

## The Book of Revelation

### Week 4

#### **Chapters 12 and 13. The Antichrist**

In this study, we will present the belief that there will be a literal Antichrist figure in the future. The word "Antichrist", appears only a couple of times in the Bible. Elsewhere he is known as the man of sin, the son of perdition, the man of lawlessness, the little horn and the beast.

There are several reasons why we should study the Antichrist.

1. **Biblical Emphasis.** The Bible definitely contains information about the Antichrist. It is clear that this figure will initiate the worst time in human history, according to Jesus and other writers.
2. **Preparedness.** If we do not know who the Antichrist is or what to look for, we will be caught off guard.
3. **Key To Revelation.** The Antichrist forms a significant backdrop to the story of Revelation, so to understand the book, we need to comprehend this backdrop. Understanding the Antichrist helps us grasp the entirety of the book of Revelation.
4. **Current and Future Events.** Understanding who the Antichrist is, helps us make sense of coming world events, which will become more and more chaotic and confusing if we do not understand them.

Part of military training is recognizing what the enemy looks like. Where they are likely positioned, and what they are likely to do. Similarly, we need to recognize that if we don't understand where the Antichrist will arise from, and his profile and his strategies, it will be possible for him to progress until we are caught in his trap.

We know that the real enemy is Satan. We are not called to wrestle against flesh and blood but against spiritual darkness. Despite this, it is to our advantage to be one step ahead of the devil's plan, by recognizing the Antichrist when he appears, so that we can respond in faith, instead of fear.

In this section we seek to explore all that the Bible has to say about this man and his end time empire, so that you may be alert and prepared for the end times, particularly the reign of the Antichrist.

#### **Daniel Chapter 2.**

The Antichrist system is first mentioned in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2 verse 40. Traditionally the legs of iron were assumed to be the Roman empire which fell in A D 476, and from that assumption many derive that the feet of iron and clay will be a revived Roman empire.

Rome is no longer the head of an empire, however the European Union does occupy a similar area to the old Roman empire in Europe. So, is the E U the platform for the Antichrist empire to come?

We will explore this option. However, there is another option. The Islamic Ottoman empire which rose to power between A D 1300 and A D 1600 is a closer fit for the legs of iron, since its borders compared more closely to the old borders of the Babylonian, Persian and Greek empires. In that case, the feet of iron and clay could be a revived Islamic empire.

Why do we think that the feet of iron and clay represent an end time kingdom? Because in Daniels account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel chapter 2 verse 34, he says "While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them.

Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the earth."

The statue of Daniel 2 represents kingdoms in a chronological order from head to toe. The kingdom represented by the feet is the last kingdom. And it is this kingdom which is struck by the rock of God's kingdom at the return of Jesus. Therefore, the feet of iron and clay must be the end time kingdom of the Antichrist.

Later in verse 44 of the same chapter, Daniel explains the meaning of the rock which smashed the statue. Daniel explains , "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms, and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever".

In the same way, the arrival of God's kingdom will not only smash the Antichrist empire, it will also blow away the very concept of man made empires. From this moment on, Jesus will reign for ever, and his kingdom will fill the earth.

## **Daniel Chapter 7.**

In Daniel's dream in Daniel chapter 7, he sees a lion, a bear, a leopard and a fourth terrifying beast. An angel tells Daniel that the four beasts are four kings that will arise from the earth. The widely accepted interpretation is as follows.

the lion is the golden head of Daniel 2, the king of Babylon.

The bear is the silver chest of Daniel 2, the king of Persia.

The leopard is the bronze belly of Daniel 2, the king of Greece.

The fourth terrible beast we then assume to correspond to the legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay of Daniel 2, which could be the Roman empire and its revival as the E U, or the Islamic Ottoman empire, historical and future.

There is more information given by the angel about the fourth beast.  
It will be different from all other kingdoms, and will devour the whole earth.  
The final king of this empire will speak against the most high.  
He will oppress God's holy people.  
He will try to change the set times.  
He will try to change the laws.  
The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times, and half a time, widely accepted to mean three and a half years.

### **Ten horns.**

This empire had ten horns. While Daniel watched, there appeared another horn, a little one, which came up amongst the ten horns, and three of the first ten horns were uprooted by it. The angel explains to Daniel that the ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them, another king will arise and subdue three kings.

Who are these ten kings? Are they ten emperors of the Roman empire? History tells us that there were 70 emperors who reigned over Rome from 27 BC to 476 AD. Are they 10 Caliphs of the Ottoman Empire? History tells us that there were 30 caliphs from 1520 to 1924 in the Ottoman Empire.

But it is possible that the ten kings are not consecutive kings who arise from this kingdom. Instead, when the Antichrist empire begins to form, there could be a confederation of ten nations, led by ten leaders. This confederation would exist before the Antichrist appears, who would then conquer three of the nations in this end times empire.

### **Detail from the book of Revelation supported by Daniel 7.**

The ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7 are again mentioned in Revelation 13. The beast who comes out of the sea has seven heads and ten horns, which we understand to be 10 kings. Revelation 18 also mentions the same beast, who is ridden by Babylon the Harlot. In this chapter too, the beast has seven heads and ten horns. In this chapter, an angel explains the mystery of the beast.

The angel says that the ten horns are ten kings who will receive authority as kings along with the beast, for one hour. This is widely accepted to refer to the ten nation Antichrist empire of the future. The hour is accepted to mean, a short time, in this case three and a half years.

The angel also explains that the seven heads are seven hills, which also represent seven kings. However, these seven kings do not reign at the same time. Instead, they represent consecutive empires. Five have fallen. These fallen kingdoms are widely accepted to be Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece.

Then the angel says that one kingdom is. At the time of writing, this would have been the Roman Empire.

Finally, the angel says that the other has not yet come, but when he does come, he must remain only for a little while. Following the Roman Empire, unbeknown to John, would come the Islamic Ottoman Empire.

In Revelation 17 verse 11, it says "The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.". There is an interpretation that this eighth king represents the ottoman empire which will be rebirthed from the seventh empire. Verse 10 says it is only here for a little while because once rebirthed Jesus will return to put an end to it.

### **Where Is The Location Of The Antichrist To Be.**

**There are 2 main ideas, Europe, or the Middle East.**

Let's look at the E U option, and ask these questions.

Does the E U currently speak against the most high? No. While there are laws that do not favour religious freedom, there is no outright opposition to the Christian faith.

Does the E U currently oppress God's people? No, it would not be true to say that Christians are persecuted by the EU government.

Does the E U have its own calendar that it would like to impose? No.

Does the E U have a law system which if imposed would constitute a significant change to the laws we are familiar with? No.

Given that the EU is not a perfect fit for the angel's prophecy regarding the fourth beast, we would be wise to also consider other options, which could more closely match the angel's explanation of the fourth beast in Daniel 7 verses 23 to 25.

### **Daniel Chapter 9.**

**There is no denying that the prophecy in this chapter is not easily understood. However, we will focus on the last verse of this chapter, verse 27, because it is mentioned by Jesus in the Olivet discourse, and definitely refers to the Antichrist.**

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.

The Hebrew word for "week" is "sabua", and it means a period of seven. This can refer to seven days, seven weeks or seven years. In the above verse it is widely accepted that the Hebrew word sabua means seven years. It is also widely accepted that the subject of this verse is the Antichrist. So armed with this knowledge, let's unpack this verse.

1. **The Antichrist will confirm a covenant with many for seven years.** There are two ways to understand this. It either means that the Antichrist will establish a covenant

between Israel and many nations so as to gain Israel's trust, or it could mean that the Antichrist will affirm the covenant that Israel has with God, in other words, acknowledge and support the Jews' desire to build a third temple for worship. Either way, he is going to appear to be on Israel's side.

2. **In the middle of the seven years, the Antichrist will put an end to sacrifice and offering.** After three and a half years, the Antichrist will revoke his promise to support Israel, and he will prevent Jews from worshipping at their new temple. Daniel 11 verse 31 also describes this. It says "His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and abolish the daily sacrifice".
3. **At the temple, the Antichrist will set up an abomination that causes desolation.** These are the words quoted by Jesus in Matthew 24 verse 15. An abomination is something abhorrent, distasteful and disgusting. Desolation is a state of complete emptiness or destruction, great unhappiness or loneliness.

So to summarize, the Antichrist will deceitfully enter a covenant with Israel for 7 years, probably enabling them to build the third Jewish Temple. Half way through this period, he will desecrate the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in such a way that the hopes and beliefs of the Jews are all but destroyed.

### **Islamic And Biblical Eschatology Compared.**

It is of some interest to compare Islamic eschatology to Biblical eschatology.

There are some similarities, which mean that people in both faiths will recognize when the end times are upon us. For instance, Muslims believe that an abundance of sin, wars and unnatural phenomena such as the sun being darkened, and a time of trials and tribulations will all precede the end times, and the coming of judgement day.

The Bible teaches that the Antichrist, false prophet and finally our Messiah Jesus, will appear in that order during the end times.

The Islamic Hadith teach that the Mahdi, Isa, and finally the Dajjal, will appear in that order during end times.

When you compare these two eschatologies, we understand that the first character to take the stage is the Antichrist according to the Bible, but it is apparent that Muslims will identify him as their Mahdi, who is said to be a descendant of Muhammed, and they believe he will rule the entire world.

The second character to take the stage is the false prophet according to the Bible. He will do great miracles and deceive the nations. The Muslims will identify him as Isa, the Muslim version of Jesus. Muslims believe that Isa is not the son of God, did not die on a cross, and is in fact a Muslim messenger of God sent to guide the children of Israel.

In the end times he will support the Mahdi, and evangelize the Christian world by removing or breaking crosses and converting all to Islam.

It will be all the more confusing if the false prophet is actually named Jesus. Revelation chapter 13 verse 11 says that the false prophet will have two horns like a lamb. So he will look like Jesus, but speak like a dragon, or the devil. In other words, he will deceive.

The last character to take the stage is our Messiah Jesus. We believe he will conquer the Antichrist and begin his earthly rule. The Muslims will identify our Messiah as the Dajjal, which means deceitful messiah. They believe that Isa will defeat the Dajjal. In other words, Muslims believe that the false prophet will kill our Messiah.

Therefore you can see how Muslims will engage with the Islamic end time narrative right up to the last moment, at which point, we believe that their eschatology will back fire, for they will not witness Isa kill the Dajjal. On the contrary, their Dajjal, who is our Messiah, will throw their Mahdi and their Isa into the lake of fire.

The following information is a chart comparing Biblical and Muslim end time texts on the ruler of the end times kingdom.

These statements all reflect what the Bible says about the Antichrist, and what the Hadiths teach about the Al Mahdi.

1. He will emerge during a time of great conflict, rumours of wars and famines
2. He will be a political & military leader.
3. He will be a religious figure.
4. He will lead nations that are majority Muslim today.
5. He will be Accompanied by a False Prophet, according to the Bible, or by Isa, according to the Hadiths.
6. He will rule for 7 years and establish a peace treaty with Israel.
7. He will Share plunder and loot amongst followers.
8. He will conquer Jerusalem.
9. He will persecute Christians and Jews.
10. Finally a third character will take the stage, the Hadiths describe him as the Dajjal, meaning the Deceptive Messiah. The Bible describes him as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

Here is where the teachings deviate. Only one teaching can be true.

### **Attitude toward Muslims.**

With the possibility that the Antichrist could emerge from a future Islamic system, how should we respond to Muslims today? Our only response can be to love and speak the truth, even in the face of persecution. Most Muslims are reasonable God fearing people. Let us honour them accordingly, but at the same time, we must boldly stand up for Jesus.

### **Paul's Teaching On The Antichrist.**

In 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, we read these descriptions of the Antichrist.

1. He is the man of lawlessness. In other words he will not follow any law, and will encourage others to do the same.
2. He will oppose God.
3. He will exalt himself over God.
4. He will set himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.
5. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders.
6. The Lord Jesus will overthrow him by the breath of his mouth, and the splendour of his coming.

### **John's teaching on the Antichrist.**

1 John chapter 2 verse 22 asks a question and gives the answer. 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.

In 1 John chapter 4 verse 3, John says this. Every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the Antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

### **The Antichrist In the book of Revelation.**

Revelation chapter 13 introduces the beast who utters proud blasphemy, wages war against God's people, and for 42 months is able to exercise its authority.

This matches the prophecy in Daniel which says that "the holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times, and half a time". Evidently the two scriptures describe the same character, the Antichrist.

### **The False Prophet In the book of Revelation.**

Revelation chapter 13 also introduces a second beast who has two horns like a lamb, but speaks like a dragon. This probably means that he will look like Jesus but speak like the devil. This person will deceive the people of the earth by performing great miracles. He will be the driving force behind the image of the beast, and the mark of the beast. These are both dangerous tools that will be used in an attempt to cause people to give up their faith.

Chapter 13 does not describe the second beast as the false prophet, so where is that link made? It is chapter 19 which describes the false prophet as the one who performed signs on behalf of the Antichrist, and deceived men to receive the mark of the beast. So we know that the second beast and the false prophet are one and the same.

### **The Image of The Beast.**

Revelation chapter 13 says the following.

1. The false prophet orders people to set up or create an image of the beast.
2. The false prophet is given power to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image could speak, and cause all who do not worship it to be killed.

Therefore we can derive the following.

1. The image of the beast is not something that already exists, like a historical monument or statue. It is created during the tribulation period.
2. If the image is to affect everyone in the world, it cannot be a physical object in a locale, which could only affect those within its sight. Instead it will be most likely made visible through some type of media.

### **The Mark of The Beast.**

Revelation chapter 13 says the following.

1. The false prophet forces all people to receive a mark on their right hand or forehead.
2. No financial transactions can be made without this mark.
3. The mark is the name of the beast, or the number of its name.

### **The Number Of The Beast in Verse 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”.

Over the years, many interpretations have been offered. Some say that the number is an alphanumeric code, and then using gematria, have gone on to wrongly identify the Antichrist as Caesar Nero, or Ronald Reagan.



Some say that the number simply means a man made system, since 6 is the incomplete number of man. Also be aware that some Bible manuscripts gave the number as 616, not 666.

Historically, much has been made of trying to identify the Antichrist by calculating the number of the beast. Since the meaning of Revelation 13 verse 18 is still unclear, our best endeavour is to use all the supporting scripture from Daniel and the New Testament to help us understand the possible systems from which the Antichrist may emerge, rather than make wild guesses about the actual person.

Taking the whole narrative of the book of Revelation, we can arrive at these conclusions.

1. People can refuse to take the mark, these people are mentioned later in the book of Revelation.
2. The mark is not a parable illustrating materialism, and the worship of mammon, but is something physical rolled out by the false prophet.
3. The mark cannot be taken unknowingly, or without consent.
4. The mark will be rolled out by the false prophet and his system. When somebody takes the mark, they are knowingly consenting to submit to the Antichrist regime.
5. If cash is not replaced totally by electronic or digital currencies, those without the mark would still be able to buy and sell. This contradicts Revelation 13 verse 17, so the conclusion is that there will most likely have to be a cashless society for the mark to prevent buying and selling.
6. If you refuse the mark of the beast, the most likely outcome is that you will not be able to use your bank account. This means that you will not be able to receive a pension, a wage, or any other income. It also means that apart from bartering with goods, you will not be able to buy either in stores or online.
7. The book of Revelation is very clear about the destiny of those who do take the mark. Chapter 14 verse 9 says "Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives the mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God which is poured out full strength into the cup of his indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone....".

There is no mention of being able to repent after taking the mark. We need to consider these verses soberly.

The mark of the beast is one of the most important aspects of the tribulation period to correctly understand. When you hear rumours about something being the mark of the beast, simply take this four point test.

1. Has the Antichrist been revealed, currently persecuting Christians everywhere?
2. Has the false prophet come to the fore in support of the Antichrist, doing mighty miracles so that he causes fire to fall from heaven?
3. Has the false prophet created a speaking image of the Antichrist, visible to all?

4. And finally has the false prophet rolled out a mark without which you cannot buy or sell?

If the answer to all these questions is a resounding yes, then you are facing the mark of the beast. Otherwise, you don't need to worry.

To conclude, the emphasis is to make sure we have our eyes open, so that from whichever part of the world and whatever system the Antichrist arises from, we have him framed. Let's be aware of all the interpretations of that final end time kingdom, so that we are not caught off guard.

Equally, considering the mark of the beast, and its dire consequence, let's not take guesses as to its identity. But let us closely follow what the book of Revelation has to say, so that when we are faced with the mark, we are able to correctly identify it, refuse it, and trust God to provide. Remember the words of Jesus. You cannot serve God and mammon.

## **Revelation Chapter 12**

Chapter 12 is the story of the woman and the dragon. The woman gives birth to a son who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre. We understand this child to be no other than Jesus, who will rule the nations with a rod of iron in the Millennium. Therefore the woman can really only be either Mary or Israel.

Interestingly, Mary and Joseph did flee to Egypt for a period of a few years when Jesus was a young child. But there are a few clues in this chapter that point to the woman being Israel.

The order of events seem to be that the child is caught up to heaven (resurrected) before the woman fled to the wilderness. So this doesn't fit the order of events in the life of Mary with the young child Jesus.

The woman was cared for in the desert for a time, times and half a time. This phrase is borrowed directly from Daniel chapter 7, where it is used to describe the period of the Antichrists rule. So if this period represents the end time tribulation period, then the woman cannot represent Mary.

Finally, when the dragon was foiled by the earth who helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river coming from the dragons mouth, the dragon went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, those who keep God's commands and hold fast to the testimony of Jesus.

If this story speaks of the foiled attempt of Herod to kill the child Jesus, then at that time, Mary had no other offspring for the devil to persecute. And there was no one who at the time held fast to the testimony of Jesus as he was still a child, and no one had yet put their faith in Him.

But if this story speaks of a foiled future attempt by the Antichrist to persecute the Israelites who flee to the desert, then it is very likely that the Antichrist will turn to wage war against the rest of the offspring of Israel. We who hold fast to our testimony of Jesus, are called Abraham's seed, according to Galatians 3 verse 29. And so you can correctly identify the church as the rest of the offspring of the Jewish people Israel.

### **The verses in revelation 12.**

Assuming that it is correct to interpret the woman as Israel or the Jewish people, we can read chapter 12 like this.

Verse 5. "The Jewish people gave birth to a son, Jesus, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron sceptre. (The future millennium reign)".

In verse 9. "The great dragon, (the devil) was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him."

Verse 12, "He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short."

Verse 13. "When the dragon, (the devil), saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the Jewish people who had given birth to the male child (Jesus)".

Verse 14. "The Jewish people were given the two wings of a great eagle, so that they might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where they would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach". This is 3 and a half years.

Verse 17. "Then the dragon, (the devil), was enraged at the Jewish people, and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring, (the believers), those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus."

Chapter 12 is symbolic, but if you stick to the main key elements the story line narrative makes a lot of sense. This interpretation then lines up with all the other Bible chapters of the narrative.

There are many other verses in the Bible which describe the Antichrist..

Isaiah 14 verse 14. He shall say in his heart, I will be like the Most High.

Daniel 8 verse 25. He shall stand up against the Prince of princes.

1 John 2 verse 22. He shall deny both the Father and the Son.

Psalms 10 verse 6. He says to himself. Nothing will ever shake me. He swears, No one will ever do me harm.

Psalm 55 verse 19. His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart, his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords.

Ezekiel 21 verse 25. You profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax.

Daniel 11 verse 36. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place.

To summarize, the purpose of this study is not to encourage people to take wild guesses about the identity of the Antichrist. Instead we want to help you understand the various options, so that when the Antichrist has already taken the world stage, you would be able to correctly identify him.

### **What Do You Think?**

What is your understanding of the location/system from which the Antichrist originates?

Are there other possibilities apart from the EU/Mid East options?

Is there enough biblical evidence to show that the Book of Daniel speaks of the end times?

If the Antichrist is from a Middle East Islamic Empire, how should we relate to Muslims now?