

Sherman Isbell: Though Neo-Calvinism sets out zealously to resist secularism, there is a foundational matter regarding which it has retreated in the face of Enlightenment philosophy, because Neo-Calvinism has effectively abandoned the primacy of religion as the goal of man's life. In doing this, Neo-Calvinism has capitulated to secularism's choice of the field on which the contest between Christianity and secularism will be fought. As the parties contended over which world view should guide the development of culture, they concurred that the goal of man's life should not be viewed in terms of religion. This removal of religion as primary in man's life and in society is an abandonment of what is theologically indispensable to Christianity's strategic position. How might this obsession with the "Culture War" impact our view of Antichrist?

1-2 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.

3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first **1Tim 4:1f**, and the man of sin **Num 35:28** is revealed, the son of perdition **Jn 17:12**

THE MAN OF SIN (aka. "***Son of Perdition***") Not Satan! (b/c Satan is not a man!)

4 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. **Dan 11:36-39**

5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? **6** And now you know WHAT is restraining, that HE may be revealed in his own time. **7** 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. [**Restrainer** ≠ **Holy Spirit** -- *never "taken out of the way"!*]

- **Man of Sin** = Man/Mystery, Person/Entity, King/Kingdom *not merely an individual!*
- **Restrainer** = He/What, King/Kingdom *Papal Rome = Revival of Pagan Rome.*

Tertullian (On the Resurrection): "Only let him hold fast who now rules, until he is out of the way, who can only be the Roman state, whose breaking apart & dispersal among ten kings will produce the Antichrist & then will the evil one be revealed." **155-240**

Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechesis): "Moreover, the Antichrist was prophesied to come when the times of the Roman Empire have been completed." **313-386**

John Chrysostom: "He who holds sway, let him hold sway. That is, the Roman Empire will be taken from our midst, at which time, he, the Antichrist, will bring it to an end."

Ambrose of Milan: "And then the evil one will be revealed; the Apostle says that Antichrist would appear after the fading of the Roman Empire." **349-407**

Augustine of Hippo: "It is not absurd to believe that these words of the apostle, Only he who now holds, let him hold until he be taken out of the way, refer to the Roman empire, as if it were said, Only he who now reigns, let him reign until he be taken out of the way. And then shall the wicked be revealed: no one doubts that this means Antichrist." **354-430**

- **Mystery of Lawlessness** 1Tim 3:14ff; Rev 12:6; 17:5 (*entire chapter*)

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.

- **Revealed** = Easily Identified by Christians!

- **Breath of His Mouth** = The Gospel (*Isa 11:1ff; Rev 19:11-16, 19-21*) **Calvin****

- **Brightness of His Coming** = Second Coming (*20:7-10*) **Rev 16:13f**

- *Already at Work, Defeated by the Gospel in History, & Destroyed at the Second Coming!*

- **Rutherford:** "Is not this the basis and mother principle of popery, That the Pope is not the Antichrist, for the Pope hath continued many ages? He is not an individual man, but a race of men; but the Antichrist, saith Bellarmine, Stapleton, Becanus, and the nation of Jesuits and pope-lings, shall be one individual man..." [Samuel Rutherford, *Lex Rex*, p. 32]

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, **10** and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **11** And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, **12** that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. **Endgame = Perverting the Gospel to Damn Sinners!**