

The Antichrist, the 144,000 and the Martyred Saints

Rev. 6:1-2; Rev. 7

As we move from the horrors described in Revelation chapter 6, which details the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation. John now records two other features of his vision in chapter seven. Note the phrase, “**after this**” found in Revelation 7:1 and 7:9. “**After this**” . . . John saw the sealing of the 144,000. “**After this**” . . . he saw the martyred tribulation saints standing before the throne.

What John saw in this chapter was not necessarily chronological, but more likely greater detail of things that will occur during the first half of the tribulation. In fact, other interludes such as this will be found in this book (cf. Revelation chapters 10 through 15 and 17 and 18.)

Many of our contemporary history books are written in the same manner. The first chapter describes a predominant historic event, and then follows up with another chapter to highlight some other event that occurred during that same time period.

There are three more features I would like to highlight in today’s study that occur during the first 3 ½ years of the tribulation. Two come from chapter seven. That is the 144,000 and the martyred saints. The other item was introduced in the opening verses of chapter six (the Antichrist). He needs a little more attention before we move forward in our study.

LET’S BEGIN WITH THE ANTICHRIST.

The Antichrist’s first appearance in the book of Revelation is found in chapter 6:1-2. He is seen riding upon a white horse, with a bow, a crown and conquering and to conquer.

“And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.
² And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”

He is not specifically named in this passage, but nearly everyone agrees that it is the Antichrist beginning a campaign of false peace that soon erupts into war, famine, death and the persecution of the saints.

We now need to know a few more details about him so when we encounter him later in Revelation chapter 11, and in chapters 13 through 19, we will better understand what John is describing in his vision.

THE TERM ANTICHRIST

The term, “Antichrist” is a compound word meaning (*anti*) “against” and (*Christ*) “Messiah” or “Anointed One.” The term Antichrist means to be “against the Messiah” or to be the one “opposing the Messiah.” In this case he presents himself to the world as the Messiah. In reality, he is the satanically empowered one deceiving the whole world. In doing so, he draws people away from the LORD, resulting in them being condemned to an eternity in hell.

HE IS PART OF A COUNTERFEIT TRINITY – (Satan, the Antichrist and the false prophet.)

Satan’s Power: In Revelation 13:4 we learn that the dragon (*Satan*) is the one authorizing and empowering the Antichrist. He is imitating the works that our heavenly Father did in the life of Jesus.

“And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast”

The False Prophet: When we get to **Revelation 13:11** we will find another man known as “another beast,” or later in Revelation 19:20 he is referred to as the “false prophet.”

“And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. ¹² And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”

He will call men to worship the Antichrist and will do great wonders in the sight of men and deceive many (Rev. 13:13-14). What he is doing is imitating the ministry role of the Holy Spirit, who calls men to worship Jesus Christ.

The Antichrist: He will be raised as if from the dead in Revelation 13:3, 12, 15. He imitates the resurrection of our Lord.

“And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast” (Rev. 13:3).

“And he (*the false prophet*) exerciseth all the power of the first beast (*the Antichrist*) before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, **whose deadly wound was healed**” (Rev. 13:12).

And he (*the false prophet*) had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed” (Rev. 13:15).

HIS NAMES:

We find eleven names are given to the Antichrist in Scripture. They help us understand his character and the role he will play in the last days.

- a. Seed of Satan – Genesis 3:15
- b. The little horn – Dan. 7:8
- c. The King of Fierce Countenance – Dan. 8:23
- d. The prince that shall come – Dan. 9:26
- e. The Desolator – Dan. 9:27 (“he shall make it desolate”)
- f. The Willful King – Dan. 11:36 (“the king shall do according to his will.”)
- g. The Man of Sin – 2 Thess. 2:3
- h. The Lawless One – 2 Thess. 2:8
- i. The Antichrist – 1 John 2:18
- j. The Beast – Rev. 11:7

His common name is the Antichrist. However, we learn much about him in the collection of his names.

HIS ORIGIN IS BOTH NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL

Remember the counterfeit trinity? Well, there is an interesting aspect to the Antichrist’s natural and supernatural nature. In Genesis 3:15 we read,

“And I will put enmity between thee (*Satan*) and the woman, and between **thy seed** (*Satan’s seed*) **אֶתְּנֶה** and **her seed** (*the woman’s seed*)”

רֵעָה; *the woman's seed shall bruise the serpents' head, and the serpent shall bruise the woman's seed's heel.*

This passage references Satan's seed and the woman's seed. To grasp what I am going to say, we need to understand what God's word says about the woman's seed.

The term "seed" in both cases appear in the singular form. "Satan's seed" (singular – as in one person) and the "woman's seed" (singular – as in one person.) We know, in the case of the woman that "the seed" in its singular form refers to the true Deliverer – Jesus.

Therefore, some see in the phrase "thy seed" (*Satan's seed*) as a reference to the Antichrist – the offspring of Satan. They illustrate how this might occur by pointing to an event that occurred in Genesis 6 where

"the sons of God (angels) came into the daughters of men and bare children to men, the same became mighty men of old, men of renown." (Gen. 6:4).

Therefore, they see Satan at a determined point in history cohabiting with a woman and producing "his seed" a male child who becomes the Antichrist – the antithesis of Jesus.

MORE OF THE ANTICHRIST'S HUMAN NATURE.

He will appear "in the latter time" - Daniel 8:23-25 describes him as

... appearing "in the latter time . . . when the transgressors are come to the full"

He will be known as "a king of fierce countenance" – Dan 8:23.

Daniel 8:24 – "His power shall be great— but not by his own power; and he shall cause fearful destruction and shall succeed in what he does and destroy mighty men and the people who are the saints." – ESV

In other words, he will seek to destroy the holy people.

He Will Understand Dark Sentences:

Daniel 8:23 says in the latter day

“a king of fierce countenance, and **understanding dark sentences**, shall stand up.”

The term “dark sentences” הַיְדָוּת (*dark sayings*) is a term indicating some sort of direct or indirect revelation, in this case, from the evil one.

2 Thess. 2:9-10 confirms this about him with it says,

“*Even him*, whose coming is **after the working of Satan** with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.”

The phrase “**after the working of Satan**” highlights the term “**working.**” In the Greek, the term is ἐνέργειαν (*energeian*) referring to the Antichrist coming “in the energy of Satan.”

He will use craftiness and deceit – Daniel 8:25

“And through his policy **also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand**; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.”

He will stand against the true Messiah

2 Thess. 2:3-4 – “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; ⁴ **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.”

He will be a willful king – Dan. 11:36

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.”

He will not desire women – Dan. 11:37

“Either shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.”

Perhaps the Antichrist's disdain for women is linked with the reality that the true Deliverer, the Last Adam (*Satan's adversary and foiler of his overthrow*) came through the seed of a woman.

WHO IS HE? WHERE WILL HE COME FROM?

Some speculate that he will be Jewish.

They base their assumptions on three things. First, a Jew will never accept a gentile at their Messiah. Second, in the book of Daniel, it says that "he (*the antichrist*) shall not regard the God of his fathers" (Dan. 11:37). They assume that the phrase, "God of his father's" is a reference to the true God – Israel's God. However, the literal translation of that phrase is "the gods of his father's" (a reference to pagan deity's). 3) The tribe of Dan is not listed among the 144,000, leading some to assume that the Antichrist will come from that tribe.

More likely he will be Gentile (non-Jewish).

First, Daniel 9:26-27 – Makes him to be of Roman Heritage

"And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city."

Second, Daniel 7:8 – Has him as the "The little horn" which is a reference to the leader who will rise out of the gentile nations.

Third, the biblical term the "times of the gentiles" found in Luke 21:24 is a reference to the period in which the Gentiles would rule over the nation of Israel. That period began in 606 BC when Babylon took Judah into captivity and will continue until the end of the Tribulation Period. The Antichrist being the final ruler.

Fourth, the typology given in Revelation 13 and 17 pictures the beast (the Antichrist) rising out of the sea. When the term "sea" is used allegorically in Scripture it is always a reference to the Gentile nations.

Therefore, in summary, the Antichrist is one who will be "against or opposing the Messiah." He will be satanically inspired and controlled. He will be a fierce king seeking to destroy the saints and he will rise up from among the gentile nations.

THE GREAT EVANGELIST OUTREACH

I did not want to end with our thoughts on this very dark figure. For when we come to Revelation 7, we find embedded within the tribulation's doom and gloom, a glimmer of hope. In this period of time more people than ever will come to the Lord.

I love how Tim LaHaye a pastor and teacher on these future events illustrates how this great evangelistic awakening may happen.

In 1990 he and Jerry Jenkins authored a wildly popular Christian fiction series entitled "Left Behind." It imagined what life would be like during the tribulation period.

That year he was invited by a friend to speak at the San Diego Lions Club. Here was a largely secular (non-religious) audience. You can imagine their attitude. Most appeared disinterested, however as he stepped up to speak, a small earthquake shook the city. It caused tables in their room to shake and the lights to flicker. Some items fell to the floor.

After this seismic event ended and the dust settled, Tim began to speak again. But this time all eyes were on him. Everyone's interest was riveted on what he had to say.

This was just a small earthquake. Imagine what would happen when the church is raptured and within a short time later the horrible scenes described in Revelation 6 unfold. I am sure many souls would be interested in what they could do to rescue themselves.

Which brings us to the 144,000 Jewish men.

Chapter 7 opens with four angels holding back the four winds.

"Standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree . . . till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

And another angel descends from the east having the seal of the living God. The angel seals (or other angels with him seal the men, cf. **"till we have sealed . . ."**) 144,000 Jewish men. These **Jewish men are from the twelve tribes** of Israel. 12,000 men are sealed out of each tribe.

The four winds indicates that the Jewish men will come from all parts of the world.

Two key items occurred here.

First, a seal is given to protect them. They were **supernaturally sealed** on their forehead, so they would be protected during this time period.

Second, seal sets them apart as servants of the Lord. It seems this is what Jesus was talking about in Matthew 24:14 where He said,

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

In the next scene, we find multitudes of people are standing before the throne of God. Revelation 7:9 tells us,

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”

These people are from “all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.” They are “they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14).

There will be multitudes coming to Christ during the tribulation. That is good news. But there is also some bad news in this. Those who trust Christ in those last days will suffer greatly for their faith. We know from this and other passages that follow that multitudes will be forced to forfeit their lives because of the oppressive hand of the Antichrist. He will make war with the saints.

Today is the day of salvation. If the Lord is knocking on the door of your heart don't turn from Him. But open the door and receive Him.

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” - 1 John 5:12.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” - John 1:12.

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰ For

with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the scripture saith, 'Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.' . . . ¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." – Romans 10;9-11, 13.