

Chapter 26 of the 1689 Confession of Faith: “Of The Church”,
Session # 17, “The Man of Sin is Revealed” Presented by
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The 1689 Confession, Chapter 26: “Of the Church”

Paragraphs 4 will once again be our focus today –

4. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, in whom, by the appointment of the Father, (g)all power for the calling, institution, order for the government of the church, is invested in a supreme and sovereign manner; neither can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is (h)that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God; whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

Now, why do we need to study the doctrine of Antichrist anyway? It is because the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ is obscured and tarnished by believing Antichrist (the Pope) is the Head of the Church here on the earth. And further, we need to study this because we do not want anyone to be led astray by what is not true.

The greatest of Satan’s systematic schemes in preventing the forward progress of Christ’s kingdom has been the raising up a man and a series of men in the visible church called Popes, the office of which usurps Christ’s place as Head of the Church here on earth.

2nd Thessalonians 2: 1-8 – “Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.”

In attempting to understand this amazing and complex passage, I want to give you a breakdown of the 7 major elements concerning the rise, the establishment and the destruction of Antichrist which are mentioned here:

1st – The Coming of the Lord (the Day of Christ, in which all Christians, those who have died and gone before us, and those who are living), being gathered together, will not take place before there is a great apostasy and the Man of Sin is revealed. (verses 1-3a)

2nd – The Man of Sin is compared to Judas, the son of perdition. (verse 3b)

3rd – The Man of Sin opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God and sits as God in the temple of God showing Himself that he is God. (verse 4)

4th – There was a most definite restraint that was taking place in the days of the early church which effectually prevented the Antichrist's being revealed. (verses 5 and 6)

5th – When that restraint was taken away, then the lawless one would be revealed. (verse 7)

6th – The way that the Lord would deal with Antichrist would be to consume him with the breath of His mouth, and with the brightness of His coming. (verse 8)

7th – The coming of this *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders. (verses 9 and 10)

Continuing on in our study of these Verses, we come to our 3rd major element in the breakdown of this passage. It is focusing on verse 4 –

3rd – The Man of Sin opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God and sits as God in the temple of God showing Himself that he is God. (verse 4)

Now we must ask ourselves – What temple of God which is being spoken of here? Is it a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem as the Premillennialists think? Or is it something closer to home. Well, the apostle Paul himself tells us what the temple of God refers to, if we turn over to –

2nd Corinthians chapter 6, and look at verses 14-16 – “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” “For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?” “And what communion has light with darkness?” “An what accord has Christ with Belial?” “Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?” “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?” “For you (ye- you plural) are the temple of the living God.” “As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them.’ “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Now, although these verses have often been applied to marriage, and believers not marrying unbelievers, which is a valid application, they clearly appear to be telling us that we should not have fellowship with unbelievers in anything sinful or criminal, whether it is in worship, or in the things that we engage in, in our everyday life. The subject of these verses is the Church and all Christians in it, not having fellowship with lawlessness, darkness, unbelievers who are idolaters. And the fact that the temple of God being set over against idols is no insignificant thing to consider. What agreement has the temple of God with idols? They do not have any agreement. They are not supposed to have agreement in the sense of fellowship; interaction, that is between the Church of God and people who have deceitfully and perhaps even unconsciously aligned themselves with Satan and Antichrist. What does the temple of God's Church, God's true people, have to do with idolatry? If the Church engages in idolatry and a man is sitting in God's visible Church claiming to be God, it is the Man of Sin; it is the Antichrist who is being worshiped. This is exactly what the Popes of Rome are doing, and they have been doing this for over 1200 years.

Listen to John Gill on this verse – so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God – “Not in the temple of Jerusalem, which was to be destroyed and never to be rebuilt more, and was destroyed before this man of sin was revealed; but in the church of God, so called, the Ethiopic

version renders it, "in the house of God"; for antichrist rose up out of, and in the midst of the church; and it was a true church in which he first appeared, and over which he usurped power and authority; though it has been so corrupted by him, as now to be only nominally so; here he sits, and has homage done him by his creatures, as if he was a god, and is not only styled Christ's vicar, but a god on earth, and our Lord God the Pope; so in the triumphal arch at the entry of Pope Sixtus IV, these lines were put, "oraculo vocis, mundi moderaris habenas, et merito in terris crederis esse Dens"; the sense is, that he governed the world by his word, and was deservedly believed to be God on earth; and their canon law (g) says, "it is clearly enough shown, that the Pope cannot be loosed or bound by any secular power; since it is evident that he is called God by that pious prince, Constantine, and it is manifest that God cannot be judged by men."

"And Pope John XXII is expressly called (h) "our Lord God the Pope": the Ethiopic version reads, "he shall say to all, I am the Lord God"; see Ezekiel 28: 2, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, leave out the phrase, "as God", but the Syriac retains it: however, the same blasphemy is expressed in the next clause,

showing himself that he is God; by usurping a power over the consciences and souls of men; by dispensing with the laws of God and man; by assuming to himself all power in heaven and in earth; by taking upon him to open and shut the gates of heaven at pleasure; and by pardoning sin, which none but God can do; this is the mouth speaking blasphemies, Revelation 13: 5." (end of quote)

Ezekiel 28: 1-6 – "The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your heart is lifted up, And you say, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, In the midst of the seas,' Yet you are a man, and not a god, Though you set your heart as the heart of a god (Behold, you are wiser than Daniel! There is no secret that can be hidden from you! With your wisdom and your understanding You have gained riches for yourself, And gathered gold and silver into your treasuries; By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches, And your heart is lifted up because of your riches)," Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have set your heart as the heart of a god..."

You can see that the king of Tyre here in these verses is typical of someone in New Testament times. The king of Tyre, here, finds a greater fulfillment in New Testament times in the office of the Pope. His heart is lifted up to consider himself as a god, sitting in the seat of gods, in the midst of the seas, or the peoples of Europe and the world. He considers himself wiser than the wise, and no secret can be hidden from him. He has supposed wisdom and supposed understanding, and he has gained great riches. What could be a better description of a New Testament Pope. We can further add, that the Pope as he is seated in the Visible Church, showing himself to be God is asking for the honor which due to God and Christ, to be given to him. That is He is showing himself to be Christ's Representative Head upon the earth, to the whole Church of Christ. He has taken Christ's place. The Pope's claim to be successor of the apostle Peter, and in his apostolic office of Bishop of Rome, each Pope in succession is proclaimed Vicar or Head of the Church, and is supposedly worthy of worship, the kind of sacred veneration which should only be given to Christ.

John Gill on Ezekiel 28: 2 – "Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyre,.... Whose name was Ethbaal, or Ithobalus, as he is called in Josephus; for that this was Hiram that was in the days of Solomon, and lived a thousand years, is a fable of the Jewish Rabbins, as Jerome relates: this prince of Tyre is thought by some to be an emblem of the devil; but rather of antichrist; and between them there is a great agreement, and it seems to have a prophetic respect to him: thus

saith the Lord God, because thine heart is lifted up: with pride, on account of his wisdom and knowledge, wealth and riches, as later mentioned: and thou hast said, I am a god; this he said in his heart, in the pride of it, and perhaps expressed it with his lips, and required divine homage to be given him by his subjects, as some insolent, proud, and haughty monarchs have done; in which he was a lively type of antichrist, who shows himself, and behaves, as if he was God, taking upon him what belongs to God; pardoning the sins of men; opening and shutting the gates of heaven; binding men's consciences with laws of his own making, and dispensing with the laws of God and man; and calling himself or suffering himself to be called God, and to be worshipped as such; See Gill on 2Th_2:4,”

“I sit in the seat of God; in a place as delightful, safe and happy, as heaven itself, where the throne of God is; so antichrist is said to sit in the temple of God, in the house and church of God; where he assumes a power that does not belong to him, calling himself God's vicegerent, and Christ's vicar; see 2Th_2:4, and the Arabic version here renders it "in the house of God": it follows, in the midst of the seas; surrounded with them as Tyre was, and lord of them as its king was; sending his ships into all parts, and to whom all brought their wares; thus the whore of Rome is said to sit upon many waters, Rev_17:2, yet thou art a man, and not God; a frail, weak, mortal man, and not the mighty God, as his later destruction shows; and as the popes of Rome appear to be, by their dying as other men; and as antichrist will plainly be seen to be when he shall be destroyed with the breath of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming: though thou set thine heart as the heart of God; as if it was as full of wisdom and knowledge as his; and thinkest as well of thyself, that thou art a sovereign as he, and to be feared, obeyed, and submitted to by all.”

Verse 3 – “Behold; thou art wiser than Daniel,... That is, in his own opinion; or it is ironically said. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it by way of interrogation, "art thou not wiser than Daniel?" who was now at the court of Babylon, and was famous throughout all Chaldea for his knowledge in politics, his wisdom and prudence in government, as well as his skill in interpreting dreams. The Jews have a saying, that "if all the wise men of the nations were in one scale, and Daniel in the other, he would weigh them all down.”

“And perhaps the fame of him had reached the king of Tyre, and yet he thought himself wiser than he; see Zec_9:2, antichrist thinks himself wiser than Daniel, or any of the prophets and apostles; he is wise above that which is written, and takes upon him the sole interpretation of the Scriptures, and to fix the sense of them: there is no secret that they can hide from thee; as he fancied; he had sagacity to penetrate into the councils of neighboring princes, and discover all plots and intrigues against him; he understood all the "arcana" and secrets of government, and could counterwork the designs of his enemies. Antichrist pretends to know all mysteries, and solve all difficulties, and pass an infallible judgment on things; as if he was of the privy council of heaven, and nothing was transacted there but he was acquainted with it, and had full knowledge of the mind of God in all things.”

Verse 4 – “With thy wisdom and with thy understanding thou hast gotten thee riches,... Through skill in navigation and trade, for which the Tyrians and their princes were famous, they acquired great wealth: so antichrist, by carnal policy, and hellish subtlety, has amassed vast treasures together; the sale of pardons and indulgences has brought immense riches into the pope's coffers: and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures; in great quantities; see Rev_18:3.

Verse 5 – “By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic,.... Or, "by thy great wisdom in thy traffic" (i); through great skill in trade and commerce: hast thou increased thy riches; to a very great degree, a prodigious bulk; so antichrist has done, especially through trafficking with the souls of men, which is one part of his merchandise, as it was of Tyre, Rev_18:13, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches; which are apt to puff up and make men high-minded, and swell them with a vain opinion of themselves, and to make haughty, insolent, and scornful, in their behaviour to others; thus elated with worldly grandeur and riches, the whore of Rome is represented as proud, vain, and haughty, Rev_18:7.”

Verse 14 – “Ezekiel 28:14 – Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth,.... “In allusion to the cherubim over the mercy seat, which covered it with their wings; and which, as the ark of the testimony and all the vessels of the tabernacle were anointed, were so likewise; in all probability the king of Tyre is called a "cherub" because of his wisdom and power; "anointed", because of his royal dignity; and "that covereth", because of his office, which was to protect his people; all which he either was, or ought to be, or was in his own opinion so: antichrist makes great boasts of his wisdom, power, and authority, as a teacher, pastor, or bishop, the cherubim being symbolical of the ministers of the word; and of his being anointed by men, that he may be the cover and shield of the church; and of his being the Lord's anointed, and the vicar of Christ, and head and protector of the church, as he calls himself (s). The Targum understands all this of regal power, and renders it, "thou art a king anointed for a kingdom:" and I have set thee so; from whom all kings have their scepters, crowns, and kingdoms; and by whom they reign; and who can put them down as well as set them up at his pleasure. It may be rendered, "I have given thee" (t); or suffered thee to be so, as the word "give" is often used; it is by divine permission that antichrist has taken such power to himself, and in judgment to them over whom he rules, who are given up to believe a lie; yea, God "put", or, as it is in the original text, "gave" it into the hearts of the kings to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, Rev_17:17, thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; not on Sinai, nor on Zion; on neither of which was the king of Tyre; nor was this literally true of him; for to say, as Kimchi does to illustrate it, that Hiram king of Tyre assisted Solomon with materials to build the temple, is very foreign; but this is true of the antitype of the king of Tyre, antichrist; who has set his foot on God's holy mountain the church; here he first appeared and stood, as before observed on the preceding verse: thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire; which some understand of the precious stones with which the king of Tyre was adorned, which glittered like fire; though rather they design the people of God, those living lively stones of which the spiritual house is built; who, for their clear light, and burning zeal and love, may be said to be as stones of fire; and among these the bishop of Rome, or the antichristian king of Tyre, first walked: so Kimchi interprets them of the Israelites, who were a holy people; and Jarchi of the kings of Israel, who were as the ministering angels; the seraphim perhaps he means, so called from their burning and flaming love. The Targum is, "and over the holy people thou hast thought to rule."