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'Pharaoh' - a foreshadowing of the Antichrist

That there have been men who in their lives foreshadowed the future Antichrist serves to remind us of a number of important truths.

1. The spirit of iniquity has been at work amongst men since the fall of Adam. The devil's temptation of man was not a random event but rather the beginning, amongst men, of the devil's plan to overthrow God!

2. Furthermore, these vile men were merely foreshadowings and not the substance which indicates the restraining power of God upon the devil at work. The devil would like to have made some of them his ultimate agents but was prevented from doing so by the restraining power of God.

3. Moreover, if such wicked men as Cain, Goliath, Judas, and many others were but foreshadowings of the Antichrist, then the final manifestation of wickedness incarnate will be most dreadful indeed.

As a volcano reveals its destructive heart by its occasional eruptions, even so the repeated emergence of evil men, whose ways and words have been a portent of that satanically-controlled being who will emerge to dominate the Roman world, shortly before the return of the Saviour, has been a revealing of the burning cauldron of degeneracy that has long been inhibited by the mighty power of God until it is God's time to bring to pass "every purpose of the LORD," Jeremiah 51:29.

Can anything be more terrible to say of a man than that he is a foreshadowing of the Antichrist?

And yet, all men bear the marks of the one who energises and empowers the Antichrist, that is the devil, to a great measure.

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it," John 8:44.

"The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one," Matthew 13:38.

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother," 1 John 3:10.

"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 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?" Revelation 13:2, 4.

The spirit of the flesh is the spirit of rebellion. Even within the believer there is at work a tendency to set up a rival to Christ which is victoriously opposed by the new nature, implanted at our regeneration. We who are saved must rejoice that we have been delivered from the bondage of sin and now bear the image of God where once we bore the image of the devil. Bless God for the wonder of 'Regeneration'! (2 Cor 3:18, 4:10-11, 5:17, Rom 8:29, 1 John 3:2).

Let us consider our subject - 'Pharaoh - a foreshadowing of the Antichrist'.

I. PHARAOH HAD NO REGARD FOR THE ISRAEL OF GOD.

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph," Exodus 1:8. "Knew" means "perceived,



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"And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years," Genesis 15:13. The relationship between the Egyptians and the Hebrews undoubtedly deteriorated as the number of the Hebrews began to increase. Jealousy, covetousness and a growing fear of the threat they might pose, brought on the spirit of "affliction" which culminated in the scheming of the Pharaoh as set forth in Exodus 1:8-11.

It should be noted that the 'Pharaoh' of Exodus 1:8 is not the same person as the 'Pharaoh' of 5:1. Some eighty years have passed and a new king sits upon the throne but though the man has changed, the hatred of the Hebrew by the Egyptians has not changed, rather it has intensified.

1. He had no regard for the benefits that Joseph and his people had brought to Egypt. God's people have been a benefit to this world, though rarely credited as such by men. Christ called His people the "Light" of the world and the "Salt" of the world, Matthew 5:13-14. Again, consider Paul's exhortation for it indicates the beneficial character of the Christian's influence in the world. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" Philippians 2:15.

2. He saw the people of God as a threat. Exodus 1:9-10 records his animosity, his jealousy as well as his sense of misgiving toward the Hebrews.

3. Their eradication was deemed the ultimate solution. "Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. . . . And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour. . . . And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the stools; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it be a daughter, then she shall live," Exodus 1:11, 13-14, 16.

The slaying of the male babies could have only one outcome - the annihilation of the nation.

Of course, ultimately, it would mean the eradication of the promised Messiah which, while likely not in Pharaoh's mind, most certainly was in the mind of his liege lord, the devil.

II. HE HAD NO REGARD FOR THE GOD OF ISRAEL

"And Pharaoh said, Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go," Exodus 5:2.

1. Such ignorance breeds defiance. Blindness to God results in a despising of Him. This explains the brashness of the mockers of Christ at His trial and crucifixion.

2. Such ignorance breeds disobedience. When we know not the majesty, power and glory of the Lord, why would we serve Him? 2 Kings 18:28-35.

3. Such ignorance breeds deception. He thought that he could defy God because he was deceived about God and his own powers and abilities. It is only as we see the greatness of God that we see our own nothingness. Job illustrates this for us. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes," Job 42:5-6.

III. CONSIDER THE BLINDNESS OF MAN TO THE POWER AND GLORY OF THE LORD

1. What displays of God's majesty and power took place before Pharaoh's eyes and yet he saw not.



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He was not the first nor was he the last!

The leaders of Israel, including Nadab, and Abihu, the wicked rebels who died before the Lord for their rebellion (Numbers 3:4) witnessed the glory of God and yet defied and disobeyed Him so many times. "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink." Exodus 24:9-11. "Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him," Deuteronomy 4:33-35. These glorious manifestations of God's power did not curb man's wickedness. Judas, and the opponents of Christ, likewise saw such wonders but went on to slay Him.

2. Antichrist and his followers will see such a display as seen by Pharaoh. "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk," Revelation 9:20. "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will," Revelation 11:3-6. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds," Revelation 16:10-11.

These things will come to pass just as it is set down in God's Word and yet men will remain defiant and rebellious.

3. Wherever there is such refusal to acknowledge God's power you have the spirit of the Antichrist. "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 2:22. "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world," 1 John 4:3.

It is the spirit that lies behind the blindness of men today and that in a land which has such a glorious history of God's mercy.

IV. HIS PERSECUTING OF GOD'S PEOPLE, INITIATED A SEEKING OF THE LORD BY ISRAEL AND WAS A PREPARATION FOR THEIR TRANSLATION TO THE PROMISED LAND.

"And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them," Exodus 2:23-25.

It also happened in the days of the return from the Babylonian exile.

"For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will



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turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive," Jeremiah 29:10-14.

The final destruction of Babylon and the final deliverance of Israel are depicted in God's Word.

"The word that the LORD spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish, and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast. In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the LORD their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against the LORD, the habitation of justice, even the LORD, the hope of their fathers. Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks. For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the LORD," Jeremiah 50:1-10. (See the rest of the chapter).

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God," Zechariah 13:7-9.

These verses link the repentance that sprang from the persecutions endured by Israel under Antichrist and which brought the intervention of the Saviour to their deliverance.

V. HE AND ALL HIS PERISHED UNDER GOD'S JUDGMENT IN THE MIDST OF GOD'S DELIVERING OF ISRAEL.

The power that saved Israel and which destroyed Pharaoh was one and the same! It happened at the same time!

"And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the LORD fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them," Exodus 14:24-28.

So it will be in the day of the Lord. It will be a day of light and blessing for Israel and one of darkness and doom for Antichrist and his hosts.

The parallel between Pharaoh and the future Antichrist is evident and worthy of study.

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