

THE ANTICHRIST

- alias the Man of Lawlessness

The Antichrist is the vilest satanically empowered dictator that our world will ever know. He will rule the whole world for a mercifully short period of three and a half years. We are not told from what country he will arise or his name, only that the number of his name is 666. Scripture challenges the person who has insight to identify him from that number, but that won't be possible until he appears on the world scene. He is commonly known as the Antichrist, although that name is not used as a proper name in scripture. Five books mention him: Daniel 'the little horn', 2 Thessalonians 'The Man of Lawlessness', 1 & 2 John 'the antichrist', Revelation 'the beast' and two Gospels saying, 'When you see in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation.'

The accounts are linked by the mention of the 'abomination that causes desolation' (Dan 9:27, 11:31, 12:11, Matt 24:15, Mark 13:14), 'he sets himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be God' (2 Thess 2:4) and 'It ordered them to set up an image in honour of the beast' (Rev 13:14). The 3 ½-year period of his reign is called 'a time, times and half a time' (Dan 7:25, 12:7, Rev 12:14), 42 months (Rev 11:2, 13:5) or 1260 days (Rev 11:3, 12:6).

Daniel's vision of the Antichrist

The prophet Daniel, who lived 2600 years ago, gives us the most information about the Antichrist (Dan 7-11). The name Antichrist is not used as a proper name in Scripture; Jesus does not name him, Paul calls him the 'man of sin' and 'the lawless one' (2 Thess 2:1-12), while John simply calls him 'the animal' or 'the beast.' Daniel calls him a 'little horn', and 'a despicable person.' Daniel said he had eyes like those of a human being and a mouth that boasted with audacious claims. He watched him as he waged war against the saints and prevailed against them. He will attempt to alter times and laws, which may include the current calendar, religious holidays, and Judeo-Christian morality. He'll succeed for three and a half years until he is killed, and his body is destroyed and given over to be burned with fire. Then the

kingdom, authority, and magnificence of all nations of the earth will be given to the saints.

He had a vision of four great beasts representing world kingdoms, the last of which was terrifying and very powerful. It devours the whole earth and so must be still future. It has large iron teeth and crushes and devours its victims and tramples underfoot whatever is left. It has ten horns (powerful leaders) and:

While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully (Daniel 7:8)

The little horn is the Antichrist. Daniel said he looked more imposing than the other leaders and he had eyes (great insight) and a mouth that spoke boastfully. Why a little horn? It could imply youth, inexperience, or a lowly background. When he comes on the scene, a divine court is set up to deal with him, and in verse 11, he is killed. But in the interpretation of the dream, we learn that before his demise (7:26), this small horn wages war against God's people and defeats them. He is allowed to oppress the saints for forty-two months (Daniel 7:25, Revelation 13:5).

The following verses in Daniel 7 describe the coming of the Messiah to rule all nations and peoples of every language. As Daniel watched,

this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom (Daniel 7:21-22).

Israel would undoubtedly have regarded themselves to be the holy people mentioned here, but as we know from the Gospels, they did not recognise Jesus to be their Messiah and they forfeited their right to reign in his kingdom. By God's grace, the church, consisting of believers from all nations, are the saints who possess the kingship and they do so at the resurrection. They are co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17) and will inherit the kingship at his return and possess it forever.

Daniel cannot draw distinctions between members of the Trinity, but it does seem that in this chapter the Most High represents the Messiah. The

saints are the holy people of the Most High to whose favour the Ancient of Days pronounces favour. The kingdom is handed over to the people of the Most High whose kingdom will be everlasting and all rulers will worship and obey him.

An angel interpreted the vision for Daniel:

The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them, another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High, oppress his holy people, and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him (Daniel 7:24-27).

When the Antichrist rises to power, he oppresses God's people for three and a half years, before he is destroyed by the returning Messiah. The set times and laws he seeks to change may include religious holidays, Judeo-Christian morality, and the calendar year which begins with the year of Jesus' birth, 2030 being 2030 years since Jesus was born.

He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple, he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him (Daniel 9:27).

This verse is important because Jesus refers to it in his discourse on the end of the age. The many referred to could refer to the majority in Israel and the seven-year treaty may include the building of a temple in Jerusalem because, in the middle of that period, he will increase his power by putting an end to the normal activities at the Jewish temple at Jerusalem and setting up an idol of himself.

Jesus' teaching about Antichrist

In Matthew's Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus about the sign of his return and the end of the age and that is what he gave them. There is nothing in his reply which causes us to think about the destruction of the temple in 70 AD. After describing the beginning of birth pangs, he tells of worse pain to come. They would be persecuted and put to death, hated by all nations because of Jesus. Many will turn from the faith and betray one another, false prophets will arise and deceive many people, and because of the increases in wickedness, the love of most Christians will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. God will judge that the gospel has been successfully preached to all nations, and then the end will come. All these events following the birth pangs will occur during the Great Tribulation. Then, or therefore:

When you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ... For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equalled again (Matthew 24:15-16, 21).

Antichrist will do as he pleases. He will exalt himself to be as great as the commander of the army of the Lord, he will take away the daily sacrifices from the Lord and he will throw down his sanctuary. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place (Daniel 8.11, 11:36). Although the saints are defeated by the Antichrist, those who die are resurrected to possess the kingship and reign with the Messiah.

Zechariah had previously prophesied:

“A day of the Lord is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls. I will gather all nations to Jerusalem to fight against it, the city will be captured, the houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. Then the Lord will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle.”

With the Lord's help, Israel will consume all the surrounding nations and Jerusalem will remain intact in its place. God will destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem. Daniel 8:9-12 suggests that the Antichrist's

abominable act in the temple is the catalyst for the final battle of Armageddon. Islamic forces from Egypt are the first to rebel against Antichrist's blasphemy with more Islamic forces coming from the north, invading many countries in the process, including Israel (Dan 11:40).

In the parallel passage in Luke 21, Jesus' discourse is in response to their remark on how beautiful the temple was, and in his answer, he warns them that the temple will be destroyed, the Jews will fall by the sword or be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Then in verses 25-28 ???Jesus jumps to the next desecration of the temple under Antichrist, the warfare between nations at the end of the age and the disturbance this has on the heavenly bodies. It is at this time that they will see the Son of Man return in power and glory.

Paul's teaching about Antichrist

Paul's teaching on the Antichrist is based on Daniel's prophecy:

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters ... Do not let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God. (2 Thessalonians 2:1, 3-4).

Take note of the order of events: World rebellion against God, Antichrist appears, blasphemy against God and persecution of the church, and finally Jesus' return when he gathers his people to himself. No pre-tribulation rapture here.

Paul is talking about the second coming of Jesus Christ when Christians will be gathered to him by resurrection and rapture. Jesus will not return until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed. This is the Antichrist who will exalt himself above everything and everyone, including God and set up an idol in the temple, proclaiming himself to be God. The rebellion, instigated by the Antichrist, is a rebellion against God, his people (both Christians and Jews), his laws, the church and the Bible. When the whole

world rises up in rebellion against God and persecutes his people, God will respond in judgment as Daniel prophesied. Paul continues:

And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming. The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refuse to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason, God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10).

Daniel prophesied about the final world empire and the Antichrist whom Jesus defeats at his second coming. The focus of Daniel's visions in Daniel 7-12 is on the Antichrist, his blasphemy in claiming deity, the abomination that causes desolation, his oppression of the saints, the time of distress, Antichrist's demise, and the resurrection of the saints. The end-time prophecies often develop from events closer to Daniel's era and especially concerning Antiochus Epiphanes who is a type of the Antichrist.

The gospel will be preached in all the world and those who refuse to believe in Jesus will be deceived by Antichrist who will polarize the world's population into the righteous and the wicked. The choice will be to worship Jesus or Antichrist, or Satan who is the power behind Antichrist. The majority will perish along with the Antichrist because they refuse to believe the truth and delight in their sinful behaviour: selfishness, dishonesty, homosexual behaviour, abortion, drunkenness etc.

Beware of the Antichrist. He will be more powerful than Hitler and will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every religion, speaking amazing things against God. He will succeed until what has been determined by God is carried out. He will glorify the god of fortresses: nuclear military power. He will recognize those who honour him. "He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land (Israel)" (Daniel 11:40-41). There will be continuous war during his reign.

The Antichrist in Revelation

The apostle John, in his visions, saw a beast coming out of the sea which is symbolic of rebellious nations. The beast mentioned in verses 1–4 is not a man; it is a worldwide empire as described in Daniel 7. This beast from the sea is a coalition of nations, a worldwide empire. Satanically empowered, it is overtly anti-Christian and anti-Jewish. It has seven heads and ten horns just like the dragon that empowers it, linking it with Daniel's fourth beast. The whole world will be deceived by its ideology. This empire will be oppressive, violent, blasphemous, and dictatorial. The crowns are on the horns because the horns represent the ten leaders of this coalition. The seven heads are interpreted as seven mountains, symbolic of empires, and they also represent seven kings, the founders.

One of the heads of the beast had a fatal wound which was healed, a way of saying that the empire ceased to exist for some time and then was revived (Revelation 17:8). The Roman empire existed for over a thousand years and included parts of north Africa and the Middle east. Its revival constitutes the final, mighty, yet unstable, world empire.

The statue that Daniel saw had legs of iron (Rome) and feet that were part iron and part clay. The legs and feet all represent the same world empire, the ten toes symbolizing the unstable confederation of ten nations that rule the world in the end times.

This empire will involve political, economic, cultural, and religious globalization of which the UN may have a key role. The whole world will be full of wonder (Revelation 13:3, 17:8) that an empire that had been dead for many centuries could now be revived. All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast – all whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation 13:8). They will embrace it, submit to its laws, and they will worship Satan, the power behind it. Just as the Father gave Jesus authority over the whole world (Matthew 28:18), so Satan will give his power, throne and authority to the leader of this final empire whose government will be very frightening, powerful, violent, destructive, and despotic.

The beast is given a mouth, Antichrist, to utter proud and blasphemous speech during his rule of forty-two months. From that time, he demands universal adoration and vehemently opposes all worship except for himself.

He will embody satanic evil, have universal political power, and use nuclear weapons to achieve his ambitions. They are the only power he honours (Dan 11:38).

Antichrist and his empire will wage war against the saints and defeat them (Daniel 7:21, Revelation 13:7). That implies millions of martyrs. He will have authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation. This will be the most intense and extensive persecution that the church has ever undergone. If God had not informed us about what is to come, it would be a very confusing time for Christians. But God has warned us and told us to be patient and faithful, even unto death. The Antichrist will be a world dictator, more powerful than Hitler. Everyone is forced to worship him and to submit to his satanically inspired authority. Only those whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life will have the courage to disobey him, at the cost of their lives. Satan, the Antichrist, and the false prophet are a triumvirate, the evil equivalent of the Holy Trinity. Their destruction in hell is emphasised.

He will succeed for three and a half years. Jesus said there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equalled again, referring to nuclear warfare. Jesus warned future Jews that when they saw the abomination that caused desolation in the temple, they should flee immediately to the mountains. He said that if God did not shorten those days, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days would be shortened. War will continue for the last three and a half years with Jerusalem as the main centre of attention.

The Antichrist will be remarkably destructive and will destroy both mighty men and the holy people. Deceit will prosper under his leadership. He may arise from the area covered by the ancient Roman empire which includes Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. As his name suggests, he will oppose God and the saints, whom God will allow him to conquer during the three and half years that precede the Messiah's arrival.

By demanding universal worship, the Antichrist will cause the whole world to rebel against God. However, his empire will be unstable. He will plunge the world into a war so horrific that it slaughters a third of the world's population (Revelation 9:18). After uprisings from the south (Egypt?) and the north (Turkey?) and Russia, there will be rebellion from Gog in the east and the far north (Russia & China?), a two-hundred million strong army

released at the Euphrates River (Revelation 9:13–16) and culminating in the battle of Armageddon at the Lord's return.

Gog is certainly there at the battle of Armageddon where the birds are invited to feast on the dead armies (Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20, Rev 19:17-18, 21) and after which Israel is converted (Ezekiel 39:25, 29). Gog is distinguished from Antichrist in that Gog is buried in Israel (Ezekiel 39:11), whereas Antichrist is arrested and thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulphur (Rev 19:20).

According to C. F. Keil and most ancient interpreters, Daniel 11:40-45 no longer applies to Antiochus Epiphanes as the king of the north but to the Antichrist, the final enemy of the people of God, and the king of the far north, Gog, who invades Israel in the last days. The king of the south (Egypt) is the first to engage the Antichrist in battle, as Muslims cannot tolerate idolatry, then Gog storms out against him with armies and naval forces, invading many countries in the process. This cannot be true of the king of Syria as it borders on Israel.

The false prophet

John sees another beast coming out of the earth. Empires rise from the sea (nations), but men rise from the earth. This beast is not an empire, he is a bestial man. Gentle like a lamb, he speaks like a dragon, a deceiver who performs miracles with satanic power on Antichrist's behalf. He instructs everyone to worship the Antichrist and be branded with his mark, his name or the number of his name. He orders people to set up an image of the beast which he animates so that it speaks. This is the abomination that causes desolation standing in the holy place, or the disgusting act in God's temple that causes horror.

Paul said the lawless one will set himself up in God's temple and proclaim himself to be God. He will execute anyone who refuses to worship this image. Everyone, whether rich or poor, is forced to receive the mark of the beast on the right hand or forehead. Without the mark, nobody can buy or sell anything.

The mark is 666. Nobody will be able to identify the name it represents until he appears. It is Antichrist's name and 666 is the sum of his name. Deriving

numbers from names is a practice called gematria. As Revelation is written in Greek, we need to think in terms of Greek spelling. For example, Jesus in Greek is Ιησούς. Ι = 10, η = 8, σ = 200, ο = 70, ύ = 400, ζ = 200. The number of Jesus' name is 888.

The second beast is called the false prophet (Revelation 16:13, 19:20, 20:10) because he is a religious figure. He performs miracles and opposes all other religions. He exalts the Antichrist over everything that is called God or is worshipped, and he executes those who disobey his orders.

The death of Antichrist

Daniel 7:11 Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words *the horn* was speaking. I kept looking until *the beast* was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire (hell).

Daniel 11:44–45 But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. He will pitch his royal tents between the seas (Mediterranean and Dead Sea) at the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then *the lawless one* will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendour of his coming.

Revelation 19:19-20 Then I saw *the beast* and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. But *the beast* was captured and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs, he had deluded those who had received the mark of *the beast* and worshipped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulphur (hell).

Revelation 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where *the beast* and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

In summary, we can see from these verses that the Antichrist is killed while fighting his wars. His place of death is between the Mediterranean and Dead Seas, at the beautiful holy mountain (Mount Zion). He is overthrown and destroyed by Jesus at his coming by the breath of his mouth, his powerful word and the splendour of his coming. Antichrist and his false prophet are thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulphur, a metaphor for hell. Then follows the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth. When the thousand years is complete, the devil is captured and thrown into hell where Antichrist and his false prophet were thrown a thousand years earlier. They are tormented day and night forever and ever.

Add what has not been covered from the following:

THE ANTICHRIST

(Rev 13:5-8)

Antichrist will most probably arise from Europe, as the Roman emperors did. As his name suggests, he will oppose God and the saints, and he will be allowed to conquer them during the three and half years that precede the Messiah's arrival.

The 'abomination of desolation', or 'the sacrilegious object that causes desecration', spoken about by Jesus (Mt 24:15), is generally believed to be a statue or image of the Antichrist. Jesus referred us to Dan 9:26-27 to learn about this. There it says the Antichrist will make a binding covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he will suspend both the sacrifice and grain offerings at the temple. This may mean that he will ally with Israel for seven years, allowing them to build a temple in Jerusalem. But after three and a half years, he will put an end to temple worship and set himself up as God, an abomination that causes desolation. The Antichrist will cause desolation in Jerusalem and throughout the whole world.

Jesus told the Israelites to flee immediately to the mountains when they saw this object of desolation, saying that if God did not shorten those days, no one would survive. This may be World War III. War will continue for three years, with Jerusalem as the main center of attention.

The apostle John adds more teaching about the Antichrist (Rev13:5-8). He will reign for 42 months and exalt himself above everyone, including God and his people. God allows him to make war against the saints and conquer them, resulting in a vast number of martyrdoms. The Antichrist will have authority over every tribe, people, language, and nation and every non-Christian will worship him. He has a false prophet (Rev 13:1-1) who supports his worship and commands everyone to be branded with the name or number (666) of the Antichrist. Without it, no one will be able to buy or sell anything. The Antichrist and his false prophet will be captured at the battle of Armageddon. Paul said the Lord Jesus will overthrow him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming (2 Thess 2:8). John specifies that they will be thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur (hell) (Rev 19:20).