

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES AND THE TIME OF ANTICHRIST

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Part 1. The Economy under the Antichrist

What began in Russia will end in America. -- Elder Ignaty of Harbin

It is not often that Orthodox Christians in America point to worldly signs to show that the end is near in our day and age. Many so-called "Orthodox Christians", fully committed to ecumenism, for that matter, seem to publicly hope that in fact we are heading towards a coming modern day paradise of bliss and inter-religious harmony, with those hopes dashed or increased by the statements of this or that heterodox religious leader. Still, even among zealot Orthodox, the true Orthodox Christians, we find a certain and justified indifference to worldly events, since it is not our task to focus on the "day or the hour" of the judgment. This writer would do the same, if it were not for the fact that Patristic prophecies concerning the Antichrist and the end times match perfectly on certain scientific, economic, and political realities we currently face.

This is neither the work of an economist nor a theologian; it is only a few of the short observations of a simple layman on what is happening. Conspiracy theories put aside (having had some merit in historical analysis but not much in the present day) this paper will simply analyze some of the prophecies of the New Martyrs and Fathers of the Orthodox Church in reference to today. Too many coincide for it to be an accident. Certainly we cannot put up a "time line" or a countdown of the end. But, in context, we should be able to realize that these are truly the final days (in the Church, the final days began with the Incarnation) and that we live in a "world of the end". There is no "post-apocalyptic" world save this one.

Some previous works on the end by modern writers are very clear expositions on the Patristic position, coupled with their own imaginations on what the modern, apocalyptic world shall appear to be like-- I find that this is not necessary, that there is in fact sufficient cause in our own news stories, major and minor, to justify the claim that Antichrist is already likely here, though in secret.

THE "GLOBAL ECONOMY" AND THE FUTURE REIGN OF ANTICHRIST

This is a world-historical moment in which it is possible to stop the corporate offensive, a moment when the ruling partnership composed of the United States, Europe and to a lesser extent Japan is fracturing, as the European Union reaches its limit on the amount of deregulation it will take and Japan's economy is in turmoil. This may allow those opposing the ruling bloc — Third World governments (which may be conservative), labor, and environmentalists worldwide — to build alliances of convenience with sympathetic elements within the EU to guide the reshaping of the global institutions in a liberatory manner. - Abby Sher, *The ABC's of the Global Economy, Dollars and Sense* #228, March-April 2000

The “Global Economy” we have been trying to develop over the past few decades is on the verge of total collapse. First inaugurated through the Bretton Woods agreement of 1944, the stated aim of the creation of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), was, in the words of its founding document (*Articles of Agreement of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, July 22, 1944* United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference, Bretton Woods, New Hampshire) :

(i) To assist in the reconstruction and development of territories of members by facilitating the investment of capital for productive purposes, including the restoration of economies destroyed or disrupted by war, the reconversion of productive facilities to peacetime needs and the encouragement of the development of productive facilities and resources in less developed countries.

(ii) To promote private foreign investment by means of guarantees or participations in loans and other investments made by private investors; and when private capital is not available on reasonable terms, to supplement private investment by providing, on suitable conditions, finance for productive purposes out of its own capital, funds raised by it and its other resources.

In other words, the stated goals of the World Bank and the IMF (according to the documents, only members of the IMF were participants in the activities of the World Bank) were to allow all members-- with the goal of making all countries participating members-- to have a central capital flow from a single source. This sounds like we are talking about transference of dollars, however, and that is not a realistic (nor historically accurate) definition of “capital”, which refers far more broadly to produced goods.

To say that the rapidly inflating dollar does not play a role in this is an error, however, and this is what is leading to America's quickening economic decline. Indeed, the strength of the dollar goes hand in hand with the activities of the Bank and the Fund, primarily denominated in dollars. The Federal Interest Rate (which we have heard more and more about lately) is really of more interest to foreigners, who purchase our U.S. Savings Bonds based upon the potential rate of return they will get on their interest. Banks lend money off the interest on the bonds; thus, loans banks give, whether credit cards or mortgages are based around that same interest rate.

See? One big global economic happy family.

THE TRAP FOR ONE WORLD COMMERCE IS SLOWLY LAID

A recent article in *Market Watch* states the grim news in what is increasingly common in the popular media, but well known to anyone watching the disastrous policy of the United States in regard to her economy, a sort of “economy-through-theft” policy in international policy (we'll get to that in a moment) and “credit-without-work” policy among her citizens-- though this has changed of late.

SUBPRIME COULD CREATE GLOBAL CRISIS, ECONOMIST SAYS

World is one "Bear-like" event away from liquidity freeze, Zandi warns

The article then goes on to describe the unfolding disaster of American subprime mortgages, something anyone without an economics degree would be able to see would be a massive failure from the outset. Think about this for a moment: banks, who *control* credit, are giving home loans to people with poor debt histories with terms that would collapse the budget of those far better prepared? Certainly we cannot assume that the banks and funds that provided these loans are staffed with idiots. Such a move would inevitably lead to failure and a lot of foreclosed debts, which would damage our actual returns that we could pay with the interest (since without the money to pay the interest, we CAN'T pay it) to foreign debtors. Why would the banks cause a significant portion of the population (about 10%) to live under the illusion of buying a home, only to take it away from them, potentially risking the stability of the dollar market?

The answer to that can be found in the fact that the World Bank and the people who control the creation of our dollars are, if not the same people, closely related: the U.S. Dollar has not been under the government's control since 1913. It is under the control of a group of private banks known collectively as the Federal Reserve. Indeed, many congressmen tried to stop the implementation of the Federal Reserve act (before this, U.S. Dollars were in fact gold and silver pieces), but the most disturbing appeal came from Congressman Charles Lindbergh, Sr., (father of the famous aviator):

This [Federal Reserve Act] establishes the most gigantic trust on earth. When the President [Wilson] signs this bill, the invisible government of the monetary power will be legalized....the worst legislative crime of the ages is perpetrated by this banking and currency bill...From now on, depressions will be scientifically created.

In other words, the popular economy could be manipulated at will by the banks. The banks would then go further, taking away the gold backing from Dollar bills (or do you still think there is gold in Fort Knox? Look it up....) and eventually replacing the backing with... nothing.

But why? And why, after establishing this system in the U.S., (which would soon lead to the great depression) would such a system be established worldwide?

The answer, put simply, is greed. By replacing objects of tangible wealth (gold, silver) for exchange of goods and services with objects of no intrinsic value, those in charge of the economies get something for nothing. Sadly, this greed is not limited to the banks; governments like this system because of taxation, which allows them access to the depleted wealth.

The reader may be asking what on earth any of this has to do with Orthodoxy. Why am I not talking about the New Martyrs of Russia, for example, who spoke about the restoration of the

Tsar and the Antichrist? The answer to that is simple. The people who created the economic system above described and who killed the New Martyrs are the same people.

The first requisite for the happiness of the people is the abolition of religion. -- Karl Marx

The best way to destroy the capitalist system is to debauch the currency. -- V. I. Lenin

But Marx and Lenin were communists, you may respond! And these banks are capitalist! Just because they had the same idea about the making the currency (the dollar) worthless doesn't mean they worked together!

William Franklin Sands, a director of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, had just contributed \$1,000,000 to the Bolsheviks. — Anthony Sutton, *Wall Street and the Bolshevik Revolution*, Veritas Publishing, pp. 133, 134.

In the February 3, 1949, issue of the *New York Journal American*, Schiff's grandson, John, was quoted by columnist Cholly Knickerbocker as saying that his grandfather [Jacob Schiff-- one of the founders of the Federal Reserve] had given about twenty million dollars for the triumph of Communism in Russia. — G. Edward Griffin, *The Creature from Jekyll Island*, American Opinion Publishing, p. 265.

The dollar then was about twenty-four times the value of today's money. These two quotes alone show the banks who became the “backbone of our economy” provided at least a half a billion dollars to destroy Orthodox Russia.

GOLD, THE BANKS, AND ONE-WORLD CURRENCY

That said, we should get back to the ultimate goal of the banking systems in their current actions. If we spend too much time on the creation of false, worthless currency, we will miss the central point. Why? Because most of the documentation on these subjects is written by heterodox, most of whom believe (and mistakenly) that the solution to these problems is the return of a gold standard, whether macrocosmically (through government) or microcosmically (through individual holdings of precious metals).

One can find in almost any “economic self-protection” guide, almost any conspiracy theory literature, the need expressed to buy gold and silver. This author believes that such a position is useful only now, before the world is completely engulfed in poverty, at which point it will become completely useless. My argument is twofold: it is both economic and based on what St Ephraim says in the same text on the Antichrist.

In the first place, the world banks, nervous about the instability of their currencies, are already heading towards a gold standard, which would not be the case unless they saw it completely to their advantage. The Libertarian Cato Institute, advocates of a “free market gold standard,” published a paper on this topic, and I will quote the relevant part here.

At this point, it should be noted that the fatal flaw in the monetarist program for monetary stability lies in the

fact that its policy prescriptions completely fail to address the fundamental cause of inflation, namely, the governmental monopoly over money. The monetarist "quantity rule," according to which a governmental agency such as the Fed is to maintain a stable rate of growth in the quantity of money, is not an anti-inflation policy at all. It is merely the enunciation of a request that the political authorities exercise restraint in exploiting their monopoly of issuing money, which, under the monetarist program, would remain virtually intact. Such a request, I might add, is incredibly naive in the light of theory and history.

The virtue of a genuine, 100-percent gold standard, in contrast, is precisely that it establishes a free market in the supply of money and, in doing so, brings about a complete abolition of the governmental monopoly in this most sensitive and vital area of the market economy. Under a pure commodity money, the money-supply process is totally privatized: The mining, minting, certification, and storage of the money commodity as well as the issuance of fully covered, i.e., 100-percent gold-backed, bank notes and deposits are carried out by private firms operating in a free market. -- *The Gold Standard: An Analysis of Some Recent Proposals*, Joseph Salerno, Cato Policy Analysis #16, September 9, 1982

There is one major problem with the above for Orthodox Christians, considering that we are increasingly heading in such a direction. Antichrist will have control over a worldwide government.

...And on a sudden he [the Antichrist] rises up and rebels and assumes rule. And in the beginning of his rule, or rather tyranny, he assumes the role of sanctity. But when he becomes master he persecutes the Church of God and displays all his wickedness. -- *St John of Damascus, On the Orthodox Faith, Book 4.*

A voice of appeal will issue forth in human society, expressing the urgent need for a 'genius of geniuses,' who would elevate material development and progress to a higher plane and bring about prosperity on earth. -- *St Ignatius Brianchaninov*

The creation of such a "free-market standard" would not slow down the process of centralized international control of money, but to the contrary would speed it up. An internationally regulated gold-backed currency would be no different, practically, from an internationally regulated fiat currency: it can still be regulated through the same forms as a "cashless system", complete with electronic transfers, et cetera. And it would still be centrally regulated.

Even today, much to the shock of those would-be gold bugs, gold's distribution is monitored anyway, so even though one can buy some gold bullion at a coin dealer fairly anonymously, the government still has a good grasp of *where the gold is being bought*.

The Patristic problem is summed up in the quote from St Ephraim above: gold and silver will become completely worthless. Why? Because the standard of money will be completely irrelevant. *There will be nothing to buy, and those who accept the mark of the beast will only live in a temporary delusion of safety.*

The world rule of Antichrist will last for three and a half years (Rev. 13:5). Blinded by their own impiety and the delusions of Antichrist, the mass of mankind will join him in his disdain for Christians. "The enemies of

Antichrist will be counted as rebels, as enemies of the public good and order" (Bp. Ignatius Brianchaninov). This majority will enjoy a period of relaxation, "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," Then, suddenly the vessels of wrath will be poured out upon the followers of Antichrist: sores and boils will afflict those bearing the mark of the beast, and the waters of the earth will be turned to blood." All this will happen when least expected and when the departure of man from God has reached its extreme limit. -- *Apostasy and Antichrist*, Archbishop Averky, Jordanville 1971.

Then gold and silver and precious clothing or precious stones shall lie along the streets, and also even every type of pearls along the thoroughfares and streets of the cities, but there is not one who may extend the hand and take or desire them, but they consider all things as good as nothing because of the extreme lack and famine of bread, because the earth is not protected by the rains of heaven, and there will be neither dew nor moisture of the air upon the earth. -- St Ephrem the Syrian