

THE ANTICHRIST

The Man of Sin, the son of perdition

www.ThreeAngels.com.au

Having an understanding of the work and nature of the Antichrist is so important, that God inspired the Prophet Daniel in the Old Testament, and the Apostle's Paul and John in New Testament, to write about it at length. A study of the writings of these three men of God gives an overall picture and a clear understanding of the Antichrist so that no one need be ignorant of its identity and purpose. An understanding of this subject unmasks the working of Satan so that the Christian is better prepared for the battle between good and evil. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. This study opens with a part of Paul's second letter to the Christian church at Thessalonica. Here Paul warns the church about the then soon to be revealed Antichrist whom he called the 'man of sin' and the 'son of perdition'.



2THESS 2:1-9 (1) *Now brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, (2) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. (3) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, (4) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. (5) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? (6) And now you know*

what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. (7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. (8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. (9) The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.

The following is a commentary on the above verses 1-9

(1) Now brethren, concerning the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,

Paul's opening comment refers to the return of Christ. The Greek word translated 'coming' is the Greek word "*parousia*" which is a reference to the Second Advent of Christ. At Christ's return all living Christians will be gathered together to Him. This gathering is also described in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians. It is the 'parousia', the day when the 'Resurrection' of the dead and the 'Rapture' of the living take place. Both events occur on the same day at the Second Advent of Christ. This is what Paul had previously taught the Thessalonians in his first letter to them (quoted below).

1 Thess 4:16-17 "For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming (Parousia) of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first (resurrection). Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up (raptured or translated) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air". And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

From this we can see that "**the coming (parousia) of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him**," are the same event. Christ returns with a shout with the voice of the archangel and a loud trumpet that raises the dead from their graves. After that those who are alive at the return of Christ are raptured or translated with the resurrected dead to meet Christ in the air. This is the parousia, the coming of the Lord and our gathering together to him.

(2) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

Paul refutes the false doctrine of Imminence. Paul tells the church not to be shaken in mind or troubled regarding the rapture. They were not to be troubled or alarmed by reports that the day of the return of Jesus to rapture the living was almost here. It seems that the Thessalonians believed some errors regarding the second coming of Christ and they may have been taught these errors through false spirits, words or letters supposedly coming from Paul himself. The word translated ***'had come'*** is "*enistemi*" and it means 'close at hand' or 'imminent'. Someone had taught them that the rapture was imminent. The nearness of the Second Advent of Christ was keeping the Thessalonian Christians in a state of nervous excitement. Some had even given up work. So Paul writes to tell them, no, the rapture is not imminent. Certain events must take place first.

(3) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that day will not come unless the falling away (apostasia) comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

the falling away: Do not be deceived by the false doctrine of imminence. *'That day - the parousia, the day when Jesus returns to rapture/gather His people, will not occur until the falling away comes first, and the Antichrist is revealed. The Greek words translated 'the falling away' are 'he apostasia' and it means "the apostasy" i.e., the falling away or departure from the truth. The apostasy foretold here is a massive apostasy that was to occur from within the Christian church. This apostasy would take place first and then the Antichrist – the man of sin the son of perdition would be revealed. Then after the revealing of antichrist the return of Christ will take place to resurrect the dead saints from their graves first and then rapture the living saints.*

"The Thessalonians erroneously concluded that Christ's coming lay in the immediate future, with resultant cessation of work, fanatical excitement, and disorder." Paul's answer in 2 Thessalonians 2 is a refutation of such an imminency doctrine. The apocalyptic tribulation must come first, before the parousia and rapture.

*...the term apostasia in the New Testament and in the Septuagint is used exclusively for religious defection, a departure from the faith. It never refers to the departure of the Church from the earth. In 2 Thessalonians 2:3 it is correctly translated as **"the rebellion"** in both the **Revised Standard Version** and the **New International Version**. The definite article "the" before "rebellion" points to a well-known apostasy about which Paul had informed the Thessalonians earlier (verse 5) and which he now explains more fully in the following verses, especially verses 4, 9 and 10. The apocalyptic apostasy, says Paul, will be a deliberate departure from the apostolic faith, a rebellion against God, led by the antichrist." *The Israel of God in Prophecy*" Hans LaRondelle. Andrews University Press, Berrigan Springs Michigan, 1983 p203*

Some commentaries teach that the word *apostasia* means a departure from the earth at the rapture. This interpretation would have Paul say this: "That day (the Rapture) will not come unless the departure from the earth (rapture) comes first and the man of sin is revealed." this interpretation makes no sense at all. However the truth is the apostasia is a departure from the truth. Therefore Paul is saying "That day (the Rapture) will not come unless a departure from the truth come first and the man of sin is revealed.

This apostasy foretold here took place early in the history of the church as described by the Anglican clergyman H.Gratten Guinness.

"The history of the Christian church does not record a steady progress in the pathway of truth and holiness, an uninterrupted spread of the kingdom of God on earth. On the contrary, it tells the story of a tremendous apostasy. Even in the first century, as we learn from the New Testament, there set in a departure from the gospel, and a return to certain forms of ritualism, as among the Galatians. In the second and third centuries, anti-Christian doctrine and anti-Christian practices, sacramentarianism [a religious ceremony or act symbolising or conferring grace upon a believer] and sacerdotalism [the belief that the priest has the power to offer sacrifice in offering the Eucharist], invaded the church, and gradually climbed to a commanding position, which they never afterward abandoned. In the fourth century, with the fall of paganism, began a worldly, imperial Christianity, wholly unlike primitive apostolic Christianity, a sort of Christianised heathenism; and in the fifth and sixth centuries sprang up the Papacy, in whose career the apostasy culminated later on. - "Romanism and the Reformation," H.Gratten Guinness, pp60, 61 London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1891.

During the early centuries with the mixture of Christianity and heathenism a lot of heathen practices and doctrines became accepted in the Christian church. These practises and beliefs still exist today.

The son of perdition - The only other place in the bible where this expression is used is in John 17:12 where Jesus Himself uses it to describe Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Him. Jesus was in prayer to the Father in the garden of Gethsemane and was discussing his disciples. He admitted that one of them was lost.

John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

This clue given by the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians indicates that the Antichrist cannot be a pagan dictator like Nero or be a non-Christian Jew. Like Judas, the Antichrist the son of perdition will be a professed follower of Christ while inwardly denying Him. He will be a false apostle, an insider like Judas, looking Christian on the outside while inwardly rejecting everything the Christian gospel stands for. A Judas – a secret enemy while a seeming friend – a familiar friend yet a fatal foe who betrays with a kiss and a “hail master!”

(4) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Showing himself that he is God - Paul did not say that antichrist will walk into the temple and say: ‘I am God’. That would be too obvious. He claims such honors and such reverence as the true God would if he should appear in human form. He will show himself that he is God; by taking upon himself the titles of God, by usurping a power over the consciences and souls of men; by dispensing with the laws of God and man; by assuming to himself all power in heaven and in earth; by taking upon himself the power to open and shut the gates of heaven at pleasure; and by pardoning sin, which none but God can do; this is the Antichrist's mouth speaking blasphemies mentioned in Rev 13:5.

Temple of God – this is where the Antichrist is going to sit or rule. It does not refer to a literal sitting down on a seat but is figurative referring to possession of authority. Such as when earthly kings come to power they are said to be occupying the throne.

What and where is this temple? Quite a lot of Christians believe this temple is one that will be rebuilt in Jerusalem. But the whole purpose of the Jewish temple was to worship God and to offer sacrifices for sin that were an act of faith in the redeemer to come. After the sacrifice of Christ the Old Covenant sacrifice of animals had lost its significance. The New Covenant sacrifice of Jesus has abolished forever the Old Covenant need to sacrifice animals. So if a group of unbelieving Jews did succeed in rebuilding a temple in Jerusalem it would be a denial of the sacrifice of Jesus. Such a temple would not be called the temple of God. Certainly Paul's use of the expression does not refer to an Old Covenant temple in Jerusalem. The word translated ‘temple’ is ‘naos’ and it refers to the inner shrine. It does not refer to the temple as a whole. “*He sits in the temple of God*” might refer to the inner courts, but the reference is clearly to the ark of the covenant, which was the resting place of the shekinah glory. By sitting there, the man of sin puts himself in the place of God and most likely refers figuratively to sitting in authority over the temple.

Also when Paul uses the word ‘naos’ he uses it to refer to the church. Eg

1 Corinthians 3:16 “Do you not know that you are the temple [naos] of God and that the Spirit of God dwells within you.”

1 Corinthians 6:16 “...For you are the temple [naos] of the living God.”

There is no mention in the New Testament at all about a new temple being rebuilt in Jerusalem for the worship of God. Even if such a temple were rebuilt it would not be the temple of God. The temple of God on earth is the Christian church. There is a New Covenant temple building mentioned in the books of Revelation (Rev 11:19) and Hebrews (Heb 8:1-2). This New Covenant temple is always shown as being in heaven where Jesus Himself is the High Priest. The temple of God on earth where the Antichrist is to sit and wield power is the Christian church. Through this human antichrist, Satan is to gain access into the Christian church and from a seat or position of authority, make pronouncements over Christendom and hold world wide influence, his words and decrees being received as if from God himself.

(5) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

The apostle Paul had already told the Thessalonian church all these things. He was not giving them any information that they hadn't heard before. Paul obviously thought that it was a wise thing that the

Christian church should have a clear understanding regarding the appearance and nature of the Antichrist for him to preach about it to them and to later write about it.

(6) And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

There was a power that was restraining the appearance of the Antichrist. Paul does not mention in his letter what that power is but his church already knew because he had previously told them. However it would appear that the restrainer is the Pagan Roman Empire. Jerome - one of the early church fathers has this to say about the restraining one: -

“He [Paul] shows that that which restrains is the Roman Empire; for unless it shall have been destroyed, and taken out of the midst, according to the prophet Daniel, Antichrist will not come before that. If he had chosen to say this openly, he would have foolishly aroused a frenzy of persecution against the Christians; and then against the growing church.”

*“ And now you know what restrains, that he might be revealed in his time; that is, you know very well that the reason why the Antichrist does not come immediately. Nor does he [Paul] wish to say openly that the Roman empire must be destroyed, because those who rule think [it] eternal... For if he had openly and boldly said, ‘Antichrist will not come unless the Roman empire is first destroyed,’ a just cause of persecution then would have seemed to arise in the early church.” *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers, vol 1 p 444. Ed. L. E. Froom, Review and Herald, 1950**

What Jerome is saying is that Paul believed that the Pagan Roman empire was the restrainer and that this is what Paul had previously taught his converts. When the Roman Empire is destroyed and taken out of the way then the Antichrist will be free to manifest itself. Paul did not mention the restrainer by name because had he done so and his letter were to be read by the Roman authorities he and the Christian church would be seen as spreading sedition throughout the empire and thereby bringing persecution upon themselves. This understanding of the Ancient Roman Empire being the restrainer comes from the prophecy of the book of Daniel in chapter 7. The fourth beast in that prophecy -Pagan Rome- had to come to an end and then divide into the states of Europe symbolised by the 10 horns. The man of sin the little horn then arose from among them. The antichrist could not appear until the Ancient Roman Empire was gone.

Some commentaries insist that the restrainer of the antichrist is the Holy Spirit. They say that when the restraining power of the Holy Spirit is removed the antichrist will appear. This interpretation is nothing more than reading into the bible what isn't there. There is nothing in these verses that in anyway gives the idea that the holy spirit is intended. If Paul taught that the Holy Spirit was the restrainer then why didn't he just say so? He had nothing to hide. But he did have a lot to hide by not naming the Roman Empire as already mentioned.

(7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. (8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming (parousia).

The Antichrist was beginning in Paul's day but due to the restrainer the Antichrist was hidden from view. Once the restraining Roman Empire was removed the Antichrist was revealed. The Antichrist is called the mystery of lawlessness for it will attempt to change the law of God. According to the prophecy of Daniel chapter 7:25 the Antichrist is to think to change times and laws. The Antichrist will come to an end at the return of Christ, destroyed by the brightness of the Parousia at the rapture. This means all the church will go through the tribulation and the battle with the antichrist. It also means that the man of sin must reign in the church for a period of centuries. Therefore he *cannot be a single human being or just one man*. The man of sin cannot be Satan either because he is spoken of as being separate from him. He must either be a system, or a succession of human beings. The expression "the man of sin" is like the expression "the King" it refers to a succession of individuals not just one man. 'A King' = one man. 'A man of sin' = one man. 'The Man of Sin' refers to a dynasty, one that spans from the first century until the return of Christ.

(9) The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders.

The coming of the antichrist foretold here by Paul seems to be the resurrection of antichrist after what the apostle John in the Revelation describes as a healing of its deadly wound. The antichrist, after a long history of religious-political activity in Europe, is almost destroyed, and appears to lose all influence in human affairs. The antichrist is to fully recover from this deadly wound. This total recovery is to be

accompanied by demonic miracles. The apostle John in the Revelation 13:13-14 talks about these satanic miracles that are performed by The Land Beast [False Prophet].

Revelation 13:3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and the deadly wound was healed. And all the world marvelled and followed the beast [antichrist].... Revelation 13:13-14 "He [False Prophet] performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on earth in the sight of men". And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by the signs he was granted to do in the sight of the beast [antichrist], telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived."

The apostle John shows that the demonic deceptive miracles will occur with the antichrists resurrection and will achieve a success beyond any prediction or expectation. In refusing the true gospel, people 'will believe the lie which comes as a strong over-mastering delusion' which is accompanied by miraculous wonders.

Overview of Paul's "man of sin"

- (1) The appearance of the "man of sin" from within the church and the great apostasy are to take place **before** the return of Christ for His people.
- (2) He was beginning in Paul's day but was being restrained by the Pagan Roman Empire.
- (3) He was revealed once the restraining Roman Empire was removed in the fifth century.
- (4) He was revealed just after the time of the great apostasy from within the church.
- (5) He is a false apostle who professes Christianity
- (6) He will exalt himself to the level of God Himself within the Christian church.
- (7) He is to reign for centuries within the Christian church only to be destroyed by the brightness of the 'Parousia' – the return of Christ for His people.

According to the Westminster Confession:- There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof, but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God.—*Westminster Confession, chap 25; cited in "A History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith," William A. Curtis, p 272. New York: Charles Scriber's Sons, 1912.*

"We are convinced that the Papacy is the seat of the true and real Antichrist". *Martin Luther. 16th Century German Augustinian Monk and founder of the Lutheran church in Germany. (What Luther Says", ed. Ewald M Plass, Vol.1, 34)*

He is a false apostle.

The antichrist as a false apostle within the Christian church is the one who falsely claims to be the successor of the apostle Peter.

2 Thessalonians 2:4 "sits as God in the Temple of God, showing Himself that he is God."

"The Pope is of so great dignity and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God...The Pope by reason of the excellence of his supreme dignity is called bishop of bishops... He is likewise bishop of the universal church. He is likewise the divine monarch and supreme emperor and king of kings. Hence the Pope is crowned with a Triple Crown, as being king of heaven, and of the earth and the lower regions. ." *Extract from Ferraris Ecclesiastical Encyclopedia RC printed in Rome 1890*

Beware of deception

A series of books and a video known as the "Left Behind" series, have been produced portraying last day events supposedly based on the prophecies found in the New Testament book of Revelation. The authors of the series are Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins. These books are all based on the theology of Jesuit futurism. The main theme of the series is about a secret rapture where all true Christians suddenly vanish and are taken to heaven. Those not taken to heaven are 'left behind'. After this rapture the Antichrist appears on the world scene and rules in Israel for 3 ½ years. What is disturbing about the series is that it is the opposite of what The Apostle Paul says in 2Thess 2:1-9. Paul makes it clear that the Antichrist appears before Christ returns for his people.

False view as presented in the "Left Behind" series of books

Jesus returns _____ The Antichrist is revealed
For his people _____ and reigns in Israel for 3 ½ yrs.

The Apostle Paul in 2 Thess 2: 1-9

The Antichrist is revealed
And reigns for centuries from _____ Jesus returns for His people.
within the church

JESUIT FUTURISM - A ROMAN CATHOLIC JESUIT DECEPTION.

So great hold did the conviction that the papacy was the Antichrist gain upon the minds of men, that Rome at last saw she must bestir herself, and try, by putting forth other systems of interpretation, to counteract the identification of the papacy with the Antichrist. Accordingly, towards the close of the century of the reformation, two of her most learned doctors set themselves to task, each endeavouring by different means to accomplish the same end; namely, that of diverting men's minds from perceiving the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Antichrist in the papal system. The Jesuit Alcazar devoted himself to bring into prominence the *Preterist* method of interpretation,... that the prophecies of Antichrist were fulfilled before the popes ever ruled at Rome, and therefore could not apply to the papacy. On the other hand the Jesuit Ribera tried to set aside the application of these prophecies to the papal power by bringing out the *Futurist* system, which asserts that these prophecies refer properly not to the career of the papacy, but to that of some future supernatural individual, who is yet to appear, and to continue in power for three and a half years at the end of time. Thus, as Alford says, the Jesuit Ribera, about AD 1580, may be regarded as the founder of the Futurist system in modern times. "It is a matter of deep regret that those who hold and advocate the Futurist system at the present day, Protestants as they are for the most part, are really playing into the hands of Rome, and helping to screen the papacy from detection as the Antichrist. It has been well said that 'Futurism tends to obliterate the brand put by the Holy Spirit upon popery.' More especially is this to be deplored at a time when the papal Antichrist seems to make an expiring effort to regain his former hold on men's minds. Now once again, as at the Reformation, it is especially necessary that his true character should be recognised, by all who would be faithful to 'the testimony of Jesus.'" *"Daniel and the Revelation" pp 16-17 The Rev Joseph Tanner, 1898.*

"Roman Catholics as well as Protestants agree as to the origin of these interpretations. Thus the Roman Catholic writer G.S.Hitchcock says: "The Futuristic School, founded by the Jesuit Ribera in 1591, looks for Antichrist, Babylon, and a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, at the end of the Christian Dispensation. "The Preterist School, founded by the Jesuit Alcazar in 1614, explains the Revelation by the Fall of Jerusalem, or by the fall of Pagan Rome in 410 A.D." *G.S.Hitchcock. Quoted in 'The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers vol 2 pp 487-488. Ed, L. E. Froom. Review and Herald 1948.*

Italian Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), (nephew of Pope Marcellus 11), and who was a contemporary of Ribera and a defender of the Roman church against Protestantism said this:-

"For all Catholics think thus that Antichrist will be one certain man; but all heretics [Protestants] teach ... that antichrist is expressly declared to be not a single person, but an individual throne or absolute kingdom, and apostate seat of those who rule over the church." *Cardinal Robert Bellarmine Quoted in 'The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers vol 2 p500. Ed, L. E. Froom. Review and Herald 1948.*

The gist of the Jesuit Ribera's Futurist theory is this:- "Ribera assigned the first few chapters of the Apocalypse to ancient Rome, in John's own time; the rest he restricted to a literal three and a half years' reign of a infidel Antichrist, who would bitterly oppose and blaspheme the saints just before the second advent. He taught that Antichrist would be a single individual, who would rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, abolish the Christian religion, deny Christ, be received by the Jews, pretend to be God, and conquer the world—and all in the brief space of three and one half literal years!" ..." *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers vol 2 pp 489, Ed, L. E. Froom. Review and Herald 1948.*

Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), was one of the most learned men of his day. He advocated and taught the Jesuit Ribera's futurist interpretation to counteract the Protestant view that the Papacy is the Antichrist.

"He taught that the Antichrist would be one particular man, that he would be a Jew, that he would be preceded by the reappearance of a literal Enoch and Elias, that he would rebuild the Jewish temple at Jerusalem, compel circumcision, abolish the Christian sacraments, abolish every other form of religion, would manifestly and avowedly deny Christ, would assume to be Christ, and would be received by the Jews as their Messiah, would pretend to be God, would make a literal image speak, would feign himself dead and rise again, and would conquer the whole world—Christian, Mohammedan, and heathen; and all *in the space of three and a half years.*" *Romanism and the Reformation H.Gratten. Guinness. P.165 London: J. Nisbet & Co., 1891.*

"Thus in Ribera's commentary was laid the foundation for that great structure of Futurism, built upon and enlarged by those who followed, until it became the common Catholic position. And then, wonder of wonders, in the nineteenth century this Jesuit scheme of interpretation came to be adopted by a growing number of Protestants, until today Futurism, amplified and adorned with the rapture theory, has become the generally accepted belief of the Fundamentalist wing of popular Protestantism. Although Ribera launched the Futurist system of interpretation, it was popularised and made to register by the astute Cardinal Bellarmine..." *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers vol 2 pp 493. Ed, L. E. Froom. Review and Herald 1948.*

The "Left Behind" series of books by Jenkins and La Haye are sweeping the Christian world like a bushfire. It's important to understand that the underlying theology of these books is Jesuit futurism and was designed specifically by the Jesuit Ribera to destroy the protestant reformation, and bring all Christendom back to the foot of the Pope. When one studies the theory of futurism and the left behind books it becomes obvious that the only thing left behind in them is the truth. They are teaching the very false doctrine of imminence that Paul warned us about in his second letter to the Thessalonians. A deception that says the Lord returns to rapture His church before the revealing of the man of sin.

When Christians trust in the teaching that they will be raptured to heaven before the persecution of antichrist, how will they be prepared for the coming final test of faith when they will be forced to receive the mark of the beast? The danger of pretribulationism, [the belief that the church taken from the earth before the appearance of antichrist], is that it instills in the hearts of God's people a false hope and thus fails to prepare the Church for the final crisis when prophecy declares that whoever does not receive the mark of the beast shall be killed. It is vital that this truth is known else Christians are in a real danger of receiving the mark of the beast unknowingly because they have been deceived into thinking that the church is not on earth when the mark is enforced.

AUTHOUR:- MIKE FORFAR