

Revelation

Escape the Coming Wrath!

Lesson 13

Chapter 13

The Antichrist is Coming!

1. Read Daniel 8:23b-25; 9:26-27; 11:36-45.

I John 2:18 states, “Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the **antichrist** is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour.”

In the chaotic times of confusion, uncertainty, and unrest that will prevail during the Tribulation, the world will long for a leader. People will be desperately hoping for someone powerful and influential to unite the divided and contentious nations of the world; someone to bring hope in the midst of helplessness; someone to provide a sense of security in an unsettled time of apprehension and fear. People will be desperately seeking a strong, charismatic, authoritative leader to pull the world back from the brink of disaster.

Those longings will be fulfilled. The powerful leader people desire will come and unify the world under his rule. He will appear at first to be everything people thought they were looking for. And for a brief time he will bring peace and prosperity. But he will turn out to be far more than the world bargained for. He will be a dictator more cruel and powerful than any other leader the world has ever known. This man, often called the Antichrist, will be the culmination of a long line of would-be conquerors. What men like Alexander the Great and the Roman emperors in ancient times and Hitler and Stalin in modern times only dreamed of doing, the Antichrist actually will do—he will rule the entire world and receive its worship...

Just as the Antichrist will be the culmination of a long line of political rulers, so also will he be the ultimate false religious leader...

The astounding description of the Antichrist presented in the opening verses of this chapter is the most gripping, thorough, and dramatic one in all of Scripture...⁹

- (a) From the above passages in Daniel, describe this one coming who is referred to as the Antichrist (I John 2:18)? [In Daniel he is referred to as: “a stern-faced king,” “ruler,” and, the king.”]

⁹ Ibid. 36-37.

In addition to Daniel's prophecy, the original readers of Revelation had information about the Antichrist from the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 24:15-16, Jesus quoted Daniel's prophecy about Antichrist, warning those alive in that day "Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains."¹⁰

- (b) Read II Thessalonians 2:3-10. Describe this "man of lawlessness" who is mentioned in this passage by Paul.

Though chapter 13 gives the most detailed description of Antichrist in Revelation, this is not his first appearance in the Apocalypse. Antichrist was introduced in 11:7 as the "**beast**" who will assault and kill God's two witnesses. His wicked career, which began in chapter 11, is fully developed beginning in chapter 13.

Chapter 12 records the beginning of Satan's long war against God and His people; chapter 13 follows logically to record that war's culmination. In chapter 12 Satan is seen being cast from heaven to earth to defeat God and His purposes. Satan will try to prevent Jesus Christ from setting up His earthly kingdom by setting up his own under Antichrist...

Having been cast permanently from heaven (12:9), Satan will know that the time remaining to him is brief (12:12). To lead his last, desperate onslaught against God, he will empower his final Antichrist...¹¹

2. Read Revelation 13:1-10.

(a) Who does John see standing on the shore of the sea? Who is this (12:9)?

(b) How does John describe the Antichrist in verses 1 and 2?

(c) Why do you think John refers to him as a "beast?"

As John's vision unfolded, the dragon summoned the Antichrist, described as a beast coming up out of the sea. *Thērion* (beast) is also used to describe Antichrist in 11:7. It does not refer to a domesticated animal, but to a wild, savage, vicious personality. The beast must be understood as representing both a kingdom and a person. The beast must

¹⁰ Ibid. 39.

¹¹ Ibid. 40.

represent a kingdom, because of the complex description of him in the latter half of verse 1. Yet the beast must also represent a person, since he is always described with personal pronouns (e.g., “his,” “him,” “he”; cf. vv. 1-8; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2, 10). Daniel (Dan. 7:25; 8:24-25; 11:36-45) and Paul (II Thess. 2:4) also describe the Antichrist as a person. In this manner, Scripture views the final world empire as inseparable from its ruler, much as Hitler is inseparably linked to the Third Reich.¹²

(d) What do you think the “sea” symbolizes (Isaiah 17:12; 57:20; Revelation 17:15)?

The Antichrist will be a man (II Thess. 2:4), but at some point in his life, he will be indwelt by a powerful demon from the abyss. This demon-possessed man will be a gifted orator, an intelligent genius, possess great charm and charisma, and have immense leadership power. Added to those natural qualities will be the hellish power of Satan. The result will be a person of superhuman power, vast intelligence, and consummate wickedness.¹³

(e) Read Daniel 2 and 7. [Daniel’s dreams recorded in the book of Daniel are linked to John’s vision recorded in the book of Revelation. It’s important to understand Daniel’s dreams in order to better understand Revelation. The serious student of biblical prophecy must spend some time studying Daniel.]

1. According to Daniel, who reveals the mysteries concerning the future (Daniel 2:18, 20-22)?
2. Nebuchadnezzar had dreams (recorded in Daniel 2 and 7) that God used Daniel to interpret. According to Daniel both dreams represent Kingdoms that would arise and fall throughout the history of the world. From both of these chapters fill in the blanks in the chart below:

<u>Vision in Daniel 2</u>	<u>Vision in Daniel 7</u>	<u>Future Kingdom</u>
Head of _____	Lion	Babylonia (626-539 b.c.)
Chest and Arms of _____*	_____**	Medo-Persia (539-330 b.c.)
Belly and Thighs of _____	_____***	Greece (330-63 b.c.)
Legs of _____	Terrifying beast****	Roman (63 b.c.—)
Feet of _____ and _____	Terrifying beast	Coming Kingdom ruled by Antichrist*****

* Two arms are symbolic of a dual-kingdom: Medes and Persians.

¹² Ibid. 41.

¹³ Ibid. 41-42.

** The bear raised up on its sides, refers to the superior status of the Persians in the Medo-Persian federation.

*** The leopard with four wings may represent the speedy conquests of Alexander the Great (334-323 b.c.), and the four heads correspond to the four main divisions into which his empire fell after his untimely death in 323.

**** The fourth, unnamed, beast, with its irresistible power and surpassing all its predecessors, points to the Roman Empire.

***** Many theologians believe that in the future there will be a “Revived Roman Empire” (a confederacy of European countries) ruled by the Antichrist. Feet of clay (brittle) and iron may indicate that it will have some areas of strength and weakness.

3. According to Daniel 2:44, there is a final kingdom coming to this earth. Whose kingdom is it, and what will it do to all the other kingdoms?

4. Who do think is the rock (stone) of Daniel 2:25 (Romans 9:33)?

While all unbelievers are children of Satan (John 8:44), no one in human history will be more completely the devil’s child than the Antichrist. His “family likeness” to Satan becomes strikingly apparent from John’s description of him as having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems. That same grotesque description was applied to Satan in 12:3...The description of Antichrist emphasizes the importance of the ten horns by mentioning them first and associating the diadems (crowns) with them instead of the heads.

Horns in Scripture symbolize strength and power, both for attack and defense...In this passage, they represent the great power of the kings who will rule under Antichrist’s absolute authority. Ten fits the imagery of the fourth beast in Daniel 7:7, 24, and is a symbolic number representing all the world’s political and military might. Antichrist will rise from among these ten (cf. Dan. 7:16-24) and will not rule merely ten nations, but the entire world (cf. Dan. 7:23). Unlike the seven heads, which represent successive world empires, all of the rulers symbolized by the ten horns will rule at the same time (cf. 17:12).

Daniel described this final coalition, headed by Antichrist, in Daniel 2:41-44...

The final world empire will be in some sense a revival of the Roman Empire (the iron legs and ten toes of the stature in Daniel 2), but will far exceed it both in power and extent. It will be much more than a European confederacy; it will cover the entire world. Ultimately, Antichrist’s empire will be crushed by Christ (the “stone [that] was cut out without hands”; Dan. 2:34, 45) when He comes to establish His earthly kingdom.¹⁴

(f) What will happen to the beast (Antichrist) according to verse 3 and what do you think this will entail?

¹⁴

Ibid. 42-43.

- (g) What will be the response of the world?
- (h) Read II Thessalonians 2:3-12. The “man of lawlessness” will be revealed one day.
1. Who is restraining evil in the world today?
 2. According to this passage, what will happen in order that this lawless one might be revealed?
 3. God will send a powerful delusion one day. What will be the response of the world according to this passage and Revelation 13:3-4?
- (i) According to verses 5-7, what will the beast (Antichrist) do to God and His people and how long will He be allowed to reap havoc?

Daniel long before predicted this widespread martyrdom of God’s people. He wrote that Antichrist “will ...wear down the saints of the Highest One...and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time [three and half years; the last half of the Tribulation]” (Dan. 7:25). This persecution will begin in earnest at the midpoint of the Tribulation, when Antichrist breaks his covenant with Israel (Dan. 9:27) and sets up the abomination of desolation (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2:3-4).

That Antichrist will successfully make war with the saints and overcome them does not mean that he will have the power to destroy their faith. He will overpower them physically, but not spiritually. Genuine saving faith cannot be destroyed, because “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:38-39). Nor will the Lord Jesus Christ, who is infinitely more powerful than Antichrist or Satan, permit any true child of His to suffer the loss of eternal life (Rev. 3:5; Job 13:15; John 10:27-29). But Antichrist will slaughter God’s people on an unprecedented scale as he expresses his world dominance.¹⁵

- (j) According to verse 8, who will worship this beast?

The phrase all who dwell on the earth is used throughout Revelation do describe unbelievers (vv. 12, 14; 3:10; 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 17:2, 8) and does not include everyone who will be alive at that time. Here the limiting factor is specifically stated: it is everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain that will worship Antichrist. Unbelievers, those

¹⁵

Ibid. 48-49.

whose names are not recorded in the book of life, will “perish, because they did not receive the love of truth so as to be saved (II Thess. 2:10)...

Seven times in the New Testament, believers are identified as those whose names are written in the book of life (cf. 3:5; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27; Phil 4:3). The book of life belonging to the Lamb, the Lord Jesus, is the registry in which God inscribed the names of those chosen for salvation before the foundation of the world...¹⁶

- (k) Is your name in the Lamb’s book of life (Revelation 20:12, 15)? How do you know (I John 5:13)?
- (l) The warning, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches,” is used seven times in the Revelation (cf. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22) to emphasize a very important truth. Compare this warning to the warning found in verse 9. What is omitted in verse 9 and what might this omission imply?
- (k) What is called for on the part of believers during this period of Great Tribulation?

3. Read verses 11-18.

The major weapon in Satan’s arsenal is deception. Satan, Jesus declared, is “a liar and the father of lies” (John 8:44), who “disguises himself as an angel of light” (II Cor. 11:14) to deceive people. From his first appearance on earth in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:2-6) until his final appearance at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:7-8), Satan is a liar and a deceiver...

Since Satan is a deceiver, it follows that his agents (both human and demonic) are also deceivers. The apostle Paul warned that “[Satan’s] servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (II Cor. 11:15), though they are purveyors of wickedness, lies, and deceit. The devil uses them to spread his damning “doctrines of demons” (I Tim. 4:1)...

The Bible repeatedly warns of the danger of false prophets...

False prophets have plagued God’s people from the beginning of history. But they will proliferate even more as the return of Christ to establish His kingdom approaches. Speaking of that time Jesus said, “Many false prophets will arise and will mislead man” (Matt. 24:11) So persuasive will their efforts be that they “will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect” (Mark 13:22). Those false prophets will be energized by some of Satan’s demon hosts. The devil will intensify his efforts to deceive the world as his own doom approaches.

¹⁶

Ibid.

Just as the false christs who have plagued mankind will culminate in the final Antichrist, so also will the false prophets culminate in a final false prophet (cf. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10). He will be Satan's last and most powerful lying deceiver. Along with Satan, the counterfeit of the Father, and Antichrist, the counterfeit of Jesus Christ, the false prophet will form the satanic false trinity. He will be the counterfeit of the Holy Spirit. The false prophet will be Antichrist's partner in Satan's massive final deception of the world. While Antichrist will be primarily a political and military ruler, he will also claim to be God. The false prophet will be his high priest, the religious leader who will lead people into the satanic religion of worshiping Antichrist. The false prophet will deify Antichrist and convince unbelievers that he is the only hope for the world's salvation.

The false prophet will be able to deceive the unbelieving world because the power of religion over men's minds is so great. People are incurable worshipers; everyone worships someone, whether the true God, false gods, or themselves. There is in the heart of man the longing for someone transcendent, someone beyond himself that can deliver him from his troubling circumstances. The terrifying, unparalleled events of false prophet will convince the unbelieving world that Antichrist is the solution to the world's pressing problems. He may well be the most eloquent, powerful, convincing speaker in human history, and his lofty oratory will persuade the world to worship Antichrist...

The worldwide joining of political and religious power in the end times is detailed in Revelation 17. For a time, the two powers will coexist (17:1-9). Eventually, however, Antichrist will destroy the false religious system and institute the worship of himself (17:15-17). That will happen at the midpoint of the Tribulation, when Antichrist sets up the abomination of desolation (Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Matt. 24:15; II Thess. 2:3-4). Having reached the pinnacle of his power, Antichrist will destroy all other religions. The worship of Antichrist, fomented by the false prophet, will become the only religion tolerated (cf. 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4).¹⁷

- (a) Describe the other beast (false prophet) that John saw coming out of the earth?
- (b) What do you think it means that he had "two horns like a lamb, but he spoke like a dragon (II Corinthians 11:13-15)?

False prophets often appear meek, mild, and harmless. They offer hope and solutions to the problems troubling men and women. Yet they are ever the voices of hell, and when they open their mouths, Satan speaks...¹⁸

- (c) According to verses 12-13, what three things will things will this false prophet do?

¹⁷ Ibid. 54-58.

¹⁸ Ibid. 59.

- (d) What will be the effect upon the inhabitants of the earth (nonbelievers) of the miraculous signs he performs?
- (e) Read Romans 1:25. Mankind has always been prone to turn away from the worship of God to the worship of created things. The first two commandments (Exodus 20:1-3) state, “You shall have no other gods before me,” and “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.” According to verses 14-15, what will the false prophet lead the world to do?
- (f) Not only will he take control of religion but of what else will he take control? What will he require upon everyone in order to conduct business?
- (g) What is the number of the beast?

The precise significance of the number 666 awaits the future time of the Antichrist, but it is noteworthy that the number is that of a man. Seven, the number of perfection, is God’s number. Since man falls short of perfection, his number is six. Man was created on the sixth day (Gen. 1:26-31); slaves were freed after six years of service (Ex. 21:2); fields were to be sown for only six consecutive years (Lev. 25:3). Repeating the number three times emphasizes that this is man’s number, just as the thrice-repeated statement “holy, holy, holy” stresses God’s absolute holiness (4:8; Isa. 6:3).

A false religion on a scale never before seen is coming, led by the most notorious of all false prophets. Most people will follow the seemingly safe and prudent course, worshiping the Antichrist, and receiving his mark. But that is a tragic mistake with disastrous consequences, for those who persist in worshiping the beast will face the wrath of God...¹⁹

- (h) Examine your faith. Is your faith grounded strongly enough in the Savior to know that you would not fall prey to the soothing message of the false prophet? Are you prepared to face severe persecution as the world turns more and more away from the worship of the one, true God, Jesus Christ?
- (i) Read Hebrews 6:19. Who or what will be your anchor in the coming storms of life? Is Jesus your anchor?