

What About “Antichrist?”

The subject of “*antichrist*” has been the topic of movies, books, tracts, preachers and religious doctrine for centuries. Well known authors such as Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye have made millions by taunting the world with the idea that before the end of the world some evil person will appear and unite all nations before moving them to the brink of annihilation.

This individual they say is the “*antichrist*” that Bible prophecy foretells will come in the last days. Proponents of the “*antichrist*” theory admit that the Bible NEVER specifically refers to a coming world leader called “*antichrist*.” Yet they still advocate that any serious student of prophecy must accept their theory as true despite the lack of evidence to support it.

The term “*antichrist*” has been applied to many people over the years. During World War II the prophecy “*experts*” thought Adolf Hitler or Stalin would be the one. Since then there have been claims laid against Mikhail Gorbachev and Saddam Hussein, but not one of these predictions has come true! When they fail in their predictions, they remind the world that misidentifications have been occurring for centuries! It is my hope, that through this brief study on the subject of “*antichrist*” that you will come to understand not only the truth about antichrist, but about the kingdom as well.

Who Antichrist is Not!

Advocates of the Antichrist theory contend that the Bible uses several terms and titles to describe him. Note the following assumptions:

- The Little Horn (Daniel 7:8)
- The Insolent King (Daniel 8:23)
- The Prince who is to come (Daniel 9:26)
- The Abomination of Desolation (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15)
- The Man of Lawlessness (2 Thessalonians 2:3)

- The Son of Destruction (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- The Lawless One (2 Thessalonians 2:8)
- The Beast (Revelation 11:7; 13:1; 14:9; 15:2; etc.)
- The Strong Willed King (Daniel 11:36)
- The Worthless Shepherd (Zechariah 11:16-17)

First of all let us consider all the references from the prophet Daniel. When looking at the context of the book of Daniel in its entirety we understand that the prophet did not have in mind a future world leader called “*the antichrist*!” All the prophets of the Old Testament wrote of the immediate problems facing the Hebrew people, as well as their future – both immediate and first century future. Daniel writes of the future state of the Jewish nation in his generation and the future first century establishment of the kingdom of God in which all nations (families) of the earth would be blessed – receiving the forgiveness of sins.

The problem with premillennial thinking is that there is no specific description of how everything will come to pass. Just about every preacher, who teaches about the antichrist, rapture, tribulation, etc., has his own twist on how it will all come about. Not to mention, that they read into the text what is absolutely not there. Not once do you find the word “*antichrist*” in the books of Daniel, Revelation, 2 Thessalonians or Zechariah, but they will tell you he is in there. The kings, princes, horns and abominations that Daniel foretells refer not “*the antichrist*” but Titus Caesar, Antiochus Epiphanes and a religious leader (that I will leave nameless) who makes a mockery of Christianity. The oft used and abused text of Matthew 24 finds Jesus referring to Daniel’s prophecy as one that would be fulfilled during the lifetime of His disciples (Matthew 24:15-21; Daniel 9:26-27). Matthew 24 is not an end time prophecy of things yet to come, but refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 by the “*prince to come*” Titus Caesar. Just read carefully the first three verses of the chapter and you will find that His disciples, whom He proceeds to answer, ask Jesus three

questions. #1 – When will the temple be destroyed?. #2 – What sign will signal Jesus return? - #3 – What will signal the end of the world? (Matthew 24:1-3). How do we know that Jesus was not speaking of our day? Because He tells those to whom He was speaking, “this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled” (vs. 34; Luke 21:5-34). Not our generation, but the generation of people Jesus stood with in the first century. Then Jesus answers the second & third question in Matthew 24:36-25:46) about His Second Coming and the end of the world. There will be NO SIGNS!! (NO rapture, NO tribulation period, NO antichrist, etc.). That is why He gives the parable of the 10 virgins to illustrate how we must be prepared at all times for His coming, because it will be without warning!

In short, there are only four verses in the entire Bible that use the word “*antichrist*” and not one of them points to one specific person.

Who Is Antichrist?

The subject of “*the antichrist*” is not as dramatic and sensational as many have been led to believe. Most do not know that the Bible will often times define for us what various things mean so that we are not left to speculate. Thankfully God did not leave the matter of antichrist to our imagination. Carefully read the only four verses in the Bible that deal with this important subject:

“*Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come by which we know that it is the last time*” (1 John 2:18KJV)

“*Who is a liar but he who denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son*” (1 John 2:22KJV)

“*And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is that spirit of antichrist; whereof ye have heard it should come; and even now already is it in the world*” (1 John 4:3KJV)

“*For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist*” (2 John 7KJV).

In Greek “*anti*” is a preposition which means “*opposed to, against, or it can mean instead of.*” The primary meaning of the word is “*opposed to*” not “*instead of,*” but premillennialists choose the secondary meaning because it best fits their theory. Any honest person must accept the Bible definition of the word, which means, “*opposed to Christ.*” John teaches that during his day there were MANY people who had the spirit of opposition to Christ. They denied that Jesus Christ was God come in the flesh. It was the “*last time*” or “*last hour*” or “*last days*” because Jesus Christ the Messiah had come into the world to save mankind from his sins. Therefore, we have been in the last days since Christ first came.

Who is “*antichrist*?” Anyone and everyone on earth who will not accept Jesus Christ as being the God/man. Anyone and everyone who denies that Christ is God, or says that He was a good man and a prophet, but nothing more. Think about it for a moment and I believe you will come up with the type of person who is “*opposed to Christ.*” In John’s day when he wrote of those denying Jesus had come in the flesh, there were the Romans, the Greeks and the Jews. In our world today there are a multitude of “*antichrists.*” Skeptics, Atheists, Jews, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, New Agers, Humanists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Scientologists, and the list could go on.

When any religious subject is brought to the forefront, we must go to the Bible with an open mind and search all the evidence on the matter before drawing a conclusion. We must never get caught up in “*wresting the Scriptures to our own destruction*” (2 Peter 3:16), or allowing false teachers to draw us away as their disciples (Acts 20:30). Let the Bible be its own best commentary, and may we be noble students of the Scriptures, searching them daily to be sure that what we are being taught is absolutely the truth (Acts 17:11).

A Future Kingdom?

Futurists claim to prove that the Scriptures teach there will be a future millennial coming of Christ in His literal human body in which He will set up His kingdom on earth and reign from the literal throne of David at Jerusalem for 1,000 years. They also believe that one of the events to happen that will signal the coming of this earthly kingdom is the “*antichrist*.”

In his book “*The Late Great Planet Earth*,” author Hal Lindsey says there will come a reemergence of the Roman Empire formed from a Ten-nation confederacy of the European Common Market. Mr. Lindsey says that the beast, the Antichrist will come to power subduing three of the ten nations before the last seven willingly surrender their authority to him (pg. 77-86). Mr. Lindsey bases his theory on Daniel chapters 2 & 7 – the dream of king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He admits that the image described in Daniel 2:31-45 is speaking of the world empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome – however he chooses to ignore the kingdom of God also found in that text. If you will carefully study the text with an open mind, you will discover some important information concerning the kingdom of God.

The dream that Nebuchadnezzar had disturbed him greatly. Under penalty of death his wise men were to both tell and interpret his dream. Only Daniel with the help of God was able to meet these requirements (Daniel 2:31-35). As you read this text notice that the king recognized this image as one standing during his day, even though the three future empires did not then exist. Therefore, that image was a representation of “*world empireism*” in its entirety. As Daniel gave interpretation of the image he also disclosed that the last kingdom (world empire) – Rome – and the type of government it represented would be destroyed when another kingdom came to power – the kingdom of God. Daniel tells of how a small stone made without hands would strike the image and brake it in pieces. This stone was to be the kingdom of God – the only kingdom allowed to

stand on earth until the end of time (Daniel 2:44-45).

Jeremiah foretold of how God would use spiritual Israel (the kingdom of God) as His battle-axe and weapon of war to tear down nations and destroy kingdoms (Jeremiah 51:19-20). Will there be a future world empire over which the “*antichrist*” will reign? Not according to Daniel! The prophet said that in the days of Rome the kingdom of God would destroy the image that represents world empireism. Thus it is the case that world dominance by any one person or nation died with Rome – AD476 – never to be revived! There have been plenty that have tried to revive world empires, but try as they might, they will never succeed. Not Charlemagne, Napoleon, Hitler, Islam, or One Worldism.

In short, the kingdom of God, which began during the empire of Rome, is the only empire to remain without fear of being destroyed. What is this kingdom that now exists? It is the church of Christ. The Bible uses a family of words that all refer to the same spiritual institution – body, family, temple, house, church, kingdom, etc. As an organization, the church of Christ, which is also the body of Christ, consists of those “*called out*” of spiritual darkness into God’s marvelous light. As a government with Christ now at this time reigning as king on David’s throne at the right hand of God, it is the kingdom of God.

This being the case, there can be NO future kingdom of Christ yet to come at Jerusalem. Nor can there be a future world empire over which the “*antichrist*” will reign. Because the kingdom of God came in the days of Roman rule and was established on Pentecost AD30 (Acts 2:16-47), God’s eternal plan and purpose would not allow for some future individual called “*the antichrist*.” God’s plan called for the gospel to draw all men unto Him (Romans 1:16). To deny what Daniel plainly teaches about the non-existence of future world kingdoms and the establishment of the one church of Christ in the first century is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

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Concerning.....*

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