

THE ANTICHRIST

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." II Thessalonians 2:3-4.

Sufficient is said in the Word of God concerning the Antichrist to give us a clear idea of his identity and an understanding of his activities. Naturally we are interested in this spectacular last-day character, and the Bible does not disappoint us in this respect. Enough is revealed concerning him to permit us to form a very accurate estimate of his character. Of him and his career people should be informed in order that they may be forearmed.

There are at least sixty names applied to this startling character in the Scriptures, and they are very suggestive. He is referred to as "the bloody and deceitful man" (Psalm 5:6), "the avenger" (Psalm 8:2), "the destroyer" (Psalm 17:4), "the deceitful and unjust man" (Psalm 43:1), the "mighty man" (Psalm 52:1), "the unrighteous and cruel man" (Psalm 71:4), "the oppressor" (Psalm 72:4), "the adversary" (Psalm 74:10), "the violent man" (Psalm 140:1), "the spoiler" (Isaiah 16:4), "the extortioner" (Isaiah 16:4), "the treacherous dealer" (Isaiah 21:2), "the destroyer of the Gentiles" (Jeremiah 4:7), the "profane wicked prince of Israel" (Ezekiel 21:25), "a vile person" (Daniel 11:21), "a proud man" (Habakkuk 2:5), "a wicked counsellor" (Nahum 1:11), "the idol shepherd" (Zechariah 11:17), "the man of sin" (II Thessalonians 2:3), "the son of perdition" (II Thessalonians 2:3), "antichrist" (I John 2:18), and "the beast" (Revelation 11:7; 13:1-2).

His names reveal his character, expose his vileness, and forecast his career and doom. He will not be an ordinary person, but one possessed of extraordinary talents and endowed with superhuman powers. He will be Satan's masterpiece, the culmination and consummation of the latter's workings. In him shall dwell all the fulness of the devil bodily. With the exception of Christ, he will be the most remarkable person who has appeared on the stage of human history.

I. What He Will Be.

1. He will be an intellectual genius.

He will be possessed of extraordinary intelligence. He will surpass Solomon in wisdom. That which baffles others will be simple to him. He will be the master of the secrets of occult sciences. "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee" (Ezekiel 28:3). This will be one of his most alluring attractions. His master mind will captivate the attention of the educated world. His marvelous store of knowledge, his acquaintance with the secrets of nature, and his superhuman powers of perception will stamp him as an intellectual genius of the first magnitude.

2. He will be an oratorical genius.

Daniel informs us that he has "a mouth that spake very great things," (Daniel 7:20). He will be a wizard of words. He will surpass Demosthenes. He will have a perfect command and flow of language. His oratory will not only gain attention, but also command respect. In describing "his mouth as the mouth of a lion," (Revelation 13:2) we have a symbolic expression of the majesty and awe-producing effects of his voice. The voice of a lion excels that of any other beast. So the Antichrist will outrival all orators, both ancient and modern.

3. He will be a political genius.

He will emerge from obscurity but by the dint of his diplomatic skill he will win the admiration and compel the cooperation of the political world. It will be by diplomatic chicanery and intrigue that he will win his early successes. He will be a very astute politician, winning his authority by flattery. "And in his estate

shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honor of the kingdom; but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries" (Daniel 11:21).

4. He will be a commercial genius.

Under his regime none will be able to buy or sell without his permission. "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that hath the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:17). All commerce will be under his control, and it will be used for his own aggrandizement. The wealth of the world will be at his disposal. He will have the intelligence and the ability to balance the budget, and bring apparent prosperity to all.

5. He will be a military genius.

He will be endowed with the most extraordinary powers so that "He shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people" (Daniel 8:24). Before his exploits the fame of Alexander and Napoleon will be forgotten. None will be able to stand before him. He will go "forth conquering and to conquer" (Revelation 6:2). He will sweep everything before him so that the world will exclaim, "Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:4). He is spoken of as "the man who made the earth to tremble, who did shake kingdoms" (Isaiah 14:16).

6. He will be a religious genius.

He will proclaim himself God, demand that divine honor should be rendered to him, and sitting in the Temple shall show himself forth that he is god. "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (II Thessalonians 2:4). After he magnifies himself above all, he will not permit the worship of anyone else.

II. What He Will Do.

1. He will rise out of obscurity.

"And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea" (Revelation 13:1).

2. He will demand worship of himself.

"Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (II Thessalonians 2:4).

3. He will surpass all other liars.

"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (II Thessalonians 2:9). He will be preparing for war while saying he is for peace.

4. He will deceive others.

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thessalonians 2:10).

5. He will conquer others.

Being greater than Alexander, Caesar or Napoleon, others will say of him, "who is able to make war with him?" (Revelation 13:4).

6. He will win recognition as a wonder.

"And they worshipped the beast saying, who is like unto the beast?" (Revelation 13:4).

7. He will blaspheme God.

"And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (Revelation 13:5-6). "And shall speak marvelous things against God" (Daniel 11:36).

8. He will exercise universal dominion.
"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations" (Revelation 13:7).
9. He will act as an absolute tyrant.
In addition to holding supreme control in the political world, he will regulate the life of everybody, and fix the price of everything that is bought and sold. "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their righthand, or their foreheads: And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name" (Revelation 13:16-17).
10. He will exalt himself.
"And he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god" (Daniel 11:36).
11. He will prosper.
"And shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished" (Daniel 11:36). However, his prosperity will be limited.
12. He will ignore God.
"Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers" (Daniel 11:37).
13. He will disregard the desire of women.
"Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women" (Daniel 11:37).
14. He will divide the spoils to his own personal advantage.
"And shall divide the land for gain" (Daniel 11:39).

He will have the marvelous gift of attracting unregenerate men, and the irresistible fascination of his personality, his versatile attainments, superhuman wisdom, great administrative and executive ability, along with his powers as a consummate flatterer, a brilliant diplomatist, a superb strategist, will make him the most conspicuous and prominent of men. He will pose as a great humanitarian and the friend of men, and the special friend of the Jewish race.

III. Some Contrasts Between Christ And The Antichrist.

1. In their respective designations.
 - (1) One is called the Christ (Matthew 16:16); the other will be called Antichrist (I John 4:3).
 - (2) One is called the Man of Sorrows (Isaiah 53:3); the other, the Man of Sin (II Thessalonians 2:3).
 - (3) One is called the Son of God (John 1:34); the other, the Son of Perdition (II Thessalonians 2:3).
 - (4) One is called the Lamb (Isaiah 53:7); the other, the Beast (Revelation 11:7).
 - (5) One is called the Holy One (Mark 1:24); the other, the Wicked One (II Thessalonians 2:8).
 - (6) One is called the Truth (John 14:6); the other, the Lie (John 8:44).
 - (7) One is called the Good Shepherd (John 10:11); the other, the Idol Shepherd (Zechariah 11:17).

2. In their respective careers.

- (1) Christ came down from heaven (John 3:13); Antichrist will come up out of the bottomless pit (Revelation 11:7).
- (2) Christ came in Another's Name (John 5:43); Antichrist will come in his own name (John 5:43).
- (3) Christ came to do the Father's will (John 6:38); Antichrist will do his own will (Daniel 11:36).
- (4) Christ was energized by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14); Antichrist will be energized by Satan (Revelation 13:4).
- (5) Christ submitted Himself to God (John 5:30); Antichrist will defy God (II Thessalonians 2:4).
- (6) Christ humbled Himself (Philippians 2:8); Antichrist will exalt himself (Daniel 11:36; II Thessalonians 2:4).
- (7) Christ honored the God of His fathers (Luke 4:16); Antichrist will refuse to do so (Daniel 11:37).
- (8) Christ was despised (Isaiah 53:3; Luke 23:18); Antichrist will be admired (Revelation 13:3-4).
- (9) Christ came to save (Luke 19:10); Antichrist will come to destroy (Daniel 8:24).
- (10) Christ cleansed the temple (John 2:14, 16); Antichrist will defile the temple (Matthew 24:15).
- (11) Christ ministered to the needy (Luke 4:18); Antichrist will rob the poor (Psalm 10:8-9).
- (12) Christ was rejected of men (Isaiah 53:7); Antichrist will be accepted by men (Revelation 13:4).
- (13) Christ was slain for the people (John 11:51); Antichrist will slay the people (Isaiah 14:20).
- (14) Christ was received up into heaven (Luke 24:51); Antichrist will be cast down into hell (Isaiah 14:14-15; Revelation 19:20).

At every point he is the antithesis of Christ. The word "Antichrist" has a double significance. Its primary meaning is one who will be opposed to Christ, but its secondary meaning is one who will be a mock or pseudo Christ, that is, in the stead of Christ. At first he will pose as the true Christ. Later, he will throw off his disguise, stand forth in his true character and set himself up as one who is against Christ.

Christians, in view of what is transpiring today, if we are to accomplish anything for our Lord, there is no time to lose. Our task is to give the gospel of Christ to a lost world. In these days so many are being deceived by a false gospel. As Christians, we should not expect to be popular if we stand for the whole truth. The public does not like to be awakened. Many will turn deaf ears to the truth and continue to be deluded. In spite of any and all opposition, it is our duty to warn those who are steeped in sin and bound by Satan's delusion. Some will heed our message, repent of their sins and believe on Christ. However, the majority will not do so. Furthermore, we should avoid becoming entangled in any movement that is helping to set the stage for the coming Antichrist. Let us avoid following the false messiahs in the political, industrial and religious realms.

Unsaved friend, put your faith in Christ who died for you on Calvary's cross. Trust Him and He will blot out your sin and save your soul. Then, through time and eternity you will enjoy fellowship with Him and with the children of God. He is your only hope. Trust Him now.