

Once, twice, thrice

I have noticed that the Lord uses multiple examples in His Word to teach us His Laws and principles of righteousness. For example the defensive, 'She is my Sister excuse', is used three times in Genesis 12:13, 20:2 and 26:7 to enrich Abraham (x2) and Isaac (x1).

Preachers love to scare congregations with the future 'Antichrist' and the 'Desolation of the Temple scenario'. I believe this does pertain to the future, but these events have also occurred in the past. These past examples are there to teach us, to be able to recognise the future threats.

The Temple was first built by Solomon and desecrated later by King Manasseh around 666BC (2Ki 21:1-18). It was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar when he attacked and destroyed Jerusalem. After the 70 year exile in Babylon, the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah; and then desecrated again by King Antiochus in 167BC. It was purified and rededicated through the efforts of Mattathias, Judas Maccabaeus and his brothers in the year 164BC.

Jesus Christ made the Temple desolate at His crucifixion, when the curtain dividing the most holy place, from the rest of the Temple was torn from top to bottom. This signified the end of a building, as being the dwelling place for the Spirit of God. The Old Covenant ended, and the New Covenant began. The Temple has no role in New Covenant Christians worship, but it is still significant to the Jewish, Old Covenant worship.

As Paul said; *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."* (1Co 3:16-17)

The Temple in Jerusalem, was completely destroyed by the Roman's siege of Jerusalem in 70AD. I believe Israel will build another 'Holy Temple' in Jerusalem in the future; which will again be desecrated by the future Antichrist; as Bible prophecies are concerned with Jerusalem and the middle east region. This Antichrist will be thrown into the lake of fire along with the beast, so he must be worse than all who came before him.

An Antichrist is a person who makes people worship something, or someone else, a substitute false-christ or false-god. John explains the 'spirit of the Antichrist'; *"By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world."* (1Jo 4:2-3)

Paul clearly had the 'spirit of the Antichrist' before his conversion. He was present at the stoning of Stephen and zealously persecuted the Christian's of Jerusalem.

Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. Now Saul was consenting to his death.

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. (Act 7:57-8:3)

I believe Saul is also referred to in Daniel's seventy week prophecy, regarding the Messiah. Jesus was baptised, 3½ years later He was crucified, and 3½ years later Stephen was stoned; ending the 7 year Christian outreach, to the Jews of Jerusalem.

"Then He shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate." (Dan 9:27)

Anybody can have the spirit of the antichrist, but to be 'The Antichrist', one has to be:

- 1) Ruling or controlling the whole world.
- 2) Be extremely wealthy, with all material means at their disposal.
- 3) Be leading people away from God on a large scale; by worshipping idols, or by worshipping a false-christ person.

I believe we can recognise the future Antichrist, and know what to look out for, by examining the character traits of two previous Antichrists, Nimrod and Solomon. Unlike Saul who became Paul, both men started out righteous; and both ended up working against God, corrupted by their selfish pride and vain confidence in the wealth of their kingdoms.

Nimrod

And Cush the son of Ham, the son of Noah, took a wife in those days in his old age, and she gave birth to a son, and they called his name Nimrod, saying, "At that time the sons of men again began to rebel and go contrary to God;" the child grew up, and his father loved him greatly, for he was the son of his old age.

The garments of skin which God made for Adam and his wife, when they went out of the garden, were given to Cush. For after the death of Adam and his wife, the garments were given to Enoch, the son of Jared, and when Enoch was taken up to God, he gave them to Methuselah, his son. At the death of Methuselah, Noah took them and brought them to the ark, and they were with him until he went out of the ark. And in their going out, Ham stole those garments from Noah his father; he took them and hid them from his brothers. When Ham had his first born Cush, he gave him the garments in secret, and they were with Cush many days. Cush also concealed them from his sons and brothers, and when Cush had begotten Nimrod, he gave him those garments through his love for him, and Nimrod grew up, and when he was twenty years old he put on those garments.

Nimrod became strong when he put on the garments, and God gave him might and strength, and he was a mighty hunter in the earth. He was a mighty hunter in the field, and he hunted the animals and he built altars, and he offered on them the animals before the Lord. Nimrod strengthened himself, and he rose up from among his brothers, and he fought the battles of his brothers against all their enemies round about.

The Lord delivered all the enemies of his brothers in his hands, and God prospered him from time to time in his battles, and he reigned on earth. Therefore it became current in those days, when a man ushered forth those that he had trained for battle, he would say to them, "Like God did to Nimrod who was a mighty hunter in the earth, and who succeeded in the battles that prevailed against his brothers, that he delivered them from the hands of their enemies: so may God strengthen us and deliver us this day."

And when Nimrod was forty years old, there was a war between his brothers and the children of Japheth, so that they were in the power of their enemies. Nimrod went forth at that time, and he assembled all the sons of Cush and their families, about four hundred and sixty men; he hired also from some of his friends and acquaintances about eighty men, and he gave them their hire; he went with them to battle, and when he was on the road, Nimrod strengthened the hearts of the people that went with him. And he said to them, "Do not fear, neither be alarmed, for all our enemies will be delivered into our hands, and you may do with them as you please." All the men that went were about five hundred, and they fought against their enemies; they destroyed them, and subdued them, and Nimrod placed standing officers over them in their respective places.

He took some of their children as security, and they were all servants to Nimrod and to his brothers, and Nimrod and all the people that were with him turned homeward. When Nimrod had joyfully returned from battle, after having conquered his enemies, all his brothers, together with those who knew him before, assembled to make him king over them and they placed the regal crown on his head.

He set over his subjects and people, princes, judges, and rulers, as is the custom among kings. He placed Terah the son of Nahor the prince of his host, and he dignified him and elevated him above all his princes. And while he was reigning according to his heart's desire, after having conquered all his enemies around, he advised with his counselors to build a city for his palace, and they did so.

They found a large valley opposite to the east, and they built him a large and extensive city, and Nimrod called the name of the city that he built Shinar, for the Lord had vehemently shaken his enemies and destroyed them. Nimrod lived in Shinar, and he reigned securely, and he fought with his enemies and he subdued them; he prospered in all his battles, and his kingdom became very great. All nations and tongues heard of his fame, and they gathered themselves to him, and they bowed down to the earth; they brought him offerings, and he became their lord and king, and they all lived with him in the city at Shinar; Nimrod reigned in the earth over all the sons of Noah, and they were all under his power and counsel.

And all the earth was of one tongue and words of union, but Nimrod did not go in the ways of the Lord; he was more wicked than all the men that were before him, from the days of the flood until those days. He made gods of wood and stone, he bowed down to them, he rebelled against the Lord, and taught all his subjects and the people of the earth his wicked ways; Mardon his son was more wicked than his father. And every one that heard of the acts of Mardon the son of Nimrod would say, concerning him, "From the wicked goes forth wickedness." Therefore it became a proverb in the whole earth, saying, "From the wicked goes forth wickedness", and it was current in the words of men from that time to this. (Jas 7:23-48)

And King Nimrod reigned securely, and all the earth was under his control, and all the earth was of one tongue and words of union. And all the princes of Nimrod and his great men took counsel together: Phut, Mitzraim, Cush and Canaan with their families, and they said to each other, "Come let us build ourselves a city and in it a strong tower and its top reaching heaven, and we will make ourselves famed so that we may reign on the whole world, in order that the evil of our enemies may cease from us; that we may reign mightily over them, and that we may not become scattered over the earth on account of their wars."

They all went before the king, and they told the king these words, and the king agreed with them in this affair, and he did so. All the families assembled consisting of about six hundred thousand men, and they went to seek an extensive piece of ground to build the city and the tower, and they sought in the whole earth and they found none like one valley at the east of the land of Shinar, about two days' walk, and they journeyed there and they lived there.

And they began to make bricks and burn fires to build the city and the tower that they had imagined to complete. And the building of the tower was to them a transgression and a sin, and they began to build it. While they were building against the Lord God of heaven, they imagined in their hearts to war against Him and to ascend into heaven. And all these people and all the families divided themselves in three parts; the first said, "We will ascend into heaven and fight against him;" the second said, "We will ascend to heaven and place our own gods there and serve them;" and the third part said, "We will ascend to heaven and strike him with bows and spears."

And God knew all their works and all their evil thoughts, and He saw the city and the tower which they were building. They built themselves a great city and a very high and strong tower; on account of its height, the mortar and bricks did not reach the builders in their ascent to it until those who went up had completed a full year, and after that, they reached the builders and gave them the mortar and the bricks; thus was it done daily. And behold these ascended and others descended the whole day; and if a brick should fall from their hands and get broken, they would all weep over it; if a man fell and died, none of them would look at him.

The Lord knew their thoughts, and it came to pass when they were building they cast the arrows toward the heavens, and all the arrows fell on them filled with blood; when they saw them they said to each other, "Certainly we have slain all those that are in heaven." For this was from the Lord in order to cause them to err, and in order to destroy them from off the face of the ground. They built the tower and the city, and they did this thing daily until after many days and years were elapsed.

And God said to the seventy angels who stood foremost before Him, to those who were near to Him, saying, "Come, let Us descend and confuse their tongues, that one man shall not understand the language of his neighbor," and they did so to them. From that day following, they forgot each man his neighbor's tongue, and they could not understand to speak in one tongue; when the builder took from the hands of his neighbor lime or stone which he did not order, the builder would cast it away and throw it on his neighbor, that he would die. And they did so many days, and they killed many of them in this manner.

The Lord struck the three divisions that were there, and He punished them according to their works and designs; those who said, "We will ascend to heaven and serve our gods," became like apes and elephants; those who said, "We will strike the heaven with arrows," the Lord killed them, one man through the hand of his neighbor; and the third division of those who said, "We will ascend to heaven and fight against him," the Lord scattered them throughout the earth. Those who were left among them, when they knew and understood the evil which was coming on them, turned away from the building, and they also became scattered on the face of the whole earth.

And they ceased building the city and the tower; therefore he called that place Babel, for there the Lord confounded the language of the whole earth; behold it was at the east of the land of Shinar. As to the tower which the sons of men built, the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up one third part thereof, and a fire also descended from heaven and burned another third, and the other third is left to this day; it is of that part which was aloft, and its circumference is three days' walk. Many of the sons of men died in that tower, a people without number. (Jas 9:20-39)

Nimrod son of Cush was still in the land of Shinar, and he reigned over it and lived there, and he built cities in the land of Shinar. These are the names of the four cities which he built, and he called their names after the occurrences that happened to them in the building of the tower: He called the first Babel, saying, "Because the Lord there confounded the language of the whole earth." The name of the second he called Erech, "Because God had dispersed them." And the third he called Eched, saying, "There was a great battle at that place;" the fourth he called Calnah, "Because his princes and mighty men were consumed there, and they troubled the Lord; they rebelled and went contrary to Him."

When Nimrod had built these cities in the land of Shinar, he placed in them the remainder of his people, his princes and his mighty men that were left in his kingdom. Nimrod lived in Babel, and there he renewed his reign over the rest of his subjects, and he reigned securely, and the subjects and princes of Nimrod called his name Amraphel, saying that at the tower his princes and men fell through his means.

Notwithstanding this, Nimrod did not return to the Lord, and he continued in wickedness and teaching wickedness to the sons of men; and Mardon, his son, was worse than his father and continued to add to the abominations of his father. And he caused the sons of men to sin; therefore it is said, "From wickedness goes forth wickedness."

At that time there was a war between the families of the children of Ham, as they were dwelling in the cities which they had built. And Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, went away from the families of the children of Ham; he fought with them and he subdued them, and he went to the five cities of the plain; he fought against them, and he subdued them, and they were under his control. And they served him twelve years and gave him a yearly tax. (Jas 11:1-11)

At that time Chedorlaomer king of Elam sent to all the neighboring kings, to Nimrod, king of Shinar who was then under his power, and to Tidal, king of Goyim, and to Arioch, king of Elasar, with whom he made a covenant, saying, "Come up to me and assist me, that we may strike all the towns of Sodom and its inhabitants, for they have rebelled against me these thirteen years."

These four kings went up with all their camps, about eight-hundred thousand men, and they went as they were, and struck every man they found in their road. And the five kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboyim, Bera king of Sodom, Bersha king of Gomorrah, and Bela king of Zoar, went out to meet them, and they all joined together in the valley of Siddim. These nine kings made war in the valley of Siddim; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah were smitten before the kings of Elam. The valley of Siddim was full of lime pits and the kings of Elam pursued the kings of Sodom, and the kings of Sodom with their camps fell into the lime pits; all that remained went to the mountain for safety.

The five kings of Elam came after them and pursued them to the gates of Sodom, and they took all that there was in Sodom. They plundered all the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, and they also took Lot, Abram's brother's son, and his property; they seized all the goods of the cities of Sodom, and they went away.

Unic, Abram's servant, who was in the battle, saw this, and told Abram all that the kings had done to the cities of Sodom, and that Lot was taken captive by them. Abram heard this, and he rose up with about three hundred and eighteen men that were with him, and that night he pursued these kings and struck them; they all fell before Abram and his men, and there was none remaining but the four kings who fled, and they each went his own road. Abram recovered all the property of Sodom, and he also recovered Lot and his property, his wives and little ones and all belonging to him, so that Lot lacked nothing. (Jas 16:1-8)

Solomon

And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, that the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. And the Lord said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgements, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among the peoples. And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the Lord done thus to this land and to this house?' Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshipped them and served them; therefore the Lord has brought all this calamity on them.' " (1Ki 9:1-9)

The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents (22644kg) of gold, besides that from the traveling merchants, from the income of traders, from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country. And King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels (7,2kg) of gold went into each shield. He also made three hundred shields of hammered gold; three minas of gold (1,8kg) went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round at the back; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom. All King Solomon's drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon.

For the king had merchant ships at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys. So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem.

The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland. Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the current price. Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; and thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria. (1Ki 10:14-29)

But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites - from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David.

For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord, as did his father David. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded.

Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen."
(1Ki 11:1-13)

Question

Now, when the World officially has a single global: leader, government, currency, language, reaction force, church, religion, etc. and 'The Antichrist' challenges me to do something that conflicts with God's Word; will my faith be strong enough, to refuse and say, "No, I'm not doing that, at any cost!?" Will I stand up to testify for my Lord and my God, as Stephen did? Or will I reply as Peter first did, and deny, deny, deny?

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