

# Revelation's HOPE

## Lesson 12: The Antichrist

### I. Introduction

Revelation's main theme is the Lamb of God and His triumph over all the forces of evil. However, throughout the course of world history there has been a severe conflict that has permeated both the church and society. In this conflict there are some who have put themselves in place of Christ and against Him. Both are antichrist.

### II. Antichrist in the New Testament

#### A. One Clear Text: 1 John 4

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. <sup>2</sup> This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, <sup>3</sup> but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. <sup>4</sup> You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. . . <sup>6</sup> We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. <sup>7</sup> Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. <sup>9</sup> This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us” (1Jo 4:1-12 NIV).

#### B. Points of Contrast in 1 John 4

TRUE SPIRIT	FALSE SPIRIT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• True spokespeople for God exist</li><li>• True spirit confesses Jesus came in the flesh to save us</li><li>• Love is foundation</li><li>• Live in love so that there is no fear of the judgment</li><li>• Loves brother</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• False prophets</li><li>• Takes away from what Jesus came to do</li><li>• Fear and a lack of love is the foundation</li><li>• They do not live in love = fear of the judgment</li><li>• Does not love brother</li></ul> <p>WHO IS ANTICHRIST?→</p>

### III. WHO IS ANTICHRIST?

#### A. Popular teachings conflict:

1. Beth Gimmel and Brennan Delaney echo the popular expectation that “he will emerge from either the camp of Palestinian leader Yassar Arafat or Israel's Ariel Sharon.... after the temple... is restored to its former glory” in “Armageddon Has Begun,” *Sun*, April 30, 2002.
2. The *Left Behind* book has the antichrist appearing after the rapture.
3. The *Last Disciple* (by same publisher) has the antichrist appearing in the past.
4. Which view is right?

#### B. Antichrist Principle

1. Antichrist Principle: “In the place of” Christ. Anti in Greek means “in place of”.
2. Examples of this– **2 Corinthians 11:14** and **2 Thess. 2:4** “Sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God”.

#### C. Antichrist in Revelation

“The dragon stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. <sup>2</sup> The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. . .” (**Rev. 13:1-2**).

- Dragon – Satan (see Revelation **12:17**)
- Beast – we will find out
- Notice it has different animals together

#### D. More Characteristics

...<sup>3</sup> One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. <sup>4</sup> People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, “Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?” (**Revelation 13:3-4**).

- What is a beast? Let the Bible tell you: **Daniel 7:23**, “The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth”.
- Beast = Kingdom
- What, Who is this kingdom? It is worldwide and against Christ to say the least:

<sup>5</sup> The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. <sup>6</sup> It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. <sup>7</sup> It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. . .” (**Rev. 13:5-7**).

E. Worship is the issue

<sup>8</sup> All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.

<sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear. <sup>10</sup> 'If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity they will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed.' This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people" (**Rev 13:5-10** NIV).

- Before we look at all of the characteristics of this Religious / Political kingdom, lets contrast it with God's kingdom.
- Especially the ministry of Jesus→

F. In place of Christ: Counterfeit

Satan's Counterfeit	God's Kingdom
Beast Comes out of Water	Jesus Comes out of water after baptism
Receives authority from Dragon (13:1, 2)	After coming out of water Father gives authority to Son
Beast receives deadly wound 42 months or 3 ½ years after receiving authority	After 3 ½ year ministry as the Messiah, Jesus was crucified / wounded
Beast's deadly wound is healed	Jesus was resurrected
2 <sup>nd</sup> Beast, False prophet, performs miracles to deceive the world	Jesus ascended to heaven and sends Holy Spirit to perform miracles
False Trinity: Dragon, Beast, False Prophet	True Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
False Prophet looks like a lamb but speaks like a dragon	Jesus is the Lamb (John 1:29)
Followers think they are following Christ and that they are part of His Church	Christ's true followers suffer persecution at the hands of the Beast followers.

### III. Antichrist in Hebrew Scriptures

A. Where else do we see: “Sea”, “Lion”, “Leopard”, “Bear”, “horns”? Daniel 7:

“In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream. <sup>2</sup> Daniel said: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. <sup>3</sup> Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea. <sup>4</sup> “The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it. . . . (**Daniel 7:1-4**)”

- Dream begins during time of Babylon and continues. Lion = Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was given mind of a human after losing his mind.
- Jeremiah 4:7, 13 – Babylon described as a lion.

B. **Daniel 7:5** – Bear with three ribs. A kingdom that follows Babylon

1. We learned in Daniel 2 about a succession of 4 kingdoms.
2. Here we have Four beasts / kingdoms.
3. Perhaps a parallel is taking place: Bear = Medo-Persia

C. **Daniel 7:6** – Leopard w/ four heads conquers swiftly: GREECE

1. Swift conquest under Alexander the Great
2. Four generals after Alexander dies: Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, Seleucus.

D. **Daniel 7:7** – Fearsome beast with IRON teeth and horns

1. Iron monarch of Rome that followed Greece
2. Eventually divided by barbarian tribes into approximately 10 regions.
3. One more power is mentioned that goes AGAINST heaven!

E. **Daniel 7:8** – Little horn: Antichrist

1. Arose among the 10 divisions of Rome (Western Europe)
2. Arose after the fall of Rome
3. Eyes like a man: Prophet or “Seer” had eyes to see (see **1 John 4:1**). Human religious system based on man’s teachings.

#### 4. Different power: religious-political

##### F. Daniel wants to know what all of this means:

<sup>11</sup> "Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. <sup>12</sup> (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time)" (**Dan 7:11-12** NIV).

<sup>21</sup> As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, (**Dan 7:21** NIV).

##### G. Interpretation

<sup>17</sup> 'The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. <sup>18</sup> But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever--yes, for ever and ever.' "<sup>19</sup> (**Dan 7:17-19** NIV).

- This succession of kingdoms ends with the coming of Jesus and the kingdom being given over to God's people.
- More information:

<sup>24</sup> The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. <sup>25</sup> He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time. <sup>26</sup> "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.' <sup>28</sup> "This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself" (**Dan 7:1** NIV).

- Let's look at ALL of the identifying marks of this antichrist power from Revelation 13 & Daniel 7→

#### IV. Identifying marks of the Antichrist / Little horn

1. Arose among the 10 divisions of Rome (Western Europe)
2. Arose after the fall of Rome in 476 A.D.

**Labanca, Professor of History at the University of Rome: "To the succession of the Caesars came the succession of the Pontiffs in Rome. When Constantine left Rome he gave his seat to the Pontiff."**

**Stanley's History, Page 40: "The Popes filled the place of the vacant Emperors at Rome, inheriting their power, prestige and titles from Paganism...Constantine left all to the Bishop of Rome...The Papacy is but the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire, sitting crowned upon its grave."**

3. Eyes like a man: Prophet or “Seer” had eyes to see (see **1 John 4:1**). Human religious system based on man’s teachings.

4. Different power: religious-political

5. Subdue 3 Kings (**Dan. 7:24**)

- **Bishop of Rome opposed by three Barbarian tribes: Vandals, Ostrogoths and Heruli. Believed Christ was a created being**
- **Wipes them out after receiving power from Justinian in 538 A.D.**
- **"Hence, in accordance with the provisions of these Councils, we order that the Most Holy Pope of ancient Rome shall hold the first rank of all the Pontiffs, but the Most Blessed Archbishop of Constantinople, or New Rome, shall occupy the second place after the Holy Apostolic See of ancient Rome, which shall take precedence over all other sees." 538 AD**

6. Blaspheming power: Claim prerogatives of God (**Revelation 13 & Luke 5:20-21**) even the ability to forgive sins.

“Who can forgive sins? There is a man on earth that can forgive sins, and that man is the Catholic priest. Yes beloved brethren, the priest not only declares that the sinner is forgiven, but he *really forgives* him. The priest raises his hand, pronounces the word of absolution, and in an instant, quick as a flash of lightning . . . “. . . the chains of hell are burst asunder, and the sinner becomes a child of God. *So great is the power of the priest that the judgments of heaven itself are subject to his decision*” (The Catholic Priest by Michael Muller, Emphasis supplied).

7. Puts itself “in place of Christ” (**John 10:33**)

a. **Inscribed** in the miter of the pope is the title, Vicarious Filii Dei, which means “in the place of the Son of God,” or “in the place of Christ.” Some have pointed to the numeric value of this and other titles that total 666 numerically.

b. **666** – “Six is the number of Babylon, and, as such, it stands in contrast to the divine number seven. Being one short of seven, it expresses human imperfection without God, in contrast to the number seven which expresses the completeness and perfection of God. One might also observe the reference to 666 in 1 Kings 10:14 where 666 talents. . . were listed as King Solomon’s annual income. The information given in the context of when Solomon started going away from God after having married an Egyptian princess. In such a way, 666 as the number of the beast might point to the Christian church as the system that was once faithful to God and which eventually turns away from God and becomes the enemy of God’s people at the time of the end” (Stefanovic, Revelation of Jesus Christ, 2009, p. 427).

\*Overall, this apostate church took on various titles and practices that were in place of Jesus Christ.

8. Change times and laws – more later

9. *Power for Time, Times and Half a Time (42 months)*

a. 1,260 days

b. We saw it received power in 538 from Justinian. If it was in power for just 3 ½ years, then this would not be a major player in prophecy.

c. Also, we see that it is worldwide at the END of time.

- d. So, let's apply the day for year principle of Ezekiel 4:6
  - e.  $538 + 1,260 \text{ YEARS} = 1798$
  - f. Papal power crushed by France as Berthier takes the pope captive and he dies in captivity.
10. Why was it crushed? Because it persecuted the followers of Christ.
- John Paul II publicly confessed this was a dark chapter in the history of the Catholic Church and called for a public day of prayer and confession in March, 2000. Estimates range in the Millions for the number killed for believing "heresy".

#### V. More Thoughts for Consideration

- A. **2 Thess. 2:3-4:** Deception would be set up in the "temple" / church!
- B. We will see this power gain prominence again: Antichrist = medieval church system NOT PEOPLE in that system.
- C. Elijah Message comes to counteract teachings from this man-made system and the formation of end time Babylon. Reformation did so, but another Reformation message is being delivered at the end.
- D. Counter-reformation is where we get Preterism / Futurism which has made Revelation a mystery or confusing for many.
- E. We must know the TRUTH so we can be free: **John 8:30-36**. What I am sharing was given by the Father to Jesus, who made sure it was delivered to John so we could know what's happening. Why is this important? So that we are not focused on the cares of this world. So that we can be aware in order to **stay focused on Jesus**.

#### VI. Concluding Story

A great invasion force stood off the Normandy coast of France as dawn broke on June 6, 1944. There were nearly 5,000 ships of every type, the largest armada ever assembled. The naval bombardment that began at 05:50 that morning pounded the enemy's defensive positions. In the hours following the bombardment, more than 100,000 fighting men swept ashore to begin one of the epic assaults of history, D-Day, the invasion of Normandy.

The plan was to deceive and mislead the Germans into believing that Pas de Calais would be the site of the invasion, rather than the beaches of Normandy over 150 miles away. Eisenhower's staff created a phantom Army Group near Dover, just across the Channel from the supposed target at Pas de Calais. They built dummy installations of plywood and canvas complete with inflatable tanks, vehicles and a vast armada of rubber landing craft. They had a few real troops wandering around the dummy ones. They saturated the airways with deceptive reports leading up to the invasion and even sent double spies, trusted by the Germans to disseminate false information. Eisenhower assigned Patton, the popular and most respected American general to command the phantom army. During the weeks preceding the invasion, Allied airmen dropped more bombs on the decoy target than anywhere else in France.

When the BBC broadcast the lines from Verlaine's poem signaling commencement of the attack—"The violins of autumn wound my heart with monotonous languor"—the German forces in the decoy area went on alert, but Rommel's troops in Normandy did nothing. Indeed, many commanders had already left for Brittany to participate in an exercise designed, ironically, to simulate an Allied landing in Normandy. Rommel

himself was in Germany celebrating his wife's birthday.

The Germans became so convinced that Pas de Calais would be the Allied target that they held to the fiction until long after the actual attack had begun. As a result, nineteen powerful enemy divisions, to include important panzer reserves, stood idle on the day of the invasion, *awaiting an assault that never came*.

So today, many are following the popular leaders (such as Patton) reading the popular books, listening to the wrong signals and trusting the wrong people. They will focus on Israel and the temple and fail to prepare for the antichrist's deceptions. When the testing time comes, they will be no more prepared than the Germans were at Normandy.

Do not be fooled by a Decoy – Trust **Jesus** and His Word! If we stay focused on Him, then we need not be deceived!