The Dark Ages” (an expression, not “ages” per se) in Church history rapidly ensued, lasting for over one thousand years; and even though the Reformation (16th century, with a subsequent restoration of great prophetic truths [17th-20th centuries, attaining fruition in the 19th and 20th centuries]), followed “The Dark Ages,” the Church as a whole *has NEVER* really departed from the position it began to assume during the time of Constantine. Segments of Christendom, at times, *have stood apart, BUT NOT the Church as a whole; and this continues even more so to be the case today.*

It Becometh a Tree

The parable of the grain of mustard seed in Matt. 13:31, 32 reflects upon the position in which the Church has found itself since the time of Constantine. *The mustard seed*, “the least of all seeds,” was to germinate, grow, and become “the greatest among herbs.” *BUT*, the mustard seed in the parable germinated, experienced *an unnatural growth*, and became “a tree.”

And *NOT ONLY* did this occur, *BUT* following the germination and growth of the mustard seed into a tree, “the birds of the air” came and *lodged in its branches*.

“A tree” in Scripture symbolizes *a national power*. In Judges 9:8-15, which relates the oldest known parable in the world, “trees” represent *nations* which had sought to elect a king to reign over them.

Daniel 4:10-12 refers to a vision of “a tree in the midst of the earth,” having *a great height* which “reached unto heaven.” The interpretation of the vision is given later in the chapter (vv. 20-22), and “the tree” is said to symbolize *the kingdom of Babylon*. Babylon had grown strong, its greatness reached unto heaven, and its dominion reached to the ends of the earth.

Then in Luke 21:29-32, Christ *NOT ONLY* referred to *the nation of Israel* under the symbolism of “a fig tree” (cf. Matt. 21:18, 19; 24:32), *BUT* He also referred to *Gentile nations* under the symbolism of “all the trees.”

(Refer to Ch. VIII in the author’s book, *Prophecy on Mount Olivet*, for information on “the fig tree” and “all the trees.”)

Also, refer to the author’s book, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, for additional information on the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen.)

There *can be NO question* concerning Scripture identifying “trees” in a symbolic sense *with national powers*; and this fact, along with the fact that the grain of mustard seed (another symbol) *germinated and subsequently experienced an unnatural growth*, *MUST be understood to correctly interpret Matt. 13:31, 32*.

The next thing to note is the fact *that AFTER the national power appeared*, “the birds of the air” found places to lodge *within that power*. Again, one is not left to his own understanding to ascertain the interpretation.

In verse four, in the first of the seven parables in this chapter, "the fowls" came and devoured the individuals "sown by the wayside" (literal understanding derived from v. 19 [ref. ASV]; these are Christians sown at specific places in the world, with a view to their bringing forth fruit [ref. v. 8]). Then in verse nineteen, in the interpretation of this parable, "the fowls" from verse four are identified with "the wicked one."

The words "fowl" in verse four and "birds" in verse thirty-two are translations of the same word in the Greek text, and understanding these parables in the light of one another, the "birds" which found a place to rest in the branches of the tree *can ONLY be identified with the agents of Satan*. That is, after that which is represented by the grain of mustard seed germinated, took an unnatural growth, and became a world power, the agents of Satan simply moved in.

Through *an unnatural growth*, following the germination of the grain of mustard seed, *the agents of Satan found a natural place to lodge*.

Now, note what *MUST be looked upon* as the overall interpretation, which will reveal the identity of that which is represented by the grain of mustard seed. Interpreted in the light of the two preceding parables (which are explained in the text), *ONLY one thing can be in view*.

The first two parables concern *Satan's move against Christianity (NOT against Israel, for Christ had gone out of the house, down by the seaside [Matt. 13:1])*, and it is no different in the third parable (*cf. vv. 1, 36*). The grain of mustard seed, the object of attack in the parable, *can ONLY represent the Church* which, somewhere along the way, experienced an unnatural growth and became a world power, something it was not supposed to become at all.

And there is only one place in history to which an individual can go to show the fulfillment of such an event.

This is what began to occur during the time of Constantine in the early part of the fourth century, reaching its consummation in the latter part of the century when Christianity was declared *to be the official and only religion of the Roman Empire*.

The Church was wed to the world. The Church, through its association with a world power after this fashion, was looked upon *as being ONE with that power*; and Satan, with his agents, found it to be *a very natural thing to simply move in and begin exercising some measure of control*.

Note the sharp contrast between the work of Satan in verse four and his work in verse thirty-two.

In the former verse, Satan devoured Christians (*cf.* I Peter 5:8, 9); *BUT* in the latter verse, there was no need for Satan to devour them. The Christians in this verse had joined his ranks, and *he, along with his agents, simply positioned himself among them*. They were no longer in a position to bring forth fruit through proclaiming a true witness concerning the kingdom; and he, as a consequence, simply left them alone.

It Remaineth a Tree

Within the scope of the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, once a course of action had been taken, *there was no turning back* (e.g., “till the whole was leavened” in the parable of the leaven [v. 33]); and once fruition had been attained, the text appears to clearly indicate *that NO change would occur throughout the remainder of the dispensation in relation to that which had come to pass*.

This, then, leaves the final form given in the parable as that form which would carry through to the end of the dispensation. That is, once the mustard seed had germinated and grown into a tree (the final form revealed), it would, from all indication, *continue as a tree for the remainder of the dispensation*.

NOT ONLY would this be true, *BUT* the birds of the air would also remain in its branches (again, the final form revealed) for the remainder of the dispensation. There is *NO* intimation at all that, sometime during the course of the remainder of the dispensation, the tree could one day become a mustard bush — or anything else — possibly resulting in the birds of the air departing, etc. In fact, such a thought, aside from being contrary to sound interpretation within the scope of the parable, is contrary to any Scripture bearing upon the course of Christianity throughout the dispensation.

(The dispensation would end with Christendom completely leavened, as seen in the Matthew thirteen parables; or, presented another way in Scripture, the dispensation would end with Christendom in a Laodicean state [“...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”], as seen in Revelation chapter three.

And the Church at the end of the dispensation, during the day in which we live, is so blinded to the position which it is supposed to occupy that Christians forming these Churches have little to no understanding of that which has occurred and continues to occur, with the end result seen in Luke 18:8:

“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith [*lit.*, ‘the faith’] upon the earth?”

“The faith” has a peculiar reference in the New Testament to the Word of the Kingdom; and the way in which the question is worded in the Greek text of Luke 18:8, a negative response is indicated. That is, when the Son of Man returns, He is *NOT* going to find “the faith” being taught in the Churches of the land, liberal and fundamental Churches alike.

THIS is the ONE place where the two find COMMON ground; NEITHER will have anything to do with the Word of the Kingdom.)

Within the symbolism of “a tree” — from the time of Constantine to the present time — Christendom has found

and continues to find itself *EXACTLY* where *Satan* wants it. Christendom has been and continues to be associated with “a tree,” a world power (which would have to be Gentile world power during the present dispensation).

From Constantine Until Today

NOW, how does all of this continue FROM the time of Constantine TO the present time? HOW, or in WHAT manner, is Christianity still associated with Gentile world power, which would have to be the case with the continuing symbolism of the tree in Matt. 13:32?

The matter is evident on every hand, but it is something which is possibly *even more deceptive today than at any other time in history*. After all, the “leaven” which the woman placed in the three measures of meal in Matt. 13:33 has been working for almost two millennia, and Satan has been allowed the same length of time to sharpen the cutting edge of his master plan.

Over a period of hundreds and hundreds of years, Satan, in progressively carrying out his plans and purposes, has created *such confusion* that no segment of Christendom has escaped unscathed (cf. Luke 18:8). *Those from BOTH the liberal and fundamental wings have fallen prey* to the wiles of Satan in the area of world government, as he has continued to foster the association of Christians with that symbolized by “a tree.”

The crux of the plan of Satan is to involve Christians in the *PRESENT* kingdom, an involvement which can only detract from the things in which they are supposed to be involved — things having to do with the *COMING* kingdom (II Tim. 2:4, 5).

The *COMING* kingdom of Christ is symbolized in Scripture by “a great mountain” or “a high mountain” (Isa. 2:2-4; Dan. 2:35; Matt. 16:28-17:5), and the *ONLY* recourse for Christians in the world today is to “escape to the mountain.”

In fact, it is, "Escape for thy life ['soul']" (Gen. 19:16, 17).

There is *NO such thing* as a Christian being actively involved in both "the tree" and "the great mountain." When a Christian becomes interested in "the tree," he loses interest in "the great mountain," and vice versa.

Thus, the great deception of Satan revolves around his efforts to keep the Christians' attention centered on *the present "tree"* rather than upon *the coming "great mountain"; and this deception has been present and effectively executed for hundreds of years.*

One of the great cries one hears day after day after day over the religious radio stations and religious TV broadcasts, especially within what is recognized as "fundamental Christianity," is *the call for an increased association of Christians with world government.*

Christians on every hand are continually being exhorted to involve themselves within the political structure of this present world system. They are being exhorted to band together for purposes of becoming a powerful force or voice in the present system, and a Christian who doesn't follow suit is looked down upon as being among the uninformed.

Again, *it would NOT be* "The Triumph of Christianity" should Christians find themselves controlling, after any fashion, Gentile world power today. In fact, as with the association of Christianity and Rome, beginning during the time of Constantine, it would be just the opposite.

Modern-day Christian thought relating to the association of Christians with the state would NOT have been welcomed at all within the Church until at least the latter part of the second century.

THEN, by the fourth century, the thought of Christians associating themselves with the present government of the earth would have been right at home in the Church, as it continues to exist today.

Those individuals exhorting Christians to become involved in the political structure of this present world system are, in reality, encouraging Christians to *forsake their high calling and become involved in matters COMPLETELY UNRELATED to their HIGH calling.*

And for Christians to do this is for those Christians to involve themselves in affairs related to *the wrong kingdom — the present kingdom of Satan rather than the coming kingdom of Christ.*

Christians are to bide their time, keeping their eyes on the things having to do with the COMING kingdom of Christ, NOT on the things having to do with the PRESENT kingdom under Satan.

The former is about to be manifested, overthrow, and destroy the latter, *THEN become a great mountain and fill the whole earth* (Dan. 2:35, 44, 45; cf. Gen. 19:16, 17).