

Notes and Questions on J. L. Benson's
book: "The Showdown".

Page 18 - a basic premise of the author- whereby he assumes that the false prophet of Rev. 19:20 is the antichrist--because I John 2:18 antichrists are characteristically equivalent to I John 4:1 false prophets.

Q. Is this hermeneutics, or theory?

Page 20 - again assumes because of the I John several references, which show the same characteristics for the many antichrists and false prophets, that the final personages for these characters are one and the same.

Q. What makes this true interpretation vs. theory?

If the false prophets of I John speak the wrong things about Christ--and they are separate persons from Christ --why would not the Revelation false prophet also be a different being, doing for the antichrist (another being) what the Holy Spirit (i.e., true witnesses, etc.) does for Christ?

Benson identifies the beast of the sea of Rev. 13 as Roman prince, and the beast of the earth as false prophet and antichrist (same person).

If the ministry of a prophet, priest, etc. is to exalt one higher than himself, and they (prophets) precede the one they prophesy about, how can the Roman prince precede the False Prophet, and Antichrist; and why would they (he, to Benson) be subservient to just a man (basically only a political leader)?

Biblical prophets foretold about Christ and His Kingdom. Why would not a false prophet be a separate personage, who would do the same thing for a false Christ to come? Compare "Elijah", prophet of God (Ch. 11), and false prophet of false God (Ch. 13).

When we note in Rev. 13:5, with other related scriptures, that the beast therein referred to is given power, etc. for 3½ years (last half of trib.)--which surely describes the antichrist himself--why can we not agree that he may indeed come first as the "Roman prince", who becomes the beast in the middle of the tribulation. That is, first a great political power, and then assumes supreme religious authority.

Consider, thereunto, that when Satan is cast out of the heavens to earth, (per Rev. 12) at the same time (middle of trib.) he incarnates the "Roman prince" to take on the beast (antichrist) characteristics.

Satan is going to follow the pattern of the trinity; like any professional or expert usurper of authority would do.

To wit, that (1) He (Satan) will be "like the most high"--God (as in Isaiah 14:14); not the Holy Spirit, as the author maintains, and (2) The Antichrist, obvious by the name alone, is the counterfeit of the Christ; and that logically and demonstrably (3) the False Prophet is the anti-Spirit, for the system to follow through intact.

Following is some amplification of the above; much of the understanding of which, having been gained from study (with scripture) of Clarence Larkin's book on the Revelation:

As, the mystery of godliness = God manifest in the flesh, which = Christ, Son of God (The Father),

So does, the mystery of iniquity = Satan manifest in the flesh, which = Antichrist, Son of Satan (The Evil Father).

Whereas, in Benson's evil trinity designations:

The Roman prince -- is the evil character for God,
The Antichrist and False Prophet --is the evil character for Christ, and
Satan -- is the evil character for the Holy Spirit....

Which makes the Antichrist -- the son of the 3rd person, not the 1st person (Father) as theologically more consistent.

The mistake seems to be made by reasoning that Satan energizes the Roman prince and False prophet with his spirit; but the true trinity order--which Satan is mocking--would put him in God's place as the Highest person (technically), and as Father-figure, in perspective, etc.

This may, then, be summarized by the following comparative designations:

<u>True Trinity</u>	<u>Evil Trinity</u>
God the Father	Satan the Father
" " Son (Christ)	" " Son (Antichrist)
" " Holy Spirit	" " Unholy Spirit (F.P.)

Referring to Gen. 3:15, we again have the contrast:

Christ - Her seed (Eve, etc.)
Antichrist - Serpent's (Satan's) seed

And, John 8:44, tells us that the Devil is the father of "the lie" (Antichrist).

John 6:70-71--

Judas is referred as a devil ("diabolos") with the article "the", which is the only place in scripture that the word is used for anyone except Satan. Hence, the "Lie", Son of Perdition; mystery of iniquity connection possibility of Judas and Antichrist being the same person; or both incarnated as sons, etc. of Satan. Benson rejects this plausible consideration completely.

* Perdition is a place--but also a condition,

In Rev. 11:7, we read of the "beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit (abyss) to make war against the saints".* Compare to same wording of Dan. 7:21 (little horn). Benson says the little horn of Daniel 7 is the Roman prince (which would be all right--but Benson has a different character for the Antichrist). *Rev. 13:7.

Now where can it be said that the Roman prince in any sense comes out of the abyss (as if he had sometime been there)?

Rev. 17:8 refers to the beast out of the abyss....."that was, and is not, and yet is (to be)"; whereby the same reasoning applies against it being the Roman prince as represented by Benson, and those who hold the same views. Also the beast, and the false prophet are cast "alive" into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:20)--indicating something superhuman, etc. about these personages. And the evil triumvirate's common destiny is completed when Satan follows them, per Rev. 20:10.

An important conflict (contradiction) in Benson's character system may be seen in the following observation: He says that the Antichrist will sit in the temple as King-priest and prophet--directing worship to the emperor (Roman prince, or western dictator). But II Thess. 2:3-4, etc., which discusses the antichrist's actions in the tribulation period--says that he will act as God, not worshipping anyone else - or being anything less than "God", such as a priest, prophet, etc. would be (as Benson claims).

This is a serious error in his system of interpretation (that is, the designation of some character personages --which he himself says is essential to the right understanding of prophetic events).

Notes in contradiction to "Russian destroyer" concept held by Benson, and many others with similar theory.

Quotation from Philip R. Newell's book, "Daniel":

"When considering Dan. 2 and 7 together, there is a basic principle of interpretation involved which has far-reaching current implications. We have noticed (in previous part of Newell's book) that the fourth empire is represented by both chapters as continuing until its replacement by the millennial kingdom of Christ, and that its finally developed form will be a ten membered confederacy.

"While there appears no scriptural reason for supposing these ten kingdoms to be a reconstitution or reappearance of ten specific parts of the original Roman Empire, we have already noticed in connection with chapter 2, that at the time of the destruction of the fourth empire the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron and the clay (that is, Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and its ultimate developed form) are all present and are destroyed by the descending stone. Thus it is apparent that territorially the final form of the fourth kingdom will include all of the geographical area comprising the composite kingdoms of the great image. By the same token, the fourth kingdom will exclude all territory not originally in the areas dominated by those kingdoms.

"Thus it appears certain that neither America, nor any other country of the western hemisphere, can be expected to be included in the final form of Gentile dominion, since none was in the original area. Similarly neither Russia, nor any of its European satellites (except those countries originally part of the Roman Empire) can form any part of this fourth kingdom of prophecy.

"Here is the true explanation behind geographical and political changes in the world scene, particularly in recent years, as countries originally within the total image area have emerged from domination by countries lying outside, and vice-versa. Belgium from Holland, and Ireland from England are examples."

This is part of the worldwide sweep of nationalism, or anti-colonialism which has brought freedom, and self-determination to many countries. See the sovereign hand of God in all such events toward the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, still future.

Another interesting and hard to disprove observation of P. R. Newell, is the following:

"This view (that Gog is a Russian ruler, invader, etc.) also ignores the implication of Ezek. 38:17 wherein God asserts that he had frequently spoken by His servants, the prophets of Israel, concerning Gog and his invasion of the land. But there is no other reference to Gog in the entire Old Testament as the ruler of some northern power or confederacy outside the area of the fourth kingdom of Daniel 2, whereas there are many references to an invasion of the land by "the Assyrian" (Isa. 10:5), "the king of the north" (Dan. 11:40), "the little horn" (Dan. 7:8, 24, 25; 8:9-12), "the prince that shall come" (Dan. 9:26), "the northern army" (Joel 2:20), etc. These and other references

seem to identify Gog of Ezek. 38 and 39 with Antichrist, the final head of Gentile dominion."
".....the similarity in sound between Rosh and Russia, Meshech and Moscow, Tubal and Tobolsk, and Gomer and Germany..... is without historical support (as reasons to justify the Russo-Germanic federation, etc.) as history and the future of prophecy appear to take no notice of Russia, China, Japan, U. S., Canada, etc."

In material written by Benson (as received from Pastor K.R.) a notable missing factor has been: the absence of any explanation of the various plague judgments--taught literally as such. The only two judgments referred to were the 5th and 6th trumpets--which were interpreted as symbolizing military actions (particularly as "Russian" army invasion; involving demon-possessed people--but not any sense of other locust-like creatures, with the special characteristics of demon powers and intelligence (as more literally interpreted). Note the striking related details of Joel 2.

There does appear to be, then, an orientation away from the essentially literal types or forms of physical judgment phenomena, to a characteristically symbolical military concept of interpretation.

I assume, however, that several of the various seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments would ^{not} be held as symbolical of war-type events instead of the more obvious literal plagues described. I would like to read what Benson teaches on those particular subjects--not mentioned in his books, which I have been given to read.

In conjunction with what has been said in this critique, the paper received from brother K.R., listing the numerous biblical titles of end-time personnel has been annotated showing disagreements with many of those designations. The differences relate mostly to the author's Russian destroyer, and Roman prince concepts.

While certainly more can be said to build the argument against the so-called Kelly-Gaebelein view, I would conclude for now with the statement that I believe I have set forth adequate scriptural evidence and commentary to disprove the theory of interpretation in question.

Notes on Rev. 8 and 9, showing some typical differences of interpretation between such scholars as C. I. Scofield (who follows the Kelly-Gabelein school) and the more literal interpreters, whom Benson refers to as the Dallas school:

Rev. 8:10 -- "star". Scofield (K-G) keys it to the "star" of Rev. 9:1, and Lucifer of Isaiah 14:12; that is, symbolic of fallen angel, Satan. etc. Whereas, the "star" of vs. 10 is referred to physically as "it", more evidently some heavenly body (meteor, etc.); bringing to earth the particular destructive and punitive judgment described.

Note, then, the danger of spiritualization, and overspeculation in the K-G concept, whereas the literal method is much safer; warranted by similar O. T. examples of plagues, etc.

Rev. 8:11--"Wormwood". K-G designates as Antichrist, per idea above, but it is the "it" star of vs. 10, and is a further statement of the prophecy of Jer. 23:15 (where the Lord said "Behold I will feed them with wormwood... etc."). Word study reveals this to be a form of poison (absinthe), and that the comparable effect of poison gases, etc. from a falling star, or meteor polluting the rivers, and fountains of water is the more logical meaning of the text.

Rev. 9:1 -- "star". K-G teaches it to be Satan, bad angel, demon, etc. Why would God give control of opening the abyss to Satan, or any of his emissaries? Furthermore, is it not the same angel in Rev. 20:1-3, having the key of the bottomless pit (same as stated in Rev. 9:1)--who moreover lays hold on Satan and casts him into the pit?

These are just a few of many interpretations by Benson, and others of that persuasion which seem to be speciously explained, according to concept; often not correlated with other scriptures on the same subject, which would reveal the inconsistencies of the K-G philosophy.

With respect to J. L. Benson, the subject author, and Pastor K.R., advocate-teacher, who has presented the material to me for study and consideration --as fellow - Christians -- nevertheless I believe the concept is seriously contradictory to the biblical truth of the matter involved. Hence, it is to be regarded as error, or heresy. Error, being attributable to wrong influence received, may more hopefully be overcome by correcting influence; whereas a persistence in advocating erroneous doctrine must be more properly labeled heresy.

If we would rationalize the contrast of interpretation, as differences of opinion, that God would allow--I find Funk & Wagnall's dictionary definition 1 of the word opinion very challenging^{to} such an assumption: (Opinion), "A conclusion or judgment held with confidence, but falling short of positive knowledge."

I submit that God will never accept this subtle substitute method of scholarship, for true bible interpretation! (This is meant to be more of an objective, than personal remark, or insinuation.)

By recognizing and holding to the larger context of the dispensation of the "times of the Gentiles" vs. the eventual Davidic kingdom of the Jews--a better perspective on the related meaning of Gog and Magog may be gained, than is traditionally assumed as applicable to Russia.

Genesis 10:2+ gives us the roots of all the Gentile nations--even to the use of Magog, as son of Japheth, plus other sons, Meschech, Tubal, Gomer, etc.

Seeing the dispensational picture of Satan working to culminate his plans into the establishment of a kingdom of the Gentiles, under him, incarnate as the Anti-Christ--renders any lesser sub-division of the Gentile world, with its associated ruler personality (that is, Russia, and its dictator) as a very questionable deviation from the total scheme of the Satan-Gentile-Anti-Christ dispensational system continuously prophesied throughout scripture.

If we more logically and consistently interpret the scriptures, relating the numerous prophetic titles, types, etc. in question to the eventual Antichrist himself, the idea of a "Russian destroyer" is incompatible with the evidence. It further introduces or interposes a personality into the end-time events that confuses and conflicts with the three very distinct personages of the evil trinity of Satan, Antichrist, and the False Prophet.

The scriptural evidence against Russia, ever in any form, being involved historically in the four kingdom territories of Daniel (which are the geographical limits of the revived, reconstituted Roman empire*) makes the "Russian destroyer" concept untenable, and hence, unacceptable as an explanation of the subject prophecy.

While it admittedly takes much time to study these things to a safe conclusion, the answers are there in the scriptures to give settled understanding and conviction--so that the idea of a Russian predominance in prophetic latter-day events, finally equates to mere human theory, and therefore, poor biblical scholarship.

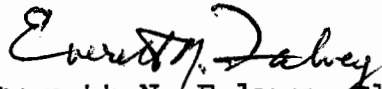
*Study the 4th kingdom of Daniel 2, and 7, which shall arise "out of the earth" (reconstruction, or revival of something previously existent), with its "ten horns" (member nations), and final "little horn" (Antichrist) arising to power over them all. There is no place in the prophetic system where a "Russian ruler" even fits this picture, let alone usurps any dominant authority--which the Antichrist alone will possess (as Satan's fellow-instrument of arrogant, blasphemous power).

Finally, then, I would hope for a willingness on the part of the two particular brethren (and many others of similar views) to openly and diligently consider the argumentation put forth in this brief polemic against the so-called Kelly-Gaebelein teaching of prophecy.

Our mutual desire should be an ultimate resolving of this confusing conflict of scriptural interpretation on a major, but largely unstudied area of doctrine (throughout the church in general, that is).

Also accompanying this paper is a copy of a list of end-time character designations (from J. L. Benson's book: "Who Is The Antichrist?")--to which list I have added marginal letter corrections and notes, wherever items are disagreed with.

Respectfully submitted,



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Addendum - to "Notes and Questions
on J. L. Benson book, 'The Showdown' "

Further errors noted, relative to the Kelly-Gaebelein interpretation of Antichrist and False Prophet being the same person; and other factors of the subject:

A prophet is mainly a foreteller, or forthteller, who performs such ministry for another (i.e., the False Prophet for the Antichrist). Even Christ was prophet of God. "Aaron thy brother (Moses') shall be thy prophet" (thy spokesman, etc.). Exod. 4:14-16, 7:1.

Old Testament prophets foretold the coming of Christ. New Testament prophets centered their messages in the crucified, risen, and coming-again Lord Jesus. Rev. 19:10 - "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy".

Can we not paraphrase in the contrary evil sense, that "The testimony of the Antichrist is the spirit of false prophecy" (or the ministry of the False Prophet)?

In other words, as in Rev. 19:10, that all prophecy testifies of Jesus; contra: all false prophecy (per Revelation, etc.) testifies of Anti-Jesus. Keeping in mind that the office of a prophet is forthtelling, or prophesying for another (particularly far greater than himself)--the False Prophet can not be also the Anti-Christ, by any logical or consistent theological explanation.

No true prophet ever claimed to be equivalent to Christ --how, or why would a false prophet claim equivalence with, or identity of Antichrist?

The K-G key basis of interpretation is the assumption that the A-C, and F.P. are the same person, because of similarity of the antichrists and false prophets of I John 2:18, and 4:1. What about separate identities of the false prophets and false Christs of Matt. 24:24--noting that they both show great signs and wonders (miracles, powers, etc.)--and if it were possible, they shall deceive even the very elect?

Equivalence, similarity, etc. is not justifiable basis to establish common identity.

The K-G concept says the Beast of Rev. 13:11 is both the A-C and F.P.--because of "lamb" reference. But if the A-C is to mock or take place of Christ--why would he not follow pattern in number of horns? Christ is spoken of as "lamb" in Rev. 5:6, having seven horns. What is the connection of lamb with two horns in Rev. 13:11 (which K-G says is the A-C)? None, because the F.P. is a different character--with lamb-like deceiving appearance, etc., but not the same identity as the A-C.

Benson, and probably others of the K-G school, do not comment much on Rev. 17:3, 7-17 (the scarlet colored beast).

It is important to note that this is the same beast as in Rev. 13:3-8. The K-G concept says he is the emperor (European dictator). But, when Rev. 17 says that he comes out of the abyss (vs.8) and goes into perdition, in what way can it be a political personage, versus the Antichrist?

When did such a king ever go into the bottomless pit? But indeed the Antichrist, being linked in identity with Judas as "sons of perdition" could have gotten into the abyss when Judas "went to his own place" (Acts 1:25).

At least, it means the Antichrist had to have been on earth before. It is interesting that Benson does designate Judas as type of the Antichrist (comparing John 17:12 with II Thess. 2:3). Why not Judas (possibly), actually resurrected in Rev. 11, 13, 17, as the Antichrist?

Note also the similarity of language in Dan. 7:21 (little horn), and Rev. 11:7. Benson's Roman prince can not be understood as coming from the abyss--unless he is the eventual Antichrist, which the K-G theory denies.

The K-G idea has the "king of fierce countenance" (Dan. 8:23) designated as the "Russian destroyer" (R.D.). Dan. 8:26 says this king shall "stand up against the Prince of princes (Christ), and shall be broken without hand". When does an earthly king (dictator, etc.) stand up against the Lord? It is, rather, a picture of the Antichrist's abomination, etc. in the temple against God (II Thess. 2:4).

While the K-G view usually has the R.P. in place of the A-C, here they have the R.D. inconsistently indicated. The K-G "emperor-beast" is destroyed at the end of the Tribulation--but in their concept of Trib. events, the R.D. ("king of fierce countenance", to them) is destroyed just after the idol is erected in the temple (mid-trib. point). Hence, the error of designating that king as the R.D., because scripture clearly teaches that he (the k. of f. c.) is destroyed by Christ at the end of Trib. (per Dan. 2:34, 8:26, etc.)

Another K-G inconsistency is in the character designations for Dan. 9:26, and 27; to wit, that "the prince that shall come" (actually the Antichrist) is to them the R.P. But in the next verse (27) "He" is the R.D. (per K-G).

Since the "He" of vs. 27, refers to whoever is the per-

sonage of vs. 26--how can K-G get two different persons?

Even Scofield (who is mainly K-G) notes that the "He" is the same as the "prince that shall come" of the preceding verse.

It is furthermore out of character for the R.D. (of K-G scheme) to be considered a desolator of the temple. He is an invader of Palestine to the K-G'ers--but they do not otherwise relate him to temple desecration, etc.

Also, the context of Dan. 8:23 is carried on through vs. 25, whereby the character described in vs. 24-25 is certainly the Antichrist. Who else will have such powers of persuasion, decept, and ability, etc.? --- causing crafts to prosper (Babylon as reconstructed center of commerce, under the A-C) --- magnifying himself in his heart (Satan, in person of A-C) --- by peace destroying many (A-C, per Rev. 6:2, conquering without war/bow without arrows) --- destroying the mighty and holy people (wearing out the saints, persecuting Israel, etc.).

No such scope of power can ever be ascribed to such a relatively minor personage as the R.D. (Yet the theory of the role of R.D. is a main feature of the K-G concept). Unfortunately, the idea is taught in the "Dallas" view, as well.

Since my reply to Pastor K.R. on differences of interpretation vs. J. L. Benson (K-G philosophy), I have made one particular discovery which corrects a scriptural reference to one of the end-time events.

That is, I had thought that the "king of the north" of Dan. 11:40 is applicable to the Antichrist. (Note that K-G has it to be the Russian destroyer). With more careful reading, it is to be noted that both the king of the south, and king of the north go against "him" (who both the Dallas and K-G views recognize as the Antichrist (per other descriptions of the vs. 36-45 passage)).

Now I interpret these invaders, or enemies of the Antichrist to be some of those kings and nations which are symbolized by Rev. 6:3-4 as the "red horse" resistors of the Antichrist's domination, etc.

But the K-G designation of the "king of the north" as R.D. is completely out of character and context with their teaching that the R.D. attacks Israel, (not the "him" of Dan. 11:40, which is the A-C).

Again, in reference to the K-G designation of Dan. 8:23

"king of fierce countenance" as R.D.--some of the descriptions of the vs. 23 character's powers indicated in vs. 24-25 are clearly similar to the Antichrist's character traits of Dan. 11:36, II Thess. 2:4, etc., which the K-G people agree is the A-C: prospering crafts, etc., magnifying himself, blasphemy against God, etc.

There are undoubtedly more discrepancies of the K-G system of interpretation of apocalyptic prophecy than I have noted.

But these evidences are certainly sufficient to bring the concept into serious question, of being valid doctrinal teaching.

I would like to note an all-too common misconception regarding the question of "Day of the Lord" prophecy, as positive doctrine. "We can't be dogmatic about doubtful things", may be heard as a typical attitude toward the subject.

An excerpt from P. R. Newell ("Daniel", page 188) should be a challenging consideration for such an unproven assumption:

"We may rejoice, however (compared to Daniel's being instructed to seal up the words of the prophecy) that the further revelations given to us in the Apocalypse to supplement Daniel's great prophecies also include the angelic instruction, 'Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.' Indeed, our Lord Himself, in Rev. 22:16, further commands that the contents of the Book of Revelation be testified to 'in the churches'. and its opening salutation, chapter 1:3, pronounces blessing upon him 'that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.' If the time indeed was 'at hand' in the mind of God when John wrote, how much more so in our own days, twenty centuries later!"

A very poignant point of emphasis may be seen in Dan. 12:4 --regarding the understanding of end-time prophecy in this dispensation. Quoting from Newell, "The concluding words of verse 4, 'many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased', have caused some to suppose that this a reference to the great movements made possible by the development of modern transportation. A more accurate translation of this passage, however, indicates that the correct sense is that 'many shall search it through and through' and that as a consequence 'knowledge of the book itself shall be increased'." Note also II Pet. 10: "we have a more sure word of prophecy".

When the Lord referred to the great tribulation to come,

spoken of by Daniel, he interjected in both passages--Matt. 24, and Mark 13--the words, "whoso readeth, let him understand" (surely this includes accurate interpretation, teaching, etc.).

In summary, then, God may--as exemplified by the "sealing up" of Daniel, and the "sealing not" of Revelation--withhold the understanding of some of his revealed word until a certain time.

But now that we have been nearly two millenia into the "time of the end" ("at hand", Rev. 1:3, etc.)--we can no longer classify the associated prophecy as doubtful things; too difficult to interpret as specific doctrine.

Shall we dare to imply that God has any purpose in giving us scripture--however replete with difficult symbolism--that we are not to be able to accurately interpret, and establish its true meaning? "The things that are revealed, belong to us" (Deut. 29:29). If they were to be secret, or even uncertain, God would not have recorded them to us --especially in such volume and detail.

Somewhere between Daniel's time and John's revelation, there may have been some justification for theories of interpretation, but since God's time of sealing up the prophecy has long ended, we are commanded to learn such things (by studying and rightly dividing the word)--just as surely as any other scriptural subject.

May God help us, then, to get on with this sorely-neglected area of responsibility to Him, and the church.

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Note: It is acknowledged, hereby, that the foregoing views are not necessarily endorsed by the above-noted church.

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