

2nd Coming of Christ

Session 2

The Antichrist: How Will We Recognize Him?

Warm-up Question: When you were a child, which Disney character was your favorite bad guy and why?

Where is the World Going?

This is a big question, for if we can correctly answer this, we can more easily see and deduce how the future will play out, especially as we have different prophecies along the way that give us light on a dark path. To see where the world is going, we must look at the agenda of Satan. The Biblical worldview is that Satan is at war with God and has managed, through man's giving into temptation in the Garden of Eden, to gain control over Planet Earth:

¹⁹ We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one (1 John 5:19).

If we can believe that this scripture is true, what do you think is Satan's aim or end goal in the days in which we live?

In the wilderness temptation of Christ, Satan, the evil one, led Christ up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to Jesus, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, **for it has been given to me**, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours" (Luke 4:6-7 Emphasis mine). The temptation was for Christ to gain dominion of the world but under Satan's authority. Note that Jesus did not dispute this claim of Satan's to have been given the kingdoms of this world. The point I am making is that this world is under Satan's control. So, what is Satan's agenda? Isaiah the prophet talks about what is in his heart and motivation. It is clear that Satan's objective and agenda is to be like God:

¹² How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! ¹³ You said in your heart, "**I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly**, on the utmost heights of Mount

Zaphon. ¹⁴ I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; **I will make myself like the Most High.**" ¹⁵ But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit. ¹⁶ Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: "Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, ¹⁷ the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?" (Isaiah 14:12-17).

We see from the above passage that Satan's objective is to gain the throne of the world and for everyone on planet earth to reject Christ and worship Satan. There is a spiritual enemy that is seeking to bring about complete control of the earth and its resources under one head, Satan, Antichrist and his False Prophet. We see in these three personages a trinity of evil that has a unified objective, to bring about a one world government and have Antichrist at the head. He wants to make himself like the Most High and sit enthroned on the mount of assembly (Isaiah 14:13). Where is the Mount of Assembly? There is only one place on Earth where God has chosen to dwell, on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:2), the place where Abraham offered up his son, Isaac. It was at Mount Moriah in Jerusalem where Solomon was told to build a temple to the Lord (2 Chronicles 3:1). The second temple, restored by King Herod, was destroyed in 70AD and now, at the center of Jerusalem, the 32 acre Temple Mount is still there, but there are two mosques there and no temple to God. It is at that place where God had promised Solomon and the Jewish people that His Name would always be there, and that His eyes and heart will watch over that place:

I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart **will always be there**" (2 Chronicles 7:16).

This is the same place where Satan wants the world to worship him and finally put his finger up to God, so to speak. His pride and vanity longs to sit in the very temple of God and receive adulation as the king of the world. This is where our enemy, Satan, and his world leader, Antichrist, are planning to take control and rule the world. God, for His own reasons, will allow Satan

to sit in a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. Paul the apostle writes about what Satan's man, the Antichrist, will do:

⁴ 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).

Antichrist will be a man that is totally ego-centric. He will exalt himself above all things that are godly. This act of self-adulation is the same thing we read about in the Book of Revelation, where we are told that there will come a time when a religious figure (the False Prophet) will set up an image of the Antichrist in the temple of God. This image is given "breath" and an ability to speak. The image that is set up will in some way cause all who refuse to worship the image to be killed:

....It (the second beast, a man called the False Prophet, Revelation 19:20) ordered them to set up an image in honor of the beast (Antichrist) who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵ The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, **so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed** (Revelation 13:14-15 Emphasis mine).

What kind of image do you think this could be? Do we have this kind of technology today?

This could be a hologram or a 3D image that is set up in the rebuilt temple of God. I presume that there is some link to the mark that is forced upon those who do not obey the Lord Jesus, that if at some point they do not worship Antichrist, they will be killed, perhaps by something in the mark itself. This kind of control will be one of the reasons why those who love and obey Christ will refuse the mark. This mark on the hand or forehead will bring about total control by the Antichrist and False Prophet.

Jesus also forewarned us about this event that would happen in the future. When His disciples asked the question, "what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Among a number of signs (which we will look at in a later session), He said,

"So 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 in Judea flee to the mountains....." (Matthew 24:15).

The word *Abomination* in Greek is "*Bdelygma*;" from *bdelyssomai*, to turn away through loathing or disgust, abhor. An abominable thing.¹ This is an important warning from Jesus, because He adds the words, "let the reader understand." So what is it that we are to understand? We need to go back to the prophecies of Daniel and look at a passage in Daniel 9:

²⁷ 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).

For the sake of time, I won't go into the bulk of the prophecy. I don't want to answer questions that you are not asking. You will notice that I took out verse 27 from a longer prophecy about 70 weeks of years (literally seventy sevens) that were pronounced on the Jewish people. If you wanted to explore it further, just Google the words, *the Seventy Weeks of Daniel*, and you will come up with many thoughts to explore in depth. My focus in this session is on verse 27. We are told of a leader that will come who will desecrate the temple of God in Jerusalem. The sacrifices and offerings to God will be stopped, and he will set up what is called "the Abomination of Desolation." I believe this leader to be Antichrist fulfilling the desires of his master Satan to sit enthroned in the temple of God in Jerusalem.

How Will We Recognize Antichrist?

If you were to speak to a Jewish historian about Daniel's prophecy of the Abomination of Desolation, not knowing the prophecy of Jesus or Paul (It is forbidden for Jews to read the New Testament), he would tell you that it was fulfilled by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, an evil Greek king that ruled over Syria and the Israelite nation after the breakup of Alexander the Great's kingdom from 171BC to 165BC. Antiochus believed he was a god, even to the point of putting the word for God into his name, changing it to Antiochus Theos Epiphanes. He believed that everybody should know that he was "Antiochus the visible god." Antiochus not only signed a peace treaty with Israel, but broke the peace treaty in 168 BC and set up a statue of Zeus in the Temple Courts with its face looking like Antiochus. He then

¹ Key Word Study Bible, AMG Publishers, New Testament Lexical Aids, Page 1598

proceeded to sacrifice a pig to this statue and took the blood of the pig and sprinkled it in the Most Holy of Holies there in the Temple of Jerusalem. He then tried to force everyone to worship the statue of Zeus with his face on it. Jewish people call this the Abomination of Desolation. God raised up a man, Judas Maccabeus, to rally the Jewish people to fight and finally overcome Antiochus, and to cleanse the Temple. This is what the Jewish people celebrate at Hanukah.

We know that there has to be something else, because Jesus said that the Abomination of Desolation was still future from his time, being 200 years later than Antiochus Epiphanes. Paul also seems to refer to something that was still yet future that is very similar to what happened at the hands of Antiochus. Paul, being a learned man, would have been very familiar with what happened more than 200 years before his time.

This is what scholars call a law of double fulfillment; a partial or shadow fulfillment in the past that speaks of a more complete fulfillment that is still to be in the future. This kind of partial fulfillment is written of by the apostle Peter of what happened on the Day of Pentecost, ten days after the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father.

¹⁴ But Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them: “Jewish men and all you residents of Jerusalem, let this be known to you and pay attention to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it’s only nine in the morning. ¹⁶ On the contrary, this is what was **spoken through the prophet Joel**: ¹⁷ And it will be **in the last days**, says God, that I will **pour out My Spirit on all humanity**; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ I will even pour out My Spirit on my male and female slaves in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ **I will display wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below**: blood and fire and a cloud of smoke. ²⁰ **The sun will be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and remarkable day of the Lord comes**; ²¹ then whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Acts 2:14-21).

Notice that the prophecy that Peter referenced was only partially fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. The wonders in the heaven and signs on the earth, and the sun turning to darkness are still yet future. Jesus told us to expect it just before He returned to earth to gather His saints

(Matthew 24:29-31). I believe that the complete fulfillment will happen at some time during the seven year period, the scripture says that it will happen before the Day of the Lord (verse 20). This is what we mean by the law of double fulfillment.

If it is true that Joel’s prophecy of the Spirit being poured out on all humanity was just a partial fulfillment, what will the full fulfillment look like if it is yet future?

Daniel’s Week of Years

The important two things for us to take from Daniel’s prophecy in chapter nine, verse twenty seven, is that there will be a seven year period that starts with a peace treaty set up by this leader, the little horn that came up amongst a group of ten nations, the one called the Antichrist (Daniel 7:20-21). We are told that in the middle of the seven years (Daniel 9:27), there will be an Abomination of Desolation. Do you remember in the last study we saw Daniel referring to a time he called “time, times, and half a time?” (Daniel 7:25, and 12:7 and also Revelation 12:14) Then we also saw in Revelation 13:5, that he would exercise his power for 42 months. Here again in this passage of Daniel 9:27, we are given the same amount of time—half of seven years is three and a half years. This is the same time and same event that Jesus and Paul talked about, the seating of Antichrist in the temple with his prophet setting up an image to him. It is at that point where Jesus said there will be a great tribulation (Matthew 24:15, King James Version uses the word tribulation). The New International Version translates this as great distress. This will be a dangerous time for the people of God. It is an important point for us to realize that in scripture, the whole of the seven years is never referred to as the Tribulation. Only the last three and a half years is ever spoken of as the Tribulation. Jesus, as we said, warned us that when we see the Abomination of Desolation then would be great tribulation. We will look at this further in our next study. Those of you that are serious students of the Bible, I challenge you to show me one passage of scripture that says that the seven year period is called the Tribulation. Jesus Himself called the signs of the times before the mid point, “the beginning of birth pains” (Matthew 24:8).

So How Will We Recognize the Antichrist?

We will certainly know him when he confirms a peace treaty or a covenant in the Middle East. I believe that he will give something to the Jews that they will want and

something to the Palestinian people that they also long for. What the Jewish people want is secure borders or security and a temple to God rebuilt. What the Palestinians want is to have their own state on what is known as the West Bank of the Jordan River, and for their capital to be East Jerusalem.



Somehow he will bring the two sides together and forge a peace treaty or covenant (A covenant is a legal binding agreement between certain parties) between them. The first three and a half years of this treaty will see the rebuilding of the temple, among other things that will be going on in the world. Three and a half years into this period, according to the prophecy of Daniel, he will stop the sacrifices, break the treaty and set up an image to himself in the Holy Place, desiring that all will worship him as Paul and Jesus both spoke about. This peace treaty and subsequent breaking of the covenant will be one of the ways we will recognize him. Have you noticed how that several American presidents have tried to bring about a peace treaty between the two parties concerned? It may yet be a European president that will achieve a peace treaty, but so far it has only been American presidents Carter and Clinton that have succeeded, but only then a limited peace treaty. It has never been between all parties in the Middle East.

What Will the Antichrist Do?

He is called by a number of names in the scripture, the apostle John is the only one to call him the Antichrist and only in his letters or epistles that are just before the Book of Revelation (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; and 2 John 7). The word suggests that he is one opposed to God, but the prefix anti can also mean “instead of.” When

God gave the apostle John the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation, the Antichrist is referred to as the Beast (Revelation 13:1). Paul the apostle calls him by two different names, “the man of lawlessness” (2 Thessalonians 2:3), and “the lawless one” (2 Thessalonians 2:8, 9). Most Bible scholars believe that he will oppose Christ, but at the same time pass himself off as Christ. When the disciples asked Jesus what would be the sign of His coming, He responded saying “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:4-5). As we get closer to the end-time there will be a number of people claiming that they are the anointed one of God (The word Christ or Messiah literally means “the anointed one”). This will culminate in the one who will act and claim that he is Christ.

John Phillips, in his book *Exploring the Future*, says this of the Antichrist:

The Antichrist will be an attractive and charismatic figure, a genius, a demon-controlled, devil-taught charmer of men. He will have answers to the horrendous problems of mankind. He will be all things to all men: a political statesman, a social lion, a financial wizard, an intellectual giant, a religious deceiver, a masterful orator, a gifted organizer. He will be Satan’s masterpiece of deception, the world’s false messiah. With boundless enthusiasm the masses will follow him and readily enthrone him in their hearts as this world’s savior and god.²

As we mentioned in the last study, the Antichrist is referred to as a “little horn” that arises among ten other “horns” or kings (Daniel 7:7-8). I believe this to be an indication that others will create the structure of a ten nation confederacy before Antichrist arises, and that he will take over the reins and complete the structure into a one-world government. With his gift of statesmanship and oratory he will draw the majority of people to himself. The angel that speaks to the apostle John in the Book of Revelation, says that the Beast (Antichrist) arises out of the sea (Revelation 13:1). Oftentimes when scripture speaks of the sea, it is a figure of speech indicating tumultuous times, or difficult times. It was Rahm Emanuel, the former Chief of Staff to President Barack Obama, who said, “You never let a serious crisis go to waste. What I mean by that is that it’s an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.” It

² John Phillips, *Exploring the Future: A Comprehensive Guide to Biblical Prophecy* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003), Page 272.

is very possible that the next serious crisis, whatever it is, will be used to engineer the world coming together under the banner of a world government with a world currency. What we do know from scripture is that there will be a situation in the end-time where the world will completely do away with cash. At the moment, you can go anywhere in the world with American dollars on your person and you will be able to buy anything anywhere in the world. At the moment, the world's reserve currency is the American dollar, but what would happen if confidence in the dollar was to collapse....?

We are already being set up for a cashless society. I read in Time Magazine, dated February 21, 2011, Page 58, that a new chip is being embedded in smart phones which allows US consumers to leave their wallets at home. Doug Aamoth writes:

“Which are you more likely to have with you at any given moment—your cell phone or your wallet? Soon you may be able to ditch your billfold altogether and pay for things with a quick wave of your smart phone over an electronic scanner.

In January, Starbucks announced that customers could start using a bar-code app on their phone to buy coffee in some 6,800 of its stores. This is the first big pay-by-phone initiative in the U.S., but we're likely to see wireless payment options as something called near field communications (NFC) gets embedded into America's consumer electronics. In December, Google unveiled its Nexus S smart phone, which contains an NFC chip. The next iPhone is rumored to have one too, as are several Blackberry models that are due out this year.

Already in use in parts of Asia and Europe, NFC allows shoppers to wave their phones a few inches above a payment terminal—a contact free system built for speed and simplicity.”

There are all kinds of scenarios which would bring about a crisis, so it is difficult to pinpoint one particular thing that will bring about the little horn, Antichrist, to be revealed among ten others. But it very likely could be a crisis with the dollar. David Rockefeller, the financier, in a speech in 1994 to the United Nations, said “All we need is the right major crisis, and the nations will accept the New World Order.” The nations of the world have just about all become indebted to the banks, including the United States. Did you know that the Federal Reserve is not owned by the United States? The Federal government borrows money, at interest, from

the Federal Reserve, a private bank consortium that was given power to oversee the nation's money supply in 1913 by President Woodrow Wilson. The Federal Reserve is as much federal as Federal Express. By restricting or contracting the money supply a financial crisis can be brought about. Any time the bankers want, they can call your debt. The Bible says that the debtor is slave to the lender (Proverbs 22:7). Those of us who are Christians should be getting out of debt as soon as we possibly can.

His Number will be 666

¹⁸ This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666 (Revelation 13:18)

I take this passage as a hint from the Lord as to the identity of the Antichrist. In the Hebrew and Greek language, the letters of the alphabet have numbers. When a name is spelled out, each letter has a different number. When calculated together, the Antichrist's name will work out to be 666. David Jeremiah has some interesting thoughts on the number 666:

Revelation 13:18, however, does give us a clue to the number's meaning when it tells us that 666 is “the number of a man.” To realize the implication of that, let's first consider another number—the number seven. Seven is considered the number of completeness. The Bible often uses the number seven in reference to God or God-related things. God rested on the seventh day. The temple candlestick held seven candles. Christ addressed seven churches in Revelation. Revelation speaks of seven spirits before God's throne, seven golden candlesticks, seven seals, seven thunders, seven angels, seven trumpets, and seven vials. The number six, on the other hand, being one short of seven, is a number of incompleteness. Thus man, being in the image of God but not God, is associated with the number six. Man was created on the sixth day. He is enjoined to work six of seven days. Even the largest man described in the Bible, the giant Goliath, was not a seven; he was just a combination of sixes. He measured six cubits in height, carried a spear head weighing six shekels, and wore six pieces of armor. No matter how big a man is, or thinks he is, he is still not God; he is merely a man. The number 666 designates man to the triple. Here is the best man can be without God—the ultimate in human ingenuity and competence elevated to the point where he thinks he is a god. But he is not God. He is still incomplete, imperfect. No matter how high the pedestal, the best he can be is a string of sixes; he is not and can never be a seven. Can you

see how that number characterizes the Antichrist.³

Some think that our personal identification number will change to be three groups of six digits when we come into a world currency based on digital money. At first it will be on our phones. Perhaps the signature for whatever we buy with our phones will be the chip that they want to place within us. It is evident though, that there will be believers in Christ who will gain victory over the beast and his image and over the number of his name:

² And I saw what looked like a sea of glass glowing with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and its image and over the number of its name. They held harps given them by God ³ and sang the song of God's servant Moses and of the Lamb (Revelation 15:2-3).

What could God hope to achieve by allowing some of His people to be around during that time?

There are some believers who will go through this time, for scripture says, "This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus (Revelation 14:12).

Antichrist's attitude and character will change in the middle of the seven years, Daniel's 70th week. Perhaps the demons within him will take more of his personality. After his great masterful act of statesmanship and diplomacy by bringing about the peace treaty in Jerusalem, he will be moved by Satan to fulfill his master's desire to sit in the temple of God and command the Jews to worship him. At that point, all those that are faithful to the God of Gods and the King of Kings, Jews and Gentiles, will refuse. It is then that a great persecution (tribulation) will take place all over the world such as not been seen before or will be again. This persecution, tribulation or time of distress, is the same one that Jesus warned those who are in Judea and Jerusalem to get out of the city:

"So when you see **standing in the holy place** 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—¹⁶ **then**

let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁷ Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. ¹⁸ Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. ¹⁹ How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! ²⁰ Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. ²¹ **For then** there will be **great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world** until now—and never to be equaled again. ²² "If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but **for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.** ²³ At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵ See, I have told you ahead of time (Matthew 24:15-25 Emphasis mine).

One question that I have reserved for our next session is the question about the Rapture. What does the Bible say about the hope of the Christian, the Rapture of the Saints? Does scripture talk about the timing of the Rapture? Please do not miss the next session when we explore together this very important topic. All of what God has told us about the future ahead of time seems scary as we read about it, but there is much to be thankful for, for the Bible says that "God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation (deliverance) through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9). Encourage yourself with His words. If you are a Christian, you have nothing to fear, in fact, as you see these things beginning to take place you should lift up your heads for your redemption is drawing near (Luke 21:28).

Have you ever placed your life in Christ's hands? God loves you and longs for you to invite Him into your life. Why don't you do it tonight? Why wait any longer?

Prayer: Father, I come to you now in the name of Jesus. Come into my life. I want to turn from my sin and have You sitting on the throne of my life. Forgive me my sin (Specific sins that weigh heavy on you should be confessed and forsaken) and fill me with your Spirit. I want to know you and experience your power in my life. Amen!

³ David Jeremiah, The Coming Economic Armageddon, Faith Words Publishers, Page 148.

Keith Thomas
Email: kthomas@miamivineyard.com
Email: keiththomas7@gmail.com
Website for more Bible studies: www.groupbiblestudy.com