

End Times Lesson 5 – The Antichrist Pt 1

So last week we looked at the Rapture, and If I'm correct, much of what I'm going to be talking about today and at the very least the next lesson when we get back after Easter, are going to be something we can file in the "It's good to know, but we'll never have to apply it" category.

And so today we are going to be talking about this mysterious figure called the antichrist. The very mention of the word antichrist sends a shudder through the hearts of Christians. All have heard or read of him and some feel fear at the mention of his name. Some of that fear comes from misunderstandings of who he is, when he will appear and what he can and can't do to God's people and I hope to dispel some of that fear this morning.

Today we are going to talk about the many names of the antichrist, some keys to his identity, how he fits into end times prophecy to include things like the mark of the beast system, we'll actually talk a little about the false prophet and the one world religion, the false church - and his role in the tribulation period which is what we'll get into detail on in the next lesson.

What we won't do today however is try to figure out who the antichrist is – if in fact he is alive today (which I believe is a distinct possibility – I would say it's highly probable). When you do a Google search on "Who is the Antichrist?" you get 11,400,000 results which is up by the way from 2006-7 where it was only 3,800,000 or so. Some of the websites post incredibly long and detailed articles – a sign of the extreme fascination generated by this sensational subject. Rock bands have written songs about it, there have been documentaries and movies made. Many people have been named as the Antichrist. And, of course, they are all wrong.

Our first glimpse of the Antichrist is in the book of Daniel – and its in Chapter 7. Daniel has a dream of four beasts – sort of a summary of

the dream Nebuchadnezzar had in Daniel 2. The first beast – this lion with eagles wings represents Babylon – which was the kingdom he was currently living in – it corresponds to the head of gold in Daniel 2, then the second beast was a bear, which represented the Medo-Persian empire – this corresponds to the Chest and arms of silver in Daniel 2. The third kingdom – was like a leopard with heads and four wings and a bird on its back – this corresponds to the belly and thighs of bronze in Daniel 2 and represents Greece. And then the fourth beast which he doesn't compare to any known animal – he just says its terrifying, dreadful, and exceedingly strong – with great iron teeth. And it corresponds to the legs of iron and represents Rome. Then we see this beast devoured and broken into pieces.

And I'll stop there for a minute – because all of this so far has happened – Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians around 539BC. The Medo-Persian empire lasted until around 330 BC. The Greco-Macedonian empire was from around 333 BC to 168 / 31 BC and the Roman empire from 168 BC to – and this depends on how you look at it because some say 476AD where others put it at 1452 with the fall of Constantinople – Don't forget – Daniel 2 has the empire represented by two legs and the Roman empire was divided for many years. But it did ultimately fall – and so what we are left with is the rest of Daniels dream in Daniel 7 and the rest of the statute in Daniel 2. Of course, in Daniel 2 we have the feet and toes made of a iron and clay and in Daniel 7 we have ten horns – and then out of that comes another little horn “before which three of the 10 horns are plucked up by the roots and on that little horn ware eyes like that of a man and a mouth speaking of great things. Verses 21-27 tell us **“As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom. “Thus he said: ‘As for the fourth beast, there shall be a fourth kingdom on earth, which shall be different from all the kingdoms, and it shall devour the**

whole earth, and trample it down, and break it to pieces. As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. But the court shall sit in judgment, and his dominion shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High; his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” As we’ll see later, this is very similar to what we see in Revelation but I want to talk about this whole idea of who the antichrist is and who he isn’t.

You hopefully remember we talked about preterism – does anyone remember what that view says? That everything the bible talks about was fulfilled in either 70AD or prior. And so they say that this antichrist was simply a historical figure and fulfilled during biblical times – the most common person they cite is Antioch Epiphanes.

Antioch Epiphanes was a Syrian king who reigned in Palestine from about 175 to 163B.C. He called himself Epiphanes which means "the great one." That title is held by Mark Levin now but anyway – the people use to call him Epimanes which means “maniac”. He was a great persecutor of the Jewish people. The apocryphal books of 1 and 2 Maccabees describe how he tried to stamp out Jewish religion, and in so doing slaughtered thousands of Jewish men, women, and children. Someone was asking about these books that were “Banned from the Bible” – well, 1 and 2 Macabees are not considered canon by the majority of Christians but my catholic bible at home does contain these books. And they record what happened during what’s known as the

intertestamental period – or the period of time from when the last book of the Bible was written in the Old Testament to the time that the earliest book in the New Testament was written. Today, as protestants we consider them as important historical documents – just not as inspired scripture.

Anyway - In one of the worst acts in Jewish history, Antiochus desecrated the Temple on December 16, 167BC by slaughtering a pig on the altar, forcing the priests to eat pork, and setting up an idol to Zeus. The Jews then abandoned the Temple, not wishing to go into a defiled place. That put a halt to the daily sacrifices, until the Jews regained control of the Temple during the Maccabean revolution. Now much of this seems to fulfill the prophecy of Daniel 11:31 which says **“³¹ Forces from him shall appear and profane the temple and fortress, and shall take away the regular burnt offering. And they shall set up the abomination that makes desolate.”**

but Antioch Epiphanes couldn't be the anti-Christ because Christ hadn't even come yet. This wasn't during the final kingdom – this is only the fourth beast and the Roman Empire was barely in power. Now, what he was though – is a foreshadowing or a precursor of the antichrist. He gave us a picture of what the antichrist will be like.

Another candidate was Nero. Now Nero did come after Christ (he reigned from 54 to 68 AD)– and he was an absolutely powerful maniac. And – he seems to fulfill one of the most famous verses in all of the book of Revelation – Revelation 13:18 “This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666.” His name Nero Caesar spelled in Aramaic is NRON KSR. Aramaic letters have numeral values like roman numerals. N= 50 R=200 O= 6 N= 50 K=100 S= 60 R=200 add them all up and you get 666. Many of those same people who argue that Nero was antichrist claim that the book of revelation was simply a coded message from John to other believers and that everything in it refers

simply to Rome and Nero and the persecution of the early church. But that is simply not true – Although much of Revelation is written in allegorical language and in apocryphal style – it is clear that these are predictions of future events some of which may be occurring now or about to occur and some of which is still yet to be fulfilled. The fact that the majority of the book of Revelation was not fulfilled during Nero’s time leaves Nero out.

Some other candidates – Kaiser Wilhelm – The German emperor’s title meant “Caesar” and he intended to conquer all of Europe in WWI and reunite the old Roman Empire. Benito Mussolini – The Italian strongman from Rome threatened the world after WWI and prophetic speculators tagged him as the antichrist long before WWII began. Here’s a big one – Adolph Hitler – Hitler has come to represent the ultimate personification of evil. He persecuted and murdered 6 million Jews and tried to conquer all of Europe but failed. He offered himself as a messiah – “on one occasion he displayed the whip he often carried to demonstrate that “in driving out the Jews I remind myself of Jesus in the temple.” He declared that “Just like Christ, I have a duty to my own people”. He even boasted that just as Christ’s birth had changed the calendar, so his victory over the Jews would be the beginning of a new age.” “What Christ began,” he said “I will complete.”... At one of the Nuremberg rallies, a giant photo of Hitler carried the caption, “In the beginning was the Word.” Then of course there is the numerological connection. In this case if you take the English Alphabet and let A stand for 100, B 101, C 102 etc and then you take the letters in Hitler’s name and add them up H=107, I=108, T=119, L=111, E=104, R=117. Add up these six numbers and voila you get 666.

Other candidates – Joseph Stalin, Nikita Krushchev, John F. Kennedy – anti-Catholic fundamentalists were convinced that Kennedy was going to form an alliance with the pope and the communists and take over the world. Mikhail Gorbachev – Many suggested that the red

mark on his head might be the mark of the beast. Ronald Wilson Regan – Yes even the darling of politically conservative evangelicals was targeted as a candidate for the antichrist because he had 6 letters in each of his three names (666), Some thought that Saddam Hussein may have been a candidate before his death, Bill Clinton with Hillary as the False Prophet (I thought it might be the other way around) – just kidding, other candidates include Henry Kissinger, Margaret Thatcher, Boris Yeltsin , George W. Bush and then there was heavy speculation that Barak Obama could be the beast himself. With headlines like – “Kissinger: Obama primed to create New World Order”, News weeks Evan Thomas says “Obama’s sort of God”, Louis Farakahn referring to Obama and saying “The Messiah is absolutely speaking”. And then there were some saying Trump was the antichrist. (But frankly Trump isn’t a good enough speaker to be the antichrist.) but anyway – look – the point here is - We can speculate all day long. We can play the numerology game until we’re blue in the face – To get the most fun out of the game of “Who is the Antichrist” you simply play by these three rules – 1)If the proper name does not reach the necessary total, add a title. 2) if the sum cannot be found in English, try Hebrew, Greek or Latin and – don’t be too particular about the spelling and above all 3) be persistent – If you keep working at it – you can come up with a mathematical formula or a combination that will make anyone the antichrist.

But this is the thing – and many people over look this – Matthew 24:36 says “**No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.**” So do you know who that includes? It includes Satan! Satan is a limited, finite created being and he himself is left guessing when the rapture might occur. This means he must have a man in mind to indwell as the Antichrist in every generation. Any one of these men I just listed could have been the antichrist – but only after the rapture of the church will the identity of the antichrist be revealed. Satan must wait on God’s timing. He can’t make his move until God releases the restraining power of the Holy

Spirit indwelling the Church. It's because of this that we pray we don't know who the antichrist is- because if he's been revealed and you've discovered it – that also means you've been left behind to face the tribulation period and none of us wants that.

Even though we won't know exactly who the antichrist is – we can know a lot about him. There are over 100 scripture passages that deal with the antichrist and his kingdom. He has many names or titles in scripture. The beast (Rev 13:1); The Man of Destruction (2 Thess 2:3); The Man of Lawlessness (2 Thess 2:3); The Lawless One (2 Thess 2:8); The Abomination (Matt 24:15); The Little Horn (Dan 7:8); The Insolent King (Dan 8:23); The Ruler Who is to Come (Dan 9:26); The Despicable Person (Dan 11:21); The Strong Willed King (Dan 11:36); The Worthless Shepherd (Zech 11:16-17) and The Antichrist (1 John 2:18,22)

“¹⁸ Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.

²²Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son.”

It is this last title by which we know him the best and a great deal has been written about the prefix anti in connection with the Antichrist. It can mean either “against” (in opposition to) or “instead of” (in place of). The issue comes down to whether he is the great enemy of Christ or whether he is a false Christ. If he is the enemy of Christ and the head of a Gentile world government, then he is most likely to be a Gentile himself. If he is a false messiah who is accepted by the Jews, then it would stand to reason that he would be Jewish.

The Biblical picture is that he is both. Initially he presents himself as the “savior” of Israel by making a covenant or peace treaty to protect

her (Daniel 9:27). In this manner, he appears to be her long awaited Messiah. But in reality, he is against all that the messianic prophecies foretell about the true Messiah. But whether the Antichrist is a Jew or Gentile is not clearly answered in the New Testament but most prophetic scholars believe he will be a Gentile because: 1) He leads the European Union of Gentile Nations or the Revived Roman Empire (Daniel 7:8-24)– the toes and feet of iron and clay from Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream (Daniel 2:41-43) 2) His covenant with Israel promises Gentile protection for Israel (Daniel 9:27) and 3) His rule is part of the “times of the Gentiles” and their domination over Israel (Luke 21:24). Now these passages make it clear that the Antichrist will lead the western powers, but they do not specifically designate him as a Gentile. It is certainly possible that he could be of Jewish origin or nationality and still be a European or American Jew who leads the final form of the world government. I will say that the typical exegesis of Daniel 11:37 has focused on his atheistic beliefs, regardless of whether he is a Jew or a Gentile. This verse states that he will reject whatever religion is practiced by his ancestors and ultimately declare himself as God.

Grant Jeffrey points out several contrasts between Christ and the Antichrist. These include:

Christ	Antichrist
The Truth	The Lie
Holy One	Lawless One
Man of Sorrows	Man of Sin
Son of God	Son of Satan
Mystery of Godliness	Mystery of Iniquity
Good Shepherd	Worthless Shepherd

Exalted on High	Cast down to Hell
Humbled Himself	Exalted Himself
Despised	Admired
Cleanses the Temple	Defiles the Temple
Slain for the People	Slays the people
The Lamb	The Beast

A simple survey of the characteristic of the Antichrist confirms the idea that he is both a false Christ and against Christ.

Another thing to point out in verse 18 is (“¹⁸ **Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.**”) that there is a dual usage of the word antichrist. It is used in the singular (Antichrist) and in the plural (Antichrists). There will be a coming world leader, indwelt by the Spirit of Satan who will ultimately face off against our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – **the Antichrist**– and there will be many people who oppose and deny Christ – **Antichrists**).

There is what is known the Spirit of Antichrist and it is alive and well in this world. 1 John 4:3 says “**every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.**” These are false prophets and false teachers who have been led astray by the spirit of antichrist. And as you can see just by looking at bookstore shelves or watching Oprah that there are many alive here today. 1 John 4:1 says “**Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.**” If what you are hearing does not match up to Scripture – to the word of God – if it

denies Jesus Christ as the Son of God, as the way the truth and the life – it is not of God but from the Spirit of Antichrist. And what its purpose happens to be is to prepare the way for the antichrist.

Now we've learned some things about the antichrist just in talking about some of the people who were thought to have been antichrist and by contrasting him with Christ – we know he will be indwelt by Satan but else can we know? There are several key characteristics to the identity of this antichrist. The first three have to do with when and who he will rule - 1)He will rise to power in the last days: **“19 He said: “I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.” “23 In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a stern-faced king, a master of intrigue, will arise. 24 He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy the mighty men and the holy people. 25 He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power. 26 The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future.”** (Daniel 8:19, 23-26)

2. He will rule the whole world: **“7 He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them. And he was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.”** (Revelation 13:7)

3. He will rule by international consent: **“12 “The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. 13 They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast.”** (Revelation 17:12-13)

Frequently when speaking of the government in the last days we see this theme of ten kingdoms – ten horns, ten toes and so on. There are a total of 7 world empires in history: We've talked about some of them but I'll put them into the bigger picture where they go - The first world empire was Egypt which was during Moses' time – it was conquered by Assyria in 670 BC. Following that – Assyria was conquered by Babylon in 612BC. This brings us to Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 –as we discussed earlier, the head of Gold – Babylon went from 606BC to 539BC when they were conquered by the Medes and Persians – the chest and arms of silver – who were overthrown in 331 BC by Alexander the great and the Greeks – the belly and thighs of bronze, then Rome came into power in about 168BC – the legs of iron. This is also fitting of the Roman empire because there was an eastern and western Roman Empire with 2 world headquarters – one in the Latin Speaking Rome and the other in the Greek speaking Constantinople. The Roman empire ended in AD 476 or 1452 depending.

Now some call this future empire – the ten toes of iron and clay a “Revived Roman Empire” – Something formed out of the old Roman empire and mixed with other elements. And some suggest that it has already begun with the European Union. In 1948 – the first three countries (Belgium, Holland (Netherlands) and Luxembourg) formed the infant European Union known as the European Community. In 1949 the Belgium premier and Foreign Minister Henri Spaak was elected president and he said this – *“I came to Strasbourg convinced of the need for a United States of Europe. I leave with the certainty that this union is possible. Today... I feel like I am part of the Roman Empire today.”* – in 1957 it they were joined by Italy, France and Germany and the Treaty of Rome was confirmed. In 1973 England, Ireland and Denmark joined for nine, and then in 1981 Greece for # 10 – now it starts to go global, Spain and Portugal join in 1986, and Austria for #13 follows in 1995. Currently the EU is already up to 28.

It's very possible that it's out of this EU that the antichrist comes from. But then again – with what we've seen with the corona virus, that the current world as we know it could drastically change – add a rapture on top of it - and, we would end up with an entirely new world structure – like a one world ten nation government.

Another quote from Henry Spaak first president of the EU underlined Bible Prophecy when he said “We do not want another committee – we have too many already. What we want is a man of sufficient stature to hold the allegiance of all people and lift us out of the economic morass in which we are sinking. Send us such a man – be he God or the devil, we will receive him.”

Believe it or not, there are several very powerful organizations that have drawn up plans for a ten kingdom administrative power, separating the whole world into ten groupings – the organizations include They are the Illuminati, the Council of Foreign relations, the Bilderbergers, the Tri Lateral commission, the Club of Rome, the New Age movement and even the United Nations. And what are the ten groupings? 1) North America – US, Canada & Mexico; 2) South America; 3)Australia & New Zealand; 4)Western Europe; 5)Eastern Europe; 6)Japan; 7)South Asia; 8)Central Asia; 9)North Africa & Middle East; and 10)Remainder of Africa.

Now those could potentially be your 10 final kingdoms, three of which will fall to the antichrist – but let's face it – it's going to take a lot for the world to follow one man right? The world is currently in turmoil with war, disease (specifically corona virus), economic crisis – as we saw, many of the signs Jesus predicted are occurring. An event like the rapture would push the world over the edge and someone would need to step in and take charge.

That person will be the antichrist.