

Chapter 26 of the 1689 Confession of Faith: “Of Antichrist”,
Session # 8, “The Breath of His Mouth” Presented by
Pastor Paul Rendall in the Adult Sunday School,
on May 27th, 2018.

The 1689 Confession, Chapter 26: “Of the Church”

Paragraph 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.

A Review and Amplification of the points already stated –

I have been trying to present to you proof from the Scriptures that the Pope and the whole Papal system of Church government, doctrine and practice, is indeed the Antichrist prophesied of by the apostle Paul in 1st Timothy 4: 1-5 and 2nd Thessalonians 2: 1-8 and if we cared to look into it in more depth, the apostle John in the book of Revelation is saying the same thing in Chapters 8-20. We are looking at the rise and establishment and eventual fall of this false system by looking carefully at this very important set of verses:

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 (iniquity – KJV) 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.”

We have been seeing thus far, in our study, that the Biblical doctrine of Antichrist relates directly the 4th World Monarch which is mentioned in Daniel 2 and Daniel 7; that is, the Roman Empire. The Pagan Roman Empire and her Emperors were the ones who restrained, or prevented the establishment of the Antichrist which is Papal Rome, the little horn or kingdom which grew out of the fallen Roman Empire. The power and authority of the Emperors, as long as it remained in place, would effectually prevent the appearance of Antichrist, the Papacy, which would be Satan’s masterpiece strategy – to place an Emperor in the visible Church of Jesus Christ who would claim to be the Head of the Church in Christ’s place, and claim to be God Himself in his use of His authority to rule over the visible church of Jesus Christ. And this Antichrist and Antichristian system would have dominion over the visible church of Jesus Christ for a time, times, and a half a time; 1260 prophetic days or 42 months of prophetic days.

These numbers, I and many of the older Historic Postmillennial commentators believe, are prophetic days which equal actual years, according to the Day/Year principle of the interpretation of prophetic years, which principle is found clearly stated in Numbers 14: 33 and 34, as referring to

Israel bearing their iniquity for their unbelief of God's great power to help them, and to deliver them from their enemies. They would be 40 years, a year for a day, wandering in the wilderness, and they would be kept out of the Promised Land until many of the unbelieving ones died, and their carcasses were consumed. Also, we see this same principle being used by the Holy Spirit in Ezekiel 4: 4-8 where Ezekiel the prophet was required to lie on his side and for 390 days. He would have to representatively bear Israel's guilt for that actual time of 390 days, and in doing so, he would be bearing the iniquity which represented the number of years which Israel would be in rebellion to God; that is, the number of years from Jeroboam's rebellion from Rehoboam in the days of Solomon until the destruction of the first temple by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

The numbers of 1260 days and the 42 months in the book of revelation are the 1260 year period of time of the dominion and spiritual reign of Antichrist. At the end of that time of a time, times, and a half of time; the three and a half prophetic years, equaling 1260 actual years, the court would be seated it says in Daniel 7: 26, and then they (that is – God the Father on the basis of His decree and the completed redemptive work of Christ, and the suffering saints under Antichrist) will take away his (that is, Antichrist's dominion), to consume and destroy it forever." "Then the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High." It is the phrase – "to consume and destroy Antichrist's dominion forever" is what I want to open up to you now, in connection with our text in 2nd Thessalonians 2: 1-11.

6th – The way that our Lord Jesus Christ will deal with Antichrist has been, and will be, to consume him with the breath of His mouth, and then to destroy him with the brightness of His coming. (verse 8)

Verse 8 – "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.

This means that there is a two stage destruction of Antichrist; the first part being, that the Lord will consume him with the breath of His mouth; the 2nd will take place with the brightness of Christ's Coming. Consume is a word which can be used either in relation to a slow consumption, like a disease that consumes, or it can be used to refer to something or someone being consumed in a more quick sense – "Escape to the mountains lest you be consumed in the iniquity of the city" (Genesis 19: 15, 17). Our passage in 2nd Thessalonians 2: 8 appears to predict both. Christ will consume Antichrist in stages and degrees, the false doctrine of Rome being undermined, exposed, and refuted by able teachers of the word; and then, by the preaching of the word by many witnesses over many generations from the time of the Reformation to the time of the Millennium, the system is greatly weakened over time. The system will be destroyed at the advent of the Millennium. Then skipping over that whole 1000 year time period of time to the time of Satan's little season at the end of the Millennium we see the culmination of his, that is Satan's destruction as being the one who brought this Antichristian system into being. He will continue to try to deceive and be an Antichrist, during Satan's little season, until the end of the world and Christ's Second Coming.

During this present time before the Millennium, the whole system of falsehood shall be more and more exposed and set aside, and confronted by faithful witnesses for the truth of the word of God, in all the true churches of Christ. And more specifically, we should understand that Antichrist's power to establish false doctrine will be consumed according to the exercise of the Lord's mighty power, the mighty power of the preaching of the gospel of Christ's grace and the witness of the whole Church. This consuming of error and the setting forth of the truth of the word of God, being disseminated prolifically to all the nations of the world, will be a part of the fulfillment of the Great Commission, the establishment of the true and orthodox doctrines of our faith. And these have been, are, and will be being proclaimed by many people in many nations, by

the power of the Holy Spirit. By this means the whole Antichristian system will be spiritually destroyed in a gradual way.

This first phase of the consumption and destruction of Antichrist will take place slowly and gradually over the time period from the Reformation until the advent of the Millennium. We are in that time period now of the slow consumption of Antichrist. (the Millennium, by the way, which is not often being clearly and Biblically defined in our day, is that Latter Day time period within the present greater Church Age, during which, the gospel will successfully be brought to the nations of the world, with power, so that not only many individual people will be converted, but that whole nations of people in this world will be converted to Christ. (that is the context of Revelation 20 if we were to do an in-depth study of it at this point, his deceiving or not being able to deceive the nations of the world by his great systematic deceptions of Roman Catholicism, Liberal Protestantism, and Mohammedanism) The destruction of Antichrist will take place before this time of the Millennium, being consumed gradually, by the breath of Christ's lips (a word picture for the preaching of the word, accompanied by the Spirit's power. During this time of the consuming of Antichrist, the doctrinal statements coming from the Council of Trent and the edicts of the Popes are brought more and more to the light of the truth of the Bible; and they are seen to be false. And they are increasingly being refuted in a public way. This, I believe is what the pouring out of the vials, or the bowls of wrath, pertains to, in Revelation chapter 16.

At the end of the 1260 days of Antichrist will come a crisis for the Church's witness, and for the short time of 3 and a half years, the witness of the Church shall be slain. But this witness of the Church shall be raised to life once again at the end of that 3 and a half years as it says in Revelation 11: 11 and 12. The Antichristian forces will completely defeated both politically and spiritually; the political powers which have supported the false church of Rome and also Mohammedanism, all through this time period will be completely defeated, and this will set the stage for the Millennium, during which Satan will be bound in respect to his ability to deceive the nations of the world by great systematic deceptions. What is in focus here is the defeat of all the efforts of the political kingdoms of the western and eastern sections of the former Pagan Roman Empire's territory, their having suppressed the truth of the gospel, their having been deceived by Satan into thinking that this is what they should do. When these nations oppose, persecute, and oppress the true Church's witness they will lose these political battles that they will initiate to oppose the advance of Christ's kingdom in a much greater way.

The defeat of the efforts of the ten horned political beast which supports the false church of Rome and her daughters, all those who have tried to deceive many peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues of the world; the Pope leading in this awful deception, will take place yet in the future, in accordance with the times that God has established. All of these powers will be defeated, as is represented in the pictorial imagery which is found in Revelation chapters 18 and 19, and thus whole systematic deceptions of Antichrist shall be destroyed, and the church will eventually come to know, after that time, the glory of the Lord covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2: 14)

Isaiah 11: 4 says – “But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.”

The “earth” is a word picture often used to represent the Roman Empire and the Church of Rome in the book of Revelation. In many places in the book of revelation the word “earth” refers to all those who adhere to the Antichristian system of error and deception, headed up by the Roman Antichrist.

The second and final stage of antichrist's destruction is when the final manifestation of Satan to deceive the world takes place after the thousand years of Revelation 20: 7 – “Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are the four corners of the earth....” Christ Himself will then return at his appointed time, of which no man knows the hour nor the day, and He will utterly destroy him with the brightness of His Coming.

John Gill says on verse 8b -

and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; either in a spiritual way, when he shall come in his spiritual kingdom and glory, by the light of his Gospel and the illuminations of his Spirit; when at eventide it shall be light; when He the sun of righteousness shall arise; when Latter Day light and glory shall appear, and latter day darkness, the gross darkness of Popery, Paganism, and Judaism, which cover the people, shall, be removed, and antichrist in every form shall disappear: **or in a personal manner**, when he shall come to judge the quick and dead, which will be in flaming fire and great glory; and then will Antichrist and his followers, the beast and those that have worshipped him, will be cast with the devil and the false prophet into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and this will be the last and utter end of him. In this passage there is a manifest reference to Isaiah 11: 4, "with the breath of his mouth shall he slay the wicked."