

The Antichrist: Diverting People from God



- Do you find yourself easily distracted from thinking about God or from reading the Bible?
- Do you think there are evil spiritual forces at work in the world seeking to keep you from God, from the Bible, from church? If so, how often do you think you have been influenced by these forces?
- Have you heard about a person called the Antichrist and wondered who he is and what he is all about?

One of the prominent figures in the Tribulation Period is a world dictator called the Antichrist. One Theologian writes: **“Other than Jesus Christ, the most important figure in Bible prophecy and all of human history is the coming world ruler—the Antichrist.”** Mark Hitchcock, *101 Answers to the Most Asked Questions about the End Times*, p.117.

The Bible describes him as a world leader unlike any in human history. He will be an intellectual, political, commercial, and military genius with hypnotic influence over the world nations. No ruler equals his abilities and power of influence for evil. He will be controlled and empowered by Satan. The Bible says: **“... the dragon [Satan] gave the beast [Antichrist] his own power and throne and great authority.”** Revelation 13:2 (NLT). Also, see Revelation 13:4 and 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10. **The main mission of the Antichrist will be to deceive and distract people from God. He will work to divert their attention and devotion to Satan and himself as the objects of worship.** The Bible also says: **“And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast [Antichrist]....”** Rev. 13:8 (NLT).

The Meaning of the Title—Antichrist.

The prefix *anti-* can mean “against, opposed to” or “instead of, in place of.” The Antichrist is Christ’s adversary and a false, counterfeit messiah. Theologian, J. Dwight Pentecost, writes: **“Satan is seeking to give the world a ruler in place of Christ who will also be in opposition to Christ so that he [Satan] can rule over the world, instead of Christ.”** *Will Man Survive?* p.93.

A study of the Antichrist in the Bible teaches us that the Devil will do everything he can to deceive, distract, and divert our attention and devotion away from God. He will seek to get our focus on anything other than God—such as material possessions, money, pleasure, prosperity, position, prestige, sensuality, addiction, business, etc.

Central Lesson:

We must be intentional and disciplined about staying focused on God—because the devil is working to distract us from God.

We must be **“intentional and disciplined”** about staying focused on God. It doesn’t happen naturally. It doesn’t happen without a deliberate choice on our part. It doesn’t happen without disciplining ourselves.

We must intentionally discipline our schedules, our feelings, and our priorities to spend time with God—in daily Bible reading, prayer, church attendance, small group Bible study, etc. Without being intentional and disciplined we will **naturally drift away from God.** Our flesh (sinful nature) will cause us to drift away from God. Also, the devil will throw

numerous enticements in front of our eyes to divert our attention away from God just as the serpent diverted Eve’s attention away from God with the attractiveness of the forbidden fruit (cf. Genesis 3:1-6). *What place does God have in your heart, schedule, priorities, affections, finances, etc.? In what ways have you been distracted from God? Do you need to be intentional and disciplined about staying focused and connected to God?*

An Overview of the Future Reign of Antichrist

The following events describe the major stages of the rise and reign of the Antichrist during the Tribulation period until he meets his end at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Information is scattered throughout the Bible and has to be put together like a puzzle. There is some uncertainty about the exact order of some of these events. The following is a possible sequence:

1. The Antichrist Is REVEALED to the World when the restrainer is removed at the rapture (2 Thessalonians 2:6-8).

Only the Spirit of God has the power to hold back the Antichrist. Also, the restrainer is referred to as **“he”** (v.7 NIV, ESV, NASB, KJV) indicating that he is a **person**. The Pretribulation rapture view believes that the restrainer (the Holy Spirit) and the Church **will be removed from the earth simultaneously at the rapture.** Since the believer is the temple of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit will never be removed from the believer (John 14:16), the believer and the Holy Spirit **must be removed from the earth at the same time.** The Holy Spirit, however, will still work in the hearts and lives of people after the removal. The Spirit will revert back to the way of operating as He did during the Old Testament era and as He did before He came at Pentecost. The removal of the restrainer is a **reversal** of Pentecost. As Theologian, John Walvoord explains:

“While the Spirit will work in the tribulation period, He will follow the pattern of the period before Pentecost rather than this present age of grace. The Spirit of God will return to heaven after accomplishing His earthly work, much as the Lord Jesus Christ returned to heaven after completing His earthly work. In both cases, the work of the second Person and the Third Person continues, but in a different setting and in a different way.” p.81 *The Rapture Question.*

The Antichrist will not be revealed to the world until after the rapture.

2. The Antichrist’s Rise to Power through POLITICAL Manipulation (Revelation 6:2).

Revelation 6:1-2 shows the Antichrist riding on a white horse with a bow in his hand and he is given a crown (v.2). This white horse symbolizes the Antichrist coming into the world with victory. The crown indicates that he will rule. The bow without arrows symbolizes that he conquers without fighting. He will take power through diplomatic manipulation.

As far back as the second century A.D., Christian scholars have believed that the Antichrist would be a Jew from the tribe of Daniel This was the view of both Irenaeus (A.D. 120-202) and Jerome (A.D. 331-420). However, many modern Bible teachers believe the Antichrist will be a Gentile since he arises from the sea of humanity (Revelation 13:1) and the sea symbolizes the Gentile nations (Revelation 17:15). Also, he will rise from one of the nations that made up the ancient Roman empire since he is a ruler of the people who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Daniel 9:26). Furthermore, he will persecute the Jewish people, invade Israel, and desecrate the rebuilt Jewish temple (2 Thessalonians 2:4; Daniel 9:27; 11:41). It seems unlikely that a Jew would harm

his own people, but yet power and greed combined with satanic influence could turn him into a Judas. Perhaps he will be a Jew who arises from the Gentile nations.

3. The Antichrist Makes a PEACE TREATY with Israel and the Tribulation Period Begins (Daniel 9:27).

After years of facing hostility from neighboring countries, Israel will finally experience peace—at least for three and a half years. The Antichrist will negotiate a Middle-East seven-year peace treaty and bring fame to himself as a political negotiator. Probably during this time, Israel will rebuild the Temple.

4. The Antichrist Is Given Power by SATAN (Rev. 13:2, 4).

The supernatural power of the Antichrist comes directly from Satan. The Antichrist seems to be invincible (v.4). His power grows politically.

5. The Antichrist Will Be ASSASSINATED Near the Middle of the Tribulation and Resurrected (Revelation 13:3, 12, 14; 17:8).

Many Bible teachers believe the Antichrist will be assassinated (Revelation 13:3), descend into the abyss (Revelation 17:8), and be raised back to life (Revelation 11:7; 13:3, 12, 14; 17:8). The whole earth will be amazed and follow him (Revelation 13:3).

6. The Antichrist Heads-up the Revived ROMAN EMPIRE (Daniel 7 and Revelation 17).

Three of the ten rulers of the revived Roman Empire will resist the Antichrist's rise to power, but he will defeat them (Daniel 7:24). The remaining seven rulers will give him full allegiance and authority over their nations (Revelation 17:12-13).

7. The Antichrist Will Kill the TWO WITNESSES (Revelation 11:7).

The gospel will be proclaimed during the Tribulation. God will send two witnesses with His power to supernaturally protect themselves (v.5) and to perform miracles (v.6). After their ministry is accomplished, the Antichrist will kill them and leave their bodies lying in the street of Jerusalem for the whole world to see (vs.7-10). After 3 ½ days, God will restore their life and they will stand to their feet (v.11). Finally, God will call them up to heaven and their enemies will witness them ascending to heaven (v.12).

8. The Antichrist and the Ten Nations DESTROY the One World Religion (Revelation 17:16-18).

A one-world religion called the *"great prostitute"* (17:1) will control (as indicated by the prostitute sitting on the beast—Revelation 17:3) all religions and governments during the Tribulation. Up to this point, the one world religion aided the Antichrist in becoming a world dictator. As the ten nations take over as the world ruler, the one world religion is no longer useful. It is in the way. The Antichrist and the ten nations will turn against the one world religion and destroy it. This opens the door for the Antichrist to set himself up as God.

9. The Antichrist STOPS Israel from Worshipping & Sacrificing in the Temple and Demands the World WORSHIP Him as God (Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:4) as He BLASPHEMES God (Revelation 13:5-6; Daniel 7:8).

The Antichrist breaks the seven-year peace treaty with Israel and stops Israel from making sacrifices to God. He declares himself to be God and sets himself up to be worshipped (Daniel 9:27). The Antichrist will perform counterfeit miracles, signs, and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10) and blasphemes God (Revelation 13:5-6; Daniel 7:8). The world nations will

worship him as God for the second half of the Tribulation period (Revelation 13:4-8). He will rule the world politically, religiously, and economically (Revelation 13:4-8, 16-18).

10. The Antichrist will PERSECUTE the Jewish people (Revelation 12:6; Daniel 7:21, 25) and All Christ-followers During the Second Half of the Tribulation Period (Revelation 13:7).

11. The Antichrist Gains a Partner—A Great Worldwide RELIGIOUS Leader (Revelation 13:11-18).

The Bible speaks of a second beast (Revelation 13:11-18) who is also called the *"false prophet"* (Revelation 16:13; 19:20, 20:10). He is the third person in the unholy trinity—Satan, Antichrist, and the False Prophet. Just as the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ (John 16:13-14) and points the world to Him, so will the False Prophet point people to worship Antichrist during the Tribulation (13:12, 15). Also, he will force the world to receive the 666 mark of the beast (13:16-17).

12. The Antichrist Will Establish a Worldwide IDENTIFICATION MARK (666) of Antichrist (Revelation 13:16-18).

The Antichrist will control the world's economy by requiring everyone to have a mark (666) on their forehead or right hand to do business. The government of the Antichrist will be able to track every business transaction on the earth.

13. The Antichrist Will Face a REVOLT from the Kingdoms of the South, North, and East (Daniel 11:40-44).

The kings of the **South** (Egypt and Arab allies) and the **North** (possibly Russia) will attack the Antichrist but will be defeated by him. The Antichrist invades the entire Middle East including Jerusalem. Later the Antichrist will hear alarming reports coming from the **East** (possibly China) and the **North**. The Antichrist will destroy everyone in his path. The Antichrist sets up his headquarters outside Jerusalem *"He [Antichrist] will stop between the glorious holy mountain and the sea and will pitch his royal tents...."* (v.45 NLT).

14. The Antichrist Will Gather All the Nations against JERUSALEM for the Battle of Armageddon. Christ Will Rescue Jerusalem from the Antichrist and the Nations at His Second Coming (Zechariah 12:1-3; 14:1-5; Revelation 16:16; 19:19).

15. Christ Will Defeat and Send the Antichrist, the False Prophet, and All Who Received the Mark of the Beast to the LAKE of FIRE (Revelation 19:19-21; Daniel 7:11).

Conclusion

We must be intentional and disciplined about staying focused on God—because the devil is working to distract us from God. The Antichrist will divert the attention and devotion of the nations to himself. They will not worship God, but the Antichrist (Revelation 13:8). The Devil will do everything he can to distract our attention and devotion away from God. He will seek to get our focus on anything other than God—such as material possessions, money, pleasure, prosperity, position, prestige, sensuality, addiction, business, etc.

What do you worship most? What place does God have in your heart, schedule, priorities, affections, finances, etc.? In what ways have you been distracted from God? Do you need to rededicate your life to God and make Him first in your life?