

Night of Broken Glass

by David A. Huston

This paper is presented as a caution to all true believers that a time of great persecution and tribulation lies ahead.

This is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is even now already in the world.

— 1 John 4:3 —

Since ancient times, the atmosphere of our world has been contaminated by a subtle voice, a whisper in the wind. This “prince of the power of the air” has worked full-time for millennia, influencing hearts and minds of entire peoples against the lordship of Jesus Christ. At this very hour, it continues its work throughout the inhabited earth.

This spirit-voice is diametrically opposed to the voice of the Spirit of Jesus. It is in fact the very antithesis of His nature. Jesus is love; this spirit is pure hatred. Jesus brings peace and joy; this spirit brings contention and despair. This spiritual power despises Jesus Christ and is staunchly antagonistic toward His purposes. It mocks His holiness and reviles everything for which He stands. The Bible calls him Satan, the serpent, the dragon, and Beelzebub, lord of the flies. He is the accuser of the brethren and the one who delights in domineering over mankind.

To be sure, this vile spirit not only hates the holy Deity of the Supreme God, it also despises His perfect humanity, whom we know as Jesus of Nazareth. This hatred is evidenced by the record of the physical abuse Jesus endured at the hands of His executioners. They were not satisfied just to kill Him; something compelled them to afflict Him with inordinate, excruciating pain. His face was battered, thorns were driven into His skull, and the Roman flagellum broke and shredded His flesh. After they were finished, His body barely resembled that of a man. The invisible power that drove these men to such extreme and irrational cruelty was the spirit of Antichrist, the devil.

By birth, Jesus of Nazareth was a Jew, son of Abraham and son of David (Matthew 1:1). His Jewish kinsmen hated Him because of His claims of Deity, but the Romans despised Him because He was a Jew—a pious one at that. The spirit

of Antichrist operated in both the Jews and the Romans, which tells us today that this spirit vehemently despises both the Spirit and the humanity Christ. In addition, it also despises everyone who is related to Christ, whether according to the spirit or according to the flesh. In short, this spirit hates both the spirit-filled Christian and the ethnic Jew, and it hates them both with equal passion.

Jesus understood the ferocious nature of the Antichrist spirit, and He carefully warned His disciples, saying, “If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20). Paul the apostle, a man who endured great persecution, cautioned that “all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Often it is subtle: a snub, a mild insult, ostracism from a social group. Occasionally, for some, it is more overt: outright public mocking, total rejection by family and friends, dismissal from a place of employment. In modern times, a few have suffered the vandalizing of personal property and some, actual physical abuse. For most Christians in America, however, even the thought of such things is repulsive. But in Nazi Germany in the 1930's, attacks of this sort were a normal part of life for the average Jew.

Kristallnacht

Anti-Semitism had been a German tradition for centuries. Martin Luther wrote that “next to the devil, thou hast no enemy more cruel, more venomous and violent than a true Jew.” It seems almost inconceivable that one so highly revered in Christian circles could have been so hateful toward a particular race of people, but such is the working of the Antichrist spirit. German history reveals a clear and unremitting line of anti-Semitic attitudes from Luther straight through to Adolph Hitler.

Immediately after the Fuhrer came to power in 1933, anti-Semitic propaganda began to proliferate. Hitler’s brand was particularly fierce and ugly, and it wasn’t long before political cartoons, posters on the streets, newspaper articles, and motion pictures all were injecting his venom into German society. But because anti-Semitism had always been present in the Gentile-German culture, most Jews had no appreciation of either the seriousness or the immediacy of their present danger...until it was too late.

They were German citizens! they reasoned. They had rights as human beings! But on the night of November 9, 1938, every Jew in Germany was made starkly aware of the vicious quality of this ugly and blasphemous spirit. On that night, known as Kristallnacht, the Nazis unleashed a raging firestorm upon the Jews of Germany.

Kristallnacht means night of broken glass. On this night the spirit of Antichrist

forsook its subtle guises and became open and obvious in Germany. All across the country in local meeting halls, Nazi leaders whipped the people into an unparalleled frenzy of Jewish hatred. They poured out of their meetings into every Jewish community, setting fire to synagogues, destroying Jewish businesses and homes, and physically abusing thousands of Jewish citizens. An eyewitness reported: "What seemed like hundreds of men swinging great truncheons, jumped from lorries and began to smash up the shops all around us."¹

It was later estimated that after the windows of virtually every Jewish-owned building in Germany had been smashed, the quantity of broken glass littering the streets amounted to one-half the total annual production of glass for the entire nation. In one twenty-four hour period, these "spontaneous demonstrations" resulted in one hundred deaths and the destruction of 7,000 Jewish businesses.

During Kristallnacht, thousands of Jewish citizens were subjected to wanton violence. An American consul general made this report:

Having demolished dwellings and hurled most of the movable effects to the streets, the insatiably sadistic perpetrators threw many of the trembling inmates into a small stream that flows through a zoological park, commanding horrified spectators to spit at them, defile them with mud and jeer at their plight.²

Hitler ordered the German State Police to arrest as many able-bodied Jewish males as they could accommodate. Within a few days concentration camps imprisoned over 30,000 men, one-tenth of the entire male Jewish population in Germany. Author Martin Gilbert gives this account of the arrest a group of Jews and their subsequent ill-treatment at the hands of Hitler's special police force, the notorious SS:

At the gates, the police were made to hand them over to an SS unit. The sixty-two Jews were then forced to run a gauntlet of spades, clubs and whips. According to an eye-witness, the police, "unable to bear their cries, turned their backs." As the Jews were beaten they fell. As they fell they were beaten further. This "orgy" of beating lasted half an hour. When it was over, "twelve of the sixty were dead, their skulls smashed. The others were all unconscious. The eyes of some had been knocked out, their faces flattened and shapeless."³

Hitler's incessant barrage of anti-Semitic propaganda, which preceded this explosion of violence, had so sedated the attitude of the citizenry at large that the activities of Kristallnacht raised virtually no outcry from the German people. And when no protests were heard from any foreign governments either, Hitler

construed the lack of interest as a mandate to do whatever he pleased with the Jews.

The Nazis assessed the Jews a penalty of one billion marks, their debt to the state for sweeping away the shattered remains of Kristallnacht. To pay this debt, every Jewish family was forced to relinquish twenty percent of its personal property to the state. A few days after Kristallnacht, on November 15, the Ministry of Education barred all Jewish children from state schools. On November 28, curfews were imposed on the Jews. That December, Jews were barred from retail stores, from calling independent craftsmen, from selling goods and services, and from serving in the management of any business. All Jews were required to publicly display a yellow Star of David as an identifying insignia. After conducting a high-level meeting of Nazi officials, Hitler confederate Hermann Goring is reported to have coolly concluded, “Incidentally, I’d like to say again that I would not like to be a Jew in Germany.”

Writing from Berlin, British observer Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes reported: “They dwell in the grip and at the mercy of a brutal oligarchy, which fiercely resents all humanitarian foreign intervention. Misery and despair are already there, and when their resources are either denied to them or exhausted, their end will be starvation.”⁴

Hilter’s Ultimate Aim

Hitler’s original goal was to purge Germany of its entire Jewish citizenry. It didn’t matter if you were rich or poor, young or old, religious or non-believing, ignorant or educated—if you were Jewish you were marked for death. He then expanded his goal to include the liquidation of every Jew in Europe...and then the world. Hitler’s attempt at conquering the world was simply a means to an end—the extermination of the Jewish race. At the conclusion of World War II, nearly six million Jews were dead, two-thirds of all the Jews living in Europe before the war.

It is vital to understand that Hitler was not targeting the Jewish religion: it was the Jewish race, the progeny of Abraham, that he despised. If it had been simply a matter of religion, any Jew facing death could have escaped by being baptized. But because Hitler’s attack was based on race, there was no escape.

In Hitler’s mind, the Jews were the ultimate evil. He considered them the source of every political, social, and economic misfortune. In his manifesto *Mein Kampf*, Hitler wrote, “No one need be surprised if among our people the personification of the Devil as the symbol of all evil assumes the living shape of the Jews.”

To Hitler, the conflict between the Aryans and the Jews was equivalent to the universal conflict between good and evil, Christ and the Antichrist. But this is precisely the way the spirit of Antichrist would see it—exactly the inverse of the truth. Hitler wrote, “Hence today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.” He later told a confidant, “We are God’s people,” and apparently he really believed that. He explained the struggle this way: “Two worlds face one another—the men of God and the men of Satan! The Jew is the anti-man, the creature of another god. He must have come from another root of the human race. I set the Aryan and the Jew over and against each other.”

On April 29, 1945, the day he died from self-inflicted wounds, Hitler wrote these final words of exhortation to the German people: “Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observing of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poisoner of all peoples, international Jewry.”

Anti-Semitism was far more than an excuse Hitler used to justify his military aggression; it was far more than a convenient political expediency. Hitler burned with a virulent hatred for the Jewish people, an animosity so intense that it could not be reigned in. As Chancellor of the German Republic, Hitler succeeded in harnessing the raw anti-Semitic attitude of the masses and converting it into political action. The combination of his intense hatred and his brilliant political instincts resulted in one of the greatest tragedies mankind has ever known.

No individual since the diabolical Antiochus Epiphanes⁵ has served so obviously as a type of the Antichrist as Adolph Hitler. He is irrefutable proof that it is possible for a charismatic political leader to totally captivate the hearts and minds of an entire people and then turn them viciously against a select, defenseless minority.

The Divine Witness

A close examination of the major events recorded in the Bible shows that every program initiated by God follows a specific and deliberate pattern, one that has been established from the foundations of the world. This pattern is *death, burial, and resurrection*. For example, the antediluvian world perished in the flood, was buried by the water, and was restored to new life after the waters receded. Similarly, a seed must die, must be buried in the earth, and only then will it grow and bring forth a fruit-bearing plant. This triadic pattern is the sure mark of God in any plan that He initiates. It is His divine signature. It is likewise the keynote of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for before the New Testament could be established,

Jesus first had to die, He had to be buried, and He had to rise again on the third day.

True to this pattern, history shows that the natural seed of Abraham, the Jews, experienced a kind of death as a people. They, in fact, underwent century after century of literal death at the hands of many persecutors. Perhaps the Holocaust represented the final burial of the Jewish people. Their persecution and affliction between 1938 and 1945 at the hands of the Nazis was probably the most severe in their entire history. But on May 15, 1948, a resurrection took place: The nation of Israel was established as an independent state, and thousands of Jews from around the world gathered together in their own land for the first time in nearly 2,000 years. The Jewish people were finally able to go home.

Whenever a Jew immigrates to Israel, he is said to be making *aliya*, a Hebrew word meaning “to come up.” As far as the Israelis are concerned, every place in the world is lower than Israel, the land promised to the heirs of Abraham. Hence, to leave the world and come to Israel is to come up, to come to the land of God.

The contemporary regathering of the Jews in Israel is a prefiguring of the soon-coming gathering together of the spiritual Jews, the New Testament believers, who will rise to meet the Lord in the air in clouds of glory. But will the Church of Jesus Christ first be required to die and be buried like the Jews? Will Christians experience their own Kristallnacht?

The Bible foretells a time of intense persecution in the last days. Some say these Scriptures pertain to the New Testament Church; others say they pertain only to Jewish and Gentile believers under a subsequent dispensation. To consider this a trivial issue would be a great mistake; in fact, it may be a far more crucial matter than many Christians would like to believe.

The Bible predicts that at some time in the future, a man will rise to a position of world-wide dominion. This is the one we call the Antichrist. He will be possessed by a spirit that hates the Spirit of Jesus Christ just as intensely as Hitler hated the Jews. It is certain that this man will strike out viciously against Christian believers. The Word of God says, “His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power; he shall destroy fearfully, and shall prosper and thrive; he shall destroy the mighty, and also the holy people” (Daniel 8:24); “It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them” (Revelation 13:7). From a New Testament perspective, the Church is the assembly of the saints.

This man will use a universal economic system requiring a personal mark on the body: “He causes all...to receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark...” (Revelation

13:16-17). The Bible warns against accepting this mark under any circumstances: “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receive his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God” (Revelation 14:9-10). Just as Hitler used the yellow star of David to publicly identify the Jews, the Antichrist will use the *absence* of this economic mark to publicly identify the true Christians.

What’s Next?

Do these verses apply to the New Testament Church? Many do not think so, believing instead that a rapture will take place before the time of great tribulation and before the reign of the Antichrist begins. But will it? Is it possible that the interpretations and conclusions of some have been influenced by a desire to avoid unpleasantness and suffering?

Should we be preparing to be raptured out of here? Or should we be preparing for a night when the masses will turn viscerally against us with bitter persecution and violence? Should we be anticipating our catching away or our night of broken glass?

As John the Revelator stood gazing at the majestic throne of God, he reported, “Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal” (Revelation 5:6). A short time later he described what he was seeing as “a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne...” (Revelations 7:9). From these Scriptures, it is obvious that the “sea of glass” John saw before the throne of God is the glorious Church after Jesus has presented her to Himself as His eternal bride (Ephesians 5:25-33).

In Revelation 15:2 John wrote, “And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.” In this passage John observed a sea of glass mingled with fire. Certainly the fire is the refining fire of persecution and tribulation. As Peter wrote, “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:6-7). Clearly Jesus is coming for a glorious Church that has been tested and purified by fire.

Daniel prophesied that during the days of great tribulation, “some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time (Daniel 11:35). We

must not think that Jesus will spare His people from great suffering, for He understands well the principle that “tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Romans 5:3-4). The Lord Himself endured the process during the days of His flesh: “for it was fitting for Him...in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2:10). God’s desire is to bring “many sons to glory,” that He might have a glorious Church, pure and white.

When a potter is making a vessel, once he has formed it into the proper shape for its specialized purpose, he then places it in the kiln for two firings. The first is a low heat firing. The purpose is to harden the clay so that it will keep its form forever. The potter runs a great risk, however; for if there are any air pockets (prideful, puffed up places) or hard spots (angry, rebellious places), the clay will crack and the vessel will be useless. This shows the importance of the kneading process at the beginning. Before the time of tribulation arrives, we must allow God to work in our hearts, “for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10).

After the first firing the object is glazed (coated with liquid glass), a process designed to beautify the surface with a permanent finish. The second firing is high heat. Rarely, however, is an object placed in a kiln all alone. Likewise, when persecution breaks out, it is usually as it was in the days of the early Church, for at that time “a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem” (Acts 8:1). Under this high heat, one small air pocket, one impurity, one crack, can cause the object to explode, damaging many of the objects around it. Hence, Jesus told His disciples, “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another...But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:9-10, 13).

The fire that gives the Church a glorious shine is not the same as the pressure that molds her into her proper form. Pressure can come from the ordinary circumstances of life, but the fire is the heat of persecution and tribulation for righteousness sake. The fire is our Kristallnacht. As Peter wrote, “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you” (1 Peter 4:12). Jesus is coming for a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Clay, which is the material of man, is one of the cheapest substances on the earth. This is because it is so plentiful. But because clay is composed of disintegrated

granite, it has rock-like potential. When it is put through the proper process of pressure and fire, it can become solid as a rock. God's plan is that we would become like Jesus. But as clay vessels, we are little more than dirt unless we are taken and worked, built up, perfected, glazed, and fired by the Master Potter. Once this process is completed, when the work is done, when we stand before the Lord as the finished workmanship of His nail-scarred hands, no one will be able to see the clay, but only the fired glaze—the glass. The Church Jesus is coming for will be a “sea of glass mingled with fire.”

His Grace is Sufficient

How will we make it through the fire? How will we have victory when the powers of Antichrist rise up against the Church? There is only one way.

When Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, looked into the fiery furnace, he was astonished and said to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said, “True, O king.” He then answered them and said, “Look! I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” Daniel 3:24-25). The only way any of us will make it through the fire is by having Jesus Christ in the fire with us. Yea, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil, for Thou art with us! He alone is our fortress and our strong tower—the righteous run in and are safe.

The Bible says that after the Hebrews came out from the midst of the fire, the people gathered together and gazed upon the men “on whose bodies the fire had no power.” For the hair of their head was not singed and their garments were unaffected. In fact, the smell of fire was not on them at all (Daniel 3:26-27). After our ordeal, no one will be able to discern that we had ever been through it. We will shine!

But first the sea of glass must be broken. The people of God must undergo their fiery trial. The Church must have her Kristallnacht. But the Church will arise victorious, because greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world.

*“And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance;
and there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald...
Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.”*

— Revelations 4:3, 6 —

Endnotes:

1. Paul Oestereicher, "Terror on Berlin's Night of Broken Glass," in *The Times*, November 9, 1978 [taken from *The Holocaust*, p. 69].
2. Letter dated Leipzig, 21 November 1938: submitted to the International Military Tribunal, Nuremburg, as document L-202 [taken from *The Holocaust*, p. 70].
3. Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1985), p. 74.
4. Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes despatch no. 1224 of 16 November 1938, Foreign Office Papers, 371 21637 [taken from *The Holocaust*, p. 72].
5. Antiochus IV (2nd century B.C.) was a Seleucid king who persecuted the Jews, going so far as to sacrifice a pig on the temple altar in Jerusalem.

Other References used: Norman H. Finkelstein, *Remember Not to Forget* (New York: Franklin Watts, Inc., 1985), p. 21.; Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The War Against The Jews* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975).

Note to the reader:

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