

ARE WE LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS?

Session Eight: Daniel 11 and Revelation 13—The Antichrist Unmasked

The Bible predicts that in the last days a charismatic leader will rise to power and establish a global following. In one recent poll, 49% of Americans say they believe there will be an Antichrist sometime in the future.

Another poll revealed that 19% of Americans believe the Antichrist is on the earth right now. Among Christians who accept biblical prophecy, 50% believe the Antichrist is alive today.

• **What is your reaction to these statistics? How close do you think we are to the time the Antichrist will come?**

The Antichrist is described in both the Old and New Testaments. In fact, over 100 passages of Scripture give us the details—his origin, nationality, career, character, kingdom, accomplishments, treachery, and his final doom. He is discussed in-depth in the books of Revelation and Daniel. He's also referenced in 2 Thessalonians and in the book of 1 John.

In this session we're going to unmask the Antichrist and his agenda.

Five Things to Know about the Antichrist:

1. The Antichrist will be empowered by Satan himself.

In the word *Antichrist*, the prefix *anti* has two different meanings. It can mean *one who is opposed to Christ* or it can mean *one who comes as a substitute for Christ*.

Dwight Pentecost puts it this way, "*Satan is seeking to give the world a ruler in the place of Christ—who will be in opposition to Christ—so that he can rule over the world instead of Christ.*"

In Revelation 13:1-2, John introduces the Antichrist as a beast: "*I stood upon the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.... The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.*"

Sea is frequently used in the Old Testament as a reference to the Gentile nations. John saw the Antichrist emerging from the Gentile nations. The term *beast* does not refer to the Antichrist's appearance. He will likely be very handsome, charismatic, and will look great on television.

Rather, the term *beast* refers to the Antichrist's *character*. Notice what John says about him: "*The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.*"

Who is the dragon? He's identified in Revelation 12:9: "*This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the Devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to earth with all his angels.*"

The Antichrist will be Satan's man—the embodiment of evil and rebellion. But he will be cleverly disguised as a dynamic, visionary leader who will astound the world with solutions to problems.

He'll do what no one else has been able to do. He'll persuade Israel and the Arab nations to sign a seven-year peace accord. Daniel 9:27 says: "*He (the Antichrist) will confirm the covenant with many (Israel) for one week (seven years.)*"

People will then hail him as the messiah. Revelation 13:4 says: *So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"*

That's the whole point of the masquerade! Satan has always wanted to be worshiped. That's why he was thrown out of heaven. He wanted to be equal with God and worshiped like God.

But at the end of 3 1/2 years, the Antichrist will reveal his true character as Satan's man. He'll break the treaty and plunge the world into war. Daniel 7:23 talks about the empire of the Antichrist: "*It will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.*"

2. The Antichrist will kill followers of Jesus.

Revelation 13:7 says: "*It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them.*"

In the New Testament, a follower of Jesus Christ is called a saint. The apostle Paul consistently used this word in his letters:

Romans 1:7: "*To all who be in Rome, Beloved of God, called to be Saints.*"

1 Corinthians 1: 2: "*Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints.*"

Ephesians 1:1: "*Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the Saints which are at Ephesus.*"

Philippians 1:1: "*Paul and Timothy, the servants of Jesus Christ to all the Saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi.*"

Colossians 1:2: "*To the Saints and Faithful Brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.*"

It's important for us to understand that by the time the Antichrist comes on the scene, the Christians have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The Rapture has happened. But there will be many who will come to faith during the Tribulation period, and many of them will be martyred.

Revelation 20:4 tells us how these followers of Jesus will be martyred. John writes: "*And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus, for proclaiming the word of God.*"

Jesus said this about the last days in John 16:2-3: "*The time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing God a service. This is because they have never known the Father or me.*"

3. The Antichrist will set himself squarely against Yahweh.

Daniel 11:36-38 gives us some interesting details about the Antichrist: "*The king (the Antichrist) will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak blasphemies against the God of gods (Yahweh). He will be successful until the time of wrath (Tribulation) is completed, for what has been determined must take place. He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers, nor the desire or women, nor regard any god, for he shall magnify himself above them all. Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses, a god his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones, and treasures.*"

Notice in these two verses:

- a. The Antichrist does according to his own will. He's arrogant and self-exalting.

- b. He will speak blasphemies against Yahweh, the one true God.
- c. He will prosper in all that he does until the time of wrath (the seven-year Tribulation) is finished—when Jesus returns.

But notice particularly what follows in these verses:

- d. The Antichrist will show no regard for the gods of his fathers.

Some say that means that the Antichrist will reject the religion of his youth—the religion of his father or grandfather. But the phrase *the gods of his fathers* in Hebrew is *elohim ab*. This phrase is used frequently throughout the Bible, and every time it is used, it's a reference to Yahweh.

- e. The Antichrist will show no regard for the desire of women. Some interpret this to mean that the Antichrist will be a homosexual.

But *the desire of women* is a Hebrew phrase referencing the Messiah. The desire of every Jewish woman was to bear the Messiah. This desire of Jewish women was realized and fulfilled in Mary, the mother of Jesus.

• Ultimately, who then is the Antichrist rejecting?

So far we see that the Antichrist rejects Yahweh—God the Father, and Jesus—God the Son. 1 John 2:22-23 says, “*Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.*”

- f. The Antichrist does not regard any god.

But in Daniel 11:38, we see that there is one god whom the Antichrist greatly honors: “*He will honor a god of fortresses.*” The King James Version translates this as *a god of forces*. This is a god of war.

But at some point, the Antichrist will proclaim *himself* god. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, Paul writes: “*Let no one in any way deceive you, for the Day of the Lord will not come until there is a great rebellion against God, and the man of lawlessness (the Antichrist) is revealed—the one who brings destruction. He will exalt himself and defy every god there is and tear down every object of adoration and worship. He will position himself in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.*”

For the Antichrist to position himself in the temple of God means that sometime during the seven-year Tribulation period, the temple must be rebuilt.

A little history:

Solomon's temple was destroyed by Babylon in 586 B.C. Herod's temple was destroyed by Rome in 70 A.D. For centuries there has been no hint of the Tribulation temple prophecies being fulfilled. The Jews were scattered throughout the world.

But since 1948, there has been a dramatic turn of events. The Jews now have their promised land and since 1967, they hold the actual site of Solomon and Herod's temples.

However, two Muslim shrines, the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque, now sit on the Temple Mount. The Arabs will certainly not stand by while their shrines are removed, and the Jews will not disturb them because an Israeli law forbids disturbing sites sacred to any religion.

Interestingly, a few years ago, the Muslims enlarged the area beneath the Temple Mount known as Solomon's Stables, and it will now accommodate up to 5,000 worshippers.

During the construction process, hundreds of tons of dirt, stones, and precious artifacts were hauled out and dumped. As a direct result, huge bulges developed in both the southern and eastern retaining walls of the Temple Mount.

A Bible verse concerning bulging walls is found in Isaiah 30:13: *“This iniquity will be to you like a breach about to fall, a bulge in a high wall, whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant.”*

Could this passage be prophetic? Israeli authorities say the Temple Mount is so unstable that even a small earthquake could bring down the Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock.

Meanwhile the Temple Institute, a non-profit organization founded in 1987 and dedicated to rebuilding the Jewish Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, announced in March, 2016, that it has compiled a list of Jewish priests who will be eligible to serve in the Temple. It includes those men who have a clear patriarchal heritage from the priestly class (descendants of Aaron) who were born and raised in Israel, and have observed the laws of purity incumbent upon priests. The Temple Institute has also recreated over 70 utensils fit for Temple service, including the gold menorah, the gem-encrusted breastplate of the high priest, musical instruments used by the Levites, and priestly garments.

The Bible is clear—the Temple will be rebuilt.

4. The Antichrist will dominate the globe.

Revelation 13:7 says, *“Authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.”* This is a one-world government. Some have termed it *the new world order*. Others call it *globalism*. We’re moving toward it right now.

A document entitled *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* was unanimously approved by the United Nations on September 25, 2015. The Preamble of the document calls it a *New Universal Agenda*.

This document calls for a world economic system, a world government, and a world religion to be established by 2030. Its preamble says, *“All countries and stakeholders, acting in a collaborative partnership, will implement this plan.”* U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said, *“The world is about to realize the dream of world peace and dignity for all.”*

On September 28, 2015, President Obama addressed the U.N. and said, *“Global integration (the merging of nations) is an agenda that transcends the narrowly defined interests of nation states.”* And on January 1, 2016, it was reported that this U.N. document is now in effect, and all nations are expected to make a strong push to bring it to pass.

Wittingly or unwittingly, those who seek god-like power to control every person on earth are preparing the way for Satan’s man of the Tribulation hour—Antichrist—who will usurp all earthly power and authority.

5. The Antichrist will have a powerful accomplice by his side: The False Prophet.

Revelation 13:11-14: *“Then I saw another beast come up out of the earth. He had two horns like those of a lamb, and he spoke with the voice of a dragon. He exercised all the authority of the first beast. And he required all the earth and those who belong to this world to worship the first beast...He did astounding miracles, such as making fire flash down to earth from heaven while everyone was watching. And with all the miracles he was allowed to perform on behalf of the first beast, he deceived all the people who belong to this world. He ordered the people of the world to make a great statue of the first beast, who was fatally wounded and then came back to life.”*

This is the False Prophet. If you add Satan—the dragon—to the mix, you have an *unholy trinity*. Our God exists in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Satan wants a trinity, too. So you have Satan in the place of God, the Father, Antichrist in the place of Jesus Christ, and the False Prophet in the place of the Holy Spirit.

These three evil ones will work together to accomplish their agenda.

A new religion will come on the scene that everyone can embrace. Throughout much of the world right now, there's the growing belief that all religions are valid expressions of truth, and each one has something unique to contribute. The central elements of the one-world religion are tolerance, understanding, diversity, and pluralism.

This one-world religion will be Christ-less. Followers of Jesus who dare to affirm biblical absolutes will not be tolerated. Americans are now being conditioned to bow only at the altar of the politically correct, non-sectarian, government god who has no connection with Jesus Christ.

Satan and his demons are on the move.

During the summer of 2015, just weeks after the heartbreaking videos of Planned Parenthood were exposed, the Empire State Building was lit up with the face of Kali, a powerful and ruthless demon goddess of Hinduism. This demon has a passion for blood and wears a belt of severed heads.

Up until recently, plans had been made for a life-sized reproduction of the gates to the Temple of Baal to be built in Times Square in 2016. For some reason, those plans were cancelled. Michael Snyder wrote this on the blog *End of the American Dream*: “*Most non-religious Americans don't understand who Baal was, nor do they really care. But the truth is that many of the elements of ancient Baal worship are being mirrored in our society in 2016.*”

WND columnist Matt Barber elaborates on some of the elements of Baal worship:

The principal pillars of Baalism were child sacrifice, sexual immorality (both heterosexual and homosexual) and pantheism (reverence of creation over the Creator).

Ritualistic Baal worship looked a little like this: Adults would gather around the altar of Baal. Infants would then be burned alive as a sacrificial offering to the deity. Amid horrific screams and the stench of charred human flesh, congregants—men and women alike—would engage in bisexual orgies. The ritual was intended to produce economic prosperity by prompting Baal to bring rain for the fertility of “mother earth.”

Thankfully, our churches in America haven't sunk to those depths but many mainline churches and clergy are participating in the *slide* to a one-world religion. False teacher Tony Campolo says, “*Going to heaven is like going to Philadelphia...There are many ways...It doesn't make any difference how we go there. We all end up in the same place.*” False teacher Brian McLaren says, “*The Bible is not an accurate, absolute, authoritative book. It's a book to be experienced, and one experience can be as valid as any other can. No doctrines are to be absolute, and truth or doctrine must be considered only with personal experiences. The Bible is not an answer book.*”

Deceptions and false teachings are also present in evangelical and nonaligned churches.

Instead of relying on the power of God's Word, some evangelical pastors are turning their worship services into an hour of entertainment. Some have removed the cross from their sanctuaries in order to attract those who might be offended by such Christian symbols.

Pope Francis has not been silent either. In March of 2013, shortly after his election to the papacy, he declared that Christians and Muslims worship the same God. In June of 2014, he authorized Islamic prayers and readings from the Qur'an at Vatican services. In November of 2015, he denounced the **fundamentalists** in Christianity who **believe in absolute truth**.

The groundwork is being laid for a one-world religion.

- **Does it make a difference if people embrace the one-world religion during the time of the Tribulation or if they embrace it today?**

- **Do you think those who follow Jesus, yet join with a church or denomination they know has gone over to the enemy, are on a dangerous path? Why or why not?**

- **David Barnhart writes: “Any church where the true preaching of the Word is not central in all it does is doomed to fail in its mission, no matter what approach it uses. Today many churches are highly successful in drawing crowds and entertaining them, but total failures when it comes to seeing lives transformed through the life-changing power of the Gospel.” Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?**

The battle for the church and the nation is being fought today whether we like it or not—and whether we want to be part of it or not. And the truth is: We’re either standing for Jesus Christ in this battle or we’re not!

As powerful as the Antichrist’s empire will be, it will come down quickly when Jesus returns.

Revelation 19:20 says, “*The beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*”

They are the first ones cast into the lake of fire. Satan’s time will come later.

As you and I witness the unfolding of end-time events, Hebrews 12:2 reminds us to “*fix our eyes on Jesus, the **author** and **finisher** of our faith.*”

If our names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, there is absolutely nothing to fear in these last days. As the **finisher of our faith**, Jesus will see us through to the end. Right now, He’s praying for us—and He’s getting our eternal home ready for us.

- **Thoughts or Questions**

Close in Prayer