

The Antichrist

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Christ vs. Antichrist

- Human history is a conflict between the city of God and the city of man.
- This conflict is leading up to a final battle between Christ and Antichrist.
- This villain is called by various titles:
 - “the man of lawlessness” (2 Thess 2:3-4)
 - “the beast” (Dan 7, Revelation 13)
 - “the antichrist” (1 John 2:18)

Various views about Antichrist

- **Some church fathers:** Antichrist would be apostate Jew taking over Roman Empire
- **Medieval church:** Antichrist was the latest attacker on Christian lands (Attila, caliphs)
- **Reformation:** Antichrist was the papacy
- **Catholics:** Protestants were paving the way for the final rebellion of Antichrist
- **Preterists:** Antichrist prophecies were fulfilled in actions of Nero and Titus

Main Fact About Antichrist:

He loses!!

- The beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire (Dan 7:11).
- His power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever (Dan 7:26).
- Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power (Dan 8:25)
- 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).

Preview of Antichrist: Antiochus IV Epiphanes

- Reigned 170-164 BC
- Propaganda & pressure for Greek humanism
- Replaced rightful high priest with a phony
- Declared himself to be Ephiphanes (“deity revealed”), Zeus made manifest.
- Abomination: built altar to Zeus in the Jerusalem temple and sacrificed pigs there.
- Banned Sabbath, Scripture, & circumcision
- Ferocious persecution
- Defeated by Maccabees; died suddenly
- Jerusalem temple cleansed and restored

Facts about Antichrist

1. Claims to be God
2. Backed by Satan
3. Clever counterfeiter
4. Vicious persecutor
5. Commits hideous abomination
6. Heads global attack against believers

Antichrist loses; Christ wins.

1. Claims to be God

Speaking of “the man of lawlessness,” Paul says, “He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

“All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast” (Rev 13:8).

Worshiping big government

- Antichrist is last and worst of a long line
- Pharoahs, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Alexander, Antiochus, Roman emperors
- Hitler, Stalin, Mao, North Korea's Kim
- “The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard of things against the God of gods... He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers ... nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all” (Daniel 11:36-37).

2. Backed by Satan

Daniel 8:24 says of Antiochus, “He will become very strong, but not by his own power.” Pagan humanism was not just human; it was backed by demonic power.

The final Antichrist will also get his power from the realm of devils, even as he claims to offer enlightened humanism and new, improved religion. Revelation 13:2 speaks of Satan as a dragon and says, “The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.”

Humanism's Satanic backing

Humanist Manifesto: “We consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate... Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement.”

Are humanists affirming humanity—or causing hellish trouble for humanity?

Prince of this world

Persian high culture backed by unseen
“prince of Persia” (Daniel 10:13)

Alexander portrayed conquests and cult of emperor worship as a way to spread enlightened Greek culture, but Greek humanism wasn't just human. Backed by a **“prince of Greece”** (Dan 10:20).

Rejecting God's rule doesn't make man supreme; it means yielding to demons. Antichrist will be agent of Satan himself.

3. Deadly deceiver

- Jesus called Satan “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44). Satan will help Antichrist to tell cunning lies and to fool people.
- Daniel said of Antiochus, “He will cause deceit to prosper” (8:25).
- “The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing” (2 Thess 2:9-10).

Fake resurrection & false prophet

- In the vision of Revelation, the beast suffers an apparently fatal wound but then is healed and gains greater power than ever.
- Like Antiochus, he will set up a religious leader who is in his pocket.
- Sidekick in miracles and speeches: **the false prophet** “performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven in full view of men... he deceived the inhabitants of the earth” (Rev 13:13-14).

Resist deceivers in our own time

- Jesus: “False Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible” (Matthew 24:24).
- “As you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now **many antichrists** have come... Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist” (1 John 2:18,22).

The spirit of antichrist

- 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 (1 John 4:3).
- Every religion that denies Jesus as God and Savior is a preview version of Antichrist: Arius, Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarian
- Every government that opposes Jesus' rule and encourages worship of big secular government is a preview version of Antichrist.

4. Vicious persecutor

The beast “was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them... all who refused to worship the image [were] killed... no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name... It is man’s number. His number is 666 (Revelation 13:7,15-17).

Great Tribulation

“There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then.” (Daniel 12:1)

“There will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.” (Matt 24:21-22)

5. Abomination of desolation

Hideous sacrilege to defile what is most holy:
“They will set up the abomination that causes desolation... but the people who know their God will firmly resist him” (Daniel 11:31-32).

This would happen on three main occasions:

- 168 BC Antiochus desecrated the temple
- 70 AD Titus destroyed the temple
- Near history's end Final abomination

Antiochus' abomination in 168 BC

Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple in Jerusalem with pagan altars and pigs' blood. That abomination matched Daniel's vision, but more would come.

Titus' abomination in 70 A.D.

- Jesus warned his generation that they would “see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel” (Matt 24:15).
Jesus warned that the temple would be destroyed, and Jerusalem would suffer horribly.
- This came true in 70 A.D. when Roman legions led by Titus marched into the holy city and the holy temple with images of the “divine” emperor. Titus massacred many and destroyed the temple.

Final abomination

- Antichrist “sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thess 2:4).
- Whether this happens in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem or in the upper leadership of the Christian church, Antichrist will twist what ought to be holy and healthy into a filthy horror.
- Many will see it as a proof that faith is folly.
- But what it really means is that the Antichrist has just pinned a target to his chest, and God is taking aim.

Present-day abomination

- Educators & entertainers mock God
- Churches bless things such as homosexual marriage that Scripture calls abomination.
- Persisting in sin and unbelief leads further: “They perish because they refused 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 Thess 2:10-12).

6. Global military attack

Will claim rule over a united international community with a multi-national military that seeks to wipe out God's faithful.

“He will invade many countries and will sweep through them like a flood. He will also invade the Beautiful Land [Israel]... he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many (Dan 11:40-44).

Armageddon

Revelation foresees “spirits of demons performing miraculous signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for battle on the great day of God Almighty... Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon... They will make war against the Lamb [Jesus Christ], but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen, and faithful followers (Revelation 16:14-16,17:15).

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- Whatever you forget or can't understand about Antichrist, remember this: **he loses!**
- “He will come to his end, with no one to help.” (Daniel 11:45)
- Just when Antichrist thinks that the whole world is his and that he can defeat even the Lord, he will find out the hard way that nobody defeats the Almighty.

Armies of heaven

“The armies of heaven were following him... I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gather together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet... The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur” (Revelation 19:11-20).

Easy victory for Jesus

- 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).
- If history's worst tyrant will lose, we can be sure lesser tyrants will also lose. If Satan's best shot will fail, then we can be sure his lesser, limited attempts will fail.

Everlasting kingdom

I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire... I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom will never be destroyed. (Daniel 7:11-14).