

THE ANTICHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT (Part #2)

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There are many wonderful, positive things that people expect to happen in the future. A pregnant woman expects a future moment in which she will give birth. A young teen expects a future moment when he/she will drive and date. A young engaged couple expects a future moment when they will marry. But just as there are many positive things people expect in life, there are also some very negative things that some people expect. Some are expecting, in fact predicting a future moment of some nuclear holocaust. Some are expecting and predicting a future worldwide financial collapse. Some are expecting and predicting a future catastrophe of running out of oil. Many of these negative things could be classified as future speculation and opinion. But there are certain, specific negative future predictions that are not just opinion but they are Divine inspiration and Divine revelation. Many of these prophetic predictions center on a key person who is known by the title- “**The Antichrist.**”

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, He predicted there will eventually come to this earth a Great Tribulation, the likes of which the world has never, ever seen before, “not since the beginning of the world”(Matt.24:21). The key person who will dominate this period of time and play a key role in all of this terrible period of misery is “**The Antichrist.**”

When it comes to the subject of the Antichrist, there seems to be two extremes:

- 1) No interest in the real **Biblical** data about him- think in terms of Hollywood movies.
- 2) Over interest in Satan and his forces to the extent that one becomes a paranoid fanatic and excludes other important Bible books and doctrines.

We do not want to be guilty of either of these extremes, but we do want to know what God expects us to know about every subject in Scripture and one of those subjects He has put in Scripture is the subject of the Antichrist.

There are two key reasons why we study the Antichrist:

- 1) Because God has put information in His inspired word about the Antichrist- in fact, the reason for this very study is because we are in a study of the book of Revelation and came to chapter 13, which features him.
- 2) Because right now things are happening which make it clear that he will be on the scene soon. There is major movement in the Middle East and the “European Union” is right in the heart of the action. This is all setting the stage for the surfacing of this person.

Just as we saw last time in the Old Testament, so the New Testament also contains information about the Antichrist.

We would like to handle New Testament data about the Antichrist by asking and answering three questions:

QUESTION #1- What does the term “Anti Christ” actually mean?

The name “Antichrist” is a composite of two Greek words- the preposition “anti”(αντι) and the proper noun “Christ”(χριστος).

The preposition “anti”(αντι) means a couple of things. **First** it means to be against or in opposition to something. **Second** it means instead of or in the place of something or as a substitute for something(G. Abbott-Smith, Greek Lexicon, p.40).

The proper noun “Christ”(χριστος) refers to the fact that Jesus is the anointed Messiah of Israel(Ibid., pp.484-485). This proper noun is critical, because this very name Christ indicates there will be a strong connection this one will have to Israel.

Now in combining, these two words, “anti” and “Christ”, we get critical data about him.

The Antichrist is one who will try to take the place of Jesus Christ on earth, specifically as Israel’s deliverer, but he is actually in total opposition to Jesus Christ and to Israel.

QUESTION #2- What names are associated in the New Testament with the Antichrist?

There are at least ten titles or appellations given to the Antichrist in the New Testament. Each of these is designed to reveal things to us about his person, work and character.

Title #1- He is identified with “the abomination of desolation.” Mt.24:15

Even though this is more of action in which he will be involved, it is a term that is associated with the man who performs the action. The abomination of desolation is the moment when the Antichrist does the most detestable thing he can do, which is to sit himself in the Temple in Jerusalem and demand that he be worshipped as God. He will have built a good rapport with Israel, but he will turn viciously against her at this moment. This will be the moment that will kick off his Israelie extermination plot.

Title #2- He is identified as the “False Christ.” Mt.24:24

The actual Greek word for “false” is pseudos(ψευδος) which means one who in relationship to truth is false, one who is not true, one who is a liar(Smith, p.487). The Antichrist is the total antithesis of the true Messiah. He is, as Smith says, “a pretender to the Messianic office.” He is a liar from the beginning and any actual truth about Christ, he will actually be the antithesis of his character.

Title #3- He is identified as the one coming “in his own name.” John 5:43

He does not come to do God’s will, he comes to do his will. His whole purpose is to exalt his own name. He will not look out for any other than himself.

Title #4- He is identified as “the man of sin.” II Thessalonians 2:3

There is a slight manuscript difference on this title. Some manuscripts call him “man of lawlessness(ανομιας)” and others “man of sin(αμαρτιας).” Combined the two words mean this man will be one who is given to concrete sinning against the written word and law of God. This title means he will be an aggressive law breaker, an aggressive sinner against the word of God.

Title #5- He is identified as the “son of destruction” II Thessalonians 2:3

He will be the most destructive person to have ever lived on earth. He is so destructive, he is called destruction’s own son. The noun “destruction”(απωλεια) is a scary word, which carries with it the idea of destroying something to the point it is total waste, total loss, a complete perishing. This does not only have to do with things physical or temporal, but this word is also used for that which is eternal such as eternal destruction and eternal damnation(Smith, pp.56-57). The Antichrist will be given to destroying things physically and eternally. He will love destruction and promote it. He will accomplish this more than any other person in all of history.

Title #6- He is identified as the “Lawless one.” II Thessalonians 2:8

The emphasis of this Greek word “anomos”(ανομος) is that the Antichrist will be one who is constrained by no law of any kind, which means he is one given to wicked lawlessness(Smith, p.39)

Title #7- He is identified as the “Antichrist” I John 2:18; 2:22; II John 7

As we have already discussed, he will try to convince the world that he is the Messiah when he is just the opposite of the Messiah. Although the actual term “Antichrist” is only found in the N.T. in these references, obviously this evil man is graphically discussed in both Testaments.

Title #8- He is identified as a “liar” I John 2:22

Greek word for liar is pseudo(ψευδω) which means he is one who is a false, a liar who deceives others by his lying(Smith, p.488). This is a man who will use intentional lying as a means of deception. He will actually invent lies to deceive people. Both the O.T. and the N.T. testify of this important reality- he will be a very convincing liar.

Title #9- He is identified as a “deceiver”. II John 7

The word “deceiver”(πλανος) is one that means to lead people astray deceptively away from truth, whether in areas of religion or morals and especially in regard to Jesus Christ. It carries with it the idea of being deceptive by being an impostor(Smith, p.363). Just as Satan is out to deceive the whole world, so the Antichrist will have the very same agenda(Rev.12:9).

Title #10- He is identified as the “Beast”. Rev.11:7; 13:2

The noun “beast”(θηριον), which is used in both the O.T. and the N.T., is one that refers to a wild beast, which would appear to be known for vicious fighting(Smith, p.207). This is especially true in fighting against the truth of God(i.e. I Cor.15:32).

These titles give us clear insight as to what the Antichrist is really like.

QUESTION #3- What are key N.T. passages that give us insight into the Antichrist?

As we look into the New Testament, with the exception of Revelation 13, which we will look at next time, there are five critical passages we want to see.

ANTICHRIST NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE #1- Matthew 24:5,15

Jesus taught that just prior to His second coming(Mt.24:29-30), many would surface who would be a false Christ's, but **only one would surface who would be connected to “the abomination of desolation” which was predicted by Daniel the prophet.**

In Daniel 9:27, Daniel predicted that one would rise to power who would make a covenant with Israel for seven years, which includes her being able to restore worship. However, in the middle of the 7 years, he would put a stop to the offerings and he will set himself in the temple and demand that he be worshipped as God and this is what is called the “Abomination of Desolation.”

When Jewish people see this abomination, Jesus warns them to get out of Jerusalem as fast as they can, and flee to the mountains(Mt.24:16) because this Antichrist will go on a destructive rampage against Israel as never before seen in the history of the world(Mt.24:21-22). He will be, as one writer said, become a “savage persecutor” of Israel.

In the musical and movie Sound of Music, which is based on a true story, the story ends with the Von Trap family fleeing Austria by climbing up and over a mountain. In order to flee Nazi persecution they fled by hiking up and over a mountain. That literally will be the thing Jewish people will need to do at this point in history. As fast as they can, they will need to get out of Jerusalem and flee to the mountains.

ANTICHRIST NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE #2- John 5:43

When Jesus Christ was here on earth, He predicted that a “sinister figure”, who is evil and diabolical, would come to Israel and be received by her with open arms. He would come in his own name, not by authorization of God, but the Jews would love him. This is a key reference to the Antichrist.

Christ came as the second member of the Trinity, in full conformity to the plan and program of God for Israel. He came to offer Israel the righteousness she needed to get into her Kingdom. But Israel, as a whole, rejected Him. She was not willing to receive Him(John 5:40). She would not admit she did not have the necessary righteousness to get into a righteous Theocratic(God-ruled) Kingdom. Jesus could have given the nation the righteousness she needed to inherit her Kingdom, but she would not accept Him. He had been authorized by God the Father to come to this earth to give Israel all of wonderful promises of God. But Israel rejected Jesus Christ. When she heard the words that she need to “repent” of her sin to get the Kingdom, she proudly rejected God’s wonderful provision, in fact, she killed her own Messiah and nailed him to a cross. So Jesus makes it clear that another one will come, not in the Father’s name, but in his own, whom she will embrace. **This one is none other than the Antichrist.**

We learn from Daniel(9:27) that he will make a peace pact with Israel when he first surfaces. Israel will embrace him and applaud him and honor him as her delivering political hero. She will offer him anything he wants, something she refused to do to the Son of God, for when He came to His own people Israel, the true Messiah who would lay down His own life for her, she would not receive Him, as John said- “He came to His own and those who were His own did not receive Him(John 1:11).

ANTICHRIST NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE #3- II Thessalonians 2:1-12

The words of verse 2, “shaken” and “disturbed” indicate that the Thessalonians were really being troubled by false teaching about future events. In fact, they were so troubled that they were living in total fear of what was going to happen in the future. People who don’t know accurate Biblical prophecy can mess up God’s people in a hurry. Paul gives inspired truth here about prophetic matters in order to calm the people in the Church age back down. **This is a very important Church Age passage that gives us at least fifteen facts about the Antichrist:**

Fact #1- His surfacing will be in close proximity to the rapture of the Church. 2:1-2

In these first two verses, Paul is trying to calm down the Thessalonians and to do it, he appeals to prophetic truth. The participial phrase “our gathering together to Him”(v:1) is grammatically connected by an article “the” and coordinating conjunction “and” to the participial phrase “coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” for the church. This grammatical construction in Greek means this is one event, which means this is a reference to the rapture of the Church (I Thess.4:13-18) when Christ comes to gather His church into the air. **So the first bit of comforting information that Paul gives the Thessalonians is that the Antichrist will not surface until the Church has been raptured.** If you are a believer in Jesus Christ you have nothing to fear about the Great Tribulation or the Antichrist, because you will be gone.

Fact #2- Christ will not come until the Antichrist has come on the scene. 2:3

The Thessalonians big worry was that they were in the Tribulation, “the Day of the Lord” which is God’s terrible time of judgment. They knew that a key person of the Tribulation was the Antichrist and so they assumed the Antichrist was already in existence. Paul is saying, you have

nothing to worry about, you are not going into the “Day of the Lord” and it is during that time when the Antichrist will surface and he will be unmistakable.

Fact #3- The Antichrist is an apostate. 2:3a

The noun “apostasy”(αποστasia) literally means to defect or revolt against something such as a political revolt. In the N.T., it is always used in the sense of a spiritual defection(Smith, p.54). The Antichrist will lead in a revolt against the truth of God and the word of God. As the church age nears its conclusion, we may expect to see a great revolt against God and His word which will actually pave the way for the Antichrist. We may expect to see an escalation in organized religious systems to depart from a careful understanding of God’s word and once the Rapture occurs, total apostasy will rule the world.

Fact #4- The Antichrist is revealed to be the man of sin. 2:3b

The tense of the verb “revealed”(aorist) indicates this will be a key, decisive moment and point in history in which God removes the veil and permits this man to surface. In other words, his public appearance in human history will be clearly known and seen. This will not be mere speculation, this will be specific revelation. He will be known as one given to lawless sin. He will flaunt it, and not try and cover it.

Fact #5- The Antichrist is the son of destruction. 2:3c

He will lead people to physical, spiritual and eternal destruction, which ultimately includes himself. He is destruction’s own son who loves it and lives for it.

Fact #6- The Antichrist opposes every god or so called god that has ever been worshipped. 2:4a

The word “oppose” means he will withstand, resist, be in total opposition to any concept of god other than himself. He will shut down all forms of religious worship that do not worship him. He raises himself above any person or god. Many years ago some students of prophecy tried to relate the Antichrist to the Catholic Church and specifically the Pope. To me, this is clear evidence that this is not the Catholic Church or the Pope, as some suggest, because no papal person has ever demanded that he be called God and worshipped as God. Romanism does not oppose all that is right about God, in fact it presents much that is true- virgin birth, Christ’s work on the cross, and the Deity of Jesus Christ.

Fact #7- The Antichrist will sit in the Temple and demand to be worshipped as God. 2:4b

He will sit in the Temple in Jerusalem and actually say he is God and demand to be worshipped as such. This is the ultimate of “self-deification” and open “defiance” against God. One might ask, how would any Jew be duped into believing he is her Messiah? This Antichrist will be one who restores worship to Jerusalem and permits the rebuilding of the Temple. Therefore, many Jews will assume he is a Messiah.

Fact #8- The Antichrist will “display himself.” 2:4c

The word “display”(αποδεικνυμι) is one that implies he will bring himself out, he will exhibit himself or show himself(Smith, p.49). What this would seem to indicate is that he will be a good physical specimen to look at. He will appear strong, healthy, well proportioned, attractive and impressive. He will be brilliant and can show off himself. Obviously he will do this at the highest level, because he will say he is God.

Fact #9- The Antichrist will not surface until the Restrainer is taken out of the way. 2:5-7

No power on earth can withhold evil, only God can do that. It is obvious from verse 5 that Paul taught on the subject of the Antichrist. Paul also taught that the restrainer was the Holy Spirit. He also taught that every believer had God’s Spirit in him(Rom.5:5; I Cor.6:19-20; Gal.3:2). In fact, it was Jesus who said an age would come in which the Spirit of God would be in the believer “forever”(John 14:16), which of course was the Church Age. **So in order for the restrainer to be removed, every N.T. Christian must be removed and this is exactly what Paul says will happen at the Rapture of the Church.**

There are two phases to Christ’s coming in connection to the Church:

Phase #1- Christ will come **FOR** His church(Rapture);

Phase #2- Christ will come **WITH** His church(Second Coming).

It is the first phase in which the restrainer will be taken out of the way.

Fact #10- The Antichrist will surface after the Restainer is taken out of the way. 2:7

There is no question that the “mystery of lawlessness” is already at work. It was at work in Paul’s day and certainly it is at work in our day. But this is nothing compared to what it will be like in the Tribulation. **As bad as evil is today, it is still restrained.** But when the restrainer is taken out of the way, evil will bust loose as never before and then the Antichrist will be revealed.

This is a critical point for ever since WWI, some have suggested they knew who the Antichrist was. For example in WWI some said it was the German Kaiser. In WWII some said it was Hitler or Mussolini. **The truth of the Bible is the Antichrist will not surface until after the Rapture. Believers in Christ never have to worry about seeing the Antichrist. They will be raptured before he surfaces.** This would be comforting news to the Thessalonians who were being told they were in the Tribulation.

During the Tribulation, there will be a notable lack of the ministries of the Holy Spirit. A key doctrine for the Church Age is Spirit Baptism in which one is placed by the Holy Spirit into Jesus Christ and linked to His work. For example, **before** the Church Age began in Acts 2, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was said to be **futuristic**(i.e Acts 1:5). **During** the Church Age, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was said to be for every believer(I Cor.12:13). However, **after the Rapture of the Church, there is never a mention of Spirit baptism ever again.** It never shows up during the Tribulation. The Holy Spirit, who is the key Person and feature of the Church age, will not be the key feature of the Tribulation.

Fact #11- The Antichrist will be killed by Jesus Christ, Himself at His second coming. 2:8

No one from earth will be able to stop the Antichrist, but One from heaven can and will stop him. I love what D. Edmund Hiebert said- the Antichrist's career will be "terminated" by Jesus Christ(The Thessalonian Epistles, pp.314-315) The Antichrist is such a liar for he struts around demanding to be worshipped as God and he cannot even save himself. Christ will cast him into hell, body and all. The true Christ will end up exterminating the false Christ. In fact, Christ will slay him with the "breath of his mouth" at his second coming.

Fact #12- The Antichrist is permitted existence within the action of Satan. 2:9b

The Antichrist is Satan's man. Everything about him is Satani. His entire career is empowered by Satan, characterized by Satan's counterfeit methodology and by Satan's desire to be worshipped as God. Satan will be his instigator and his energizer.

Fact #13- The Antichrist is able to perform the miraculous. 2:9c

The Antichrist will be able to Satanically perform amazing miracles during the Tribulation. He will be able to do spectacular things. He will be able to perform amazing miracles, signs and false wonders. He may be able to heal people, perhaps walk on water or change one substance into another. Just because it is powerful and miraculous does not mean it is of God.

Satan can do the miraculous as evidenced by the Magicians of Egypt(Ex.7:11,22); Simon the Sorcerer of Samaria(Acts 8:9-11) and Elymas the Sorcerer(Acts 13:6,8) and the seven sons of Sceva(Acts 19:13-14). The Antichrist will be the most spectacular of all. He will be Satanically empowered to do miraculous kinds of things. **This is a good thing to remember, just because one appears to do the miraculous in a religious setting, does not mean it is of God.**

Fact #14- The Antichrist will use all forms of wicked deception. 2:10

The prepositional phrase "with all deception" literally means in Greek that the Antichrist will operate in the entire sphere of every type of deception possible throughout his entire career. Remember, Satan's goal is to deceive the whole world(Rev.12:9), by any possible means. If he can keep people from a proper relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ, that is precisely what he will do. He will say he is the Christ(Mt.24:4-5) and perform miracles just to deceive people into believing it(II Thess.2:9-10). Since he will appear to be such a friend to Israel, she will be drawn to this Satanic miracle worker and masterpiece.

I believe the greatest deception Satan has in the Church age is the Satanic deception that you can be good enough for God by your works. All false religions teach you must do something to be right with God, whereas the Bible teaches there is nothing you can do to be right with God, so God has done it all in the Person and work of Jesus Christ and you must trust Him.

Back in 1938, Willard Aldrich concluded that if you believe you can be good enough to go to heaven by your works, you are guilty of at least six major sins(The Sin of Trying to Be Good, Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol.95, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1938)

- 1) You have never been perfect so you sin in thinking you are, you are living a delusional lie
- 2) You expect to have God forgive you apart from His Son, which makes you guilty of attacking God's character- which is pure and just, honest and true.
- 3) You make God a liar for God has said all are under sin and under His wrath apart from Christ.
- 4) You have rejected Christ and would rather rely on yourself, when Jesus said He was the only way to heaven(John 14:6)
- 5) You have accepted Satan's deceptive lies rather than accept God's word which says you are saved by faith and not by works(Eph.2:8-9)
- 6) You have nullified the Grace of God into saying it is by your works(Rom.11:6).

If you rely on yourself you are being deceived by Satan and he is out to deceive you all the way into hell. But even as great as his deceptions are in the Church Age, they do not even begin to compare to the Tribulation and the Antichrist.

What must not be overlooked here is that God is the one permitting him to have this deluding influence at this time(2:11). There is absolutely no doubt that God is sovereign even over the work of the Devil.

Fact #15- The Antichrist will cause many to go to condemnatory judgment. 2:10-12

God will allow the Antichrist to influence many. In fact, God will send them this delusion because they would not receive the truth. People right with God love the truth. The truth setters during the Tribulation will be 144,000 Jews of the twelve tribes of Israel(Revelation 7) and the two prophets in Jerusalem, who are killed in Jerusalem(Revelation 11). The end of verse 10 indicates that those in the Tribulation could have been saved, but they hated the truth therefore God lets them go to their deserved condemnation.

ANTICHRIST NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE #4- I John 2:18, 22

The Apostle John, who is writing I John about the year A.D. 95, communicates a well known teaching that existed among the believers in the first century, specifically there is an Antichrist who will come. In fact, **the perfect tense of the verb "you heard"(2:18) indicates that teaching about the Antichrist was part of a regular futuristic doctrinal instruction taught in the early days of the church and continued to be at the time John wrote.** The early church apparently had doctrinal studies on the Antichrist, just like these studies.

Now the historical backdrop of this statement toward the end of the first century is important because there had already been several diabolical political leaders who had tried to destroy God's people through physical persecution and doctrinal heresy. This is why John says there are many antichrists who have already surfaced. He is referring to those liars who had attacked the Person and work of Jesus Christ and who had gone on crusades against believers. The point is there is one coming in the future who will be the worst of all, he will be called the Antichrist.

ANTICHRIST NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCE #5- II JOHN 7

The antichrist spirit is to attack the truth about Jesus Christ. Contemporary “antichrists” tamper with His person and work. They will come to your door and try to convince you they are telling the truth and have the truth. They will try to convince you they are “Christian.” They are Satanic liars. **When these Satanic shysters come to your door, you do not let them into your home and you do not give them any response at all that would give them the impression you are in support of them(II John 10).** Because these are evil, deceivers just like the one who will come known as the Antichrist.

These negative things will hit, but those who know the Lord have a great positive hope in store it is called the “rapture of the Church.” Believe on the Lord and you will never have to worry about the wrath of God.