

03/31/24 Message

Part of The End... then what

April 12, 2024

Message: Who is the Antichrist

Series: The End

This series is focused on prophecy, the last days, end times, and beyond. Many people are confused by prophecy and are fearful of the unknown. Truth is, God gives us knowledge of the future. He foretells it throughout His living word known as the Bible. Be part of this series and learn more about what lies ahead!

The Antichrist

John was the only one to use the term antichrist. He uses the word both in singular and plural form.

The word references three things:

- A SPIRIT in the world that opposes or denies Christ
- The FALSE TEACHERS who embody this spirit
- A LEADER, an actual person who will head up the final world rebellion against Christ

1 John 2:18-22 (NLT)

18 Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come.

19 These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us.

20 But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth.

21 So I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies.

22 And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist.

What do we see in this passage?

- The last hour is HERE (2:18)

The “end times” or the “last days” began back in John’s day. There were ungodly false teachers then and there’s ungodly false teachers now. It’s a good time to be reminded, these people haven’t wasted away, they’ve grown both in number and influence – and with each passing year, it’s not an addition, it’s multiplication!

That was Jesus’ method for growing the church. Disciples making disciples, making disciples... multiplication. But Satan’s no fool and he uses the same strategy because it works – and he uses it to grow his kingdom while most of us sit back and let him do it.

One scholar reminded us that the term “end times” or “last days” describes a kind of time not a duration of time. In Paul’s letter to Timothy, Paul calls it the last times or latter times. They were living in the end-times, and so are we.

How do I know it’s not a duration of time? Because Peter tells us in **2 Peter 3:8**, a day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day! The duration of time doesn’t matter when you’re not living on a 24 hour clock; when time is infinite and we’re talking about eternity, God doesn’t count the seconds, minutes, hours, days, or years like we do!

- The antichrist is COMING, and the antichrist is HERE (2:18)

1 John 4:3 says if someone claims to be a prophet and doesn’t believe in Jesus, they have the spirit of the antichrist. The spirit of the antichrist has lived throughout Biblical history and was introduced to the world in **Genesis 3** when Satan declared war on God.

2 Thessalonians 2, Paul warns us not to be easily shaken or fall for their lies, and he calls the antichrist a man of lawlessness who will bring destruction. V4 says He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call God and every object of worship. He will claim that he is God.

Daniel 8:23 says a fierce king, a master of intrigue, will rise to power. **Daniel 9:26**, some translations call him a prince whose people will

destroy the city and the sanctuary in war. John clearly calls him a man in...

Revelation 13:18 (NLT)

Two things have to happen before the antichrist rises to power. Two prophecies must be fulfilled before it happens.

Daniel 9:27 says the antichrist will sign a peace treaty with Israel.

The antichrist cannot be revealed until the restrainer is taken out of the way.

2 Thessalonians 2:6-7 (NLT)

6 And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes.

7 For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way.

He Has the Power

During the tribulation, the antichrist will be the most powerful person in the world. There is only one with greater power and authority and it's God Himself. God has to step back and allow the antichrist to fulfill prophecy of the tribulation.

Why would God allow this?

It goes back to the purpose of the tribulation, to judge the world for its sin.

The world will be corporately judged through the tribulation and individually judged at the final judgment, also called the great white throne judgment. That's one reason I believe the church will be raptured before the tribulation - because legit believers and followers of Jesus - will not face judgment because legit believers and followers of Jesus have already been forgiven of their sins!

Who is the antichrist?

Revelation 13:1 (NLT)

Then I saw a beast rising up out of the sea. It had seven heads and ten horns, with ten crowns on its horns. And written on each head were names that blasphemed God.

What sea? Let's read on...

Revelation 17:15 (NLT)

Then the angel said to me, "The waters where the prostitute is ruling represent masses of people of every nation and language."

In prophetic literature, the sea is an image of Gentile nations. In agreement, most scholars indicate the antichrist will not be a Muslim or Jew, but a Gentile.

In the first half of the tribulation, the antichrist is said to be the golden child of leaders... he's attractive, an eloquent speaker, magnetic personality, people want to follow him. And remember, this is amidst chaos... the church is gone... people all over the world have vanished... society as we know it is no more. Business, banks, government... closed.

This guy enters the scene and brings order to disorder.

He's the hero and he wins people over bit by bit until he has control of the entire world! Then something happens at the midpoint of the tribulation and at the point he has the most influence and control, a massive war happens. Satan and his demons attempt one final coup on the heavenly throne of God.

Revelation 12:7-9 (NLT)

7 Then there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and his angels.

8 And the dragon lost the battle, and he and his angels were forced out of heaven.

9 This great dragon—the ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, the one deceiving the whole world—was thrown down to the earth with all his angels.

But something else happens at that midpoint.

Revelation 13:3 (NLT)

I saw that one of the heads of the beast seemed wounded beyond recovery—but the fatal wound was healed! The whole world marveled at this miracle and gave allegiance to the beast.

The Bible tells us at the midpoint of the tribulation the antichrist will suffer a fatal head wound... fatal... dead. Yet, in an instant he's alive...

the wound healed.

Satan is in Charge

2 Thessalonians 2:6-8 (NLT)

6 And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes.

7 For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way.

8 Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.

The crazy thing is – as much as Satan despises God, at his heart, he wants to be God... so his unholy trinity during the tribulation looks something like this:

- Satan imitates God the Father
- The antichrist masquerades as God's Son, Jesus
- The false prophet impersonates God's Holy Spirit

Truth Prevails

1 John 2:18-27 (NLT)

18 Dear children, the last hour is here. You have heard that the Antichrist is coming, and already many such antichrists have appeared. From this we know that the last hour has come.

19 These people left our churches, but they never really belonged with us; otherwise they would have stayed with us. When they left, it proved that they did not belong with us.

20 But you are not like that, for the Holy One has given you his Spirit, and all of you know the truth.

21 So I am writing to you not because you don't know the truth but because you know the difference between truth and lies.

22 And who is a liar? Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist.

23 Anyone who denies the Son doesn't have the Father, either. But anyone who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24 So you must remain faithful to what you have been taught from the beginning. If you do, you will remain in fellowship with the Son and with the Father.

25 And in this fellowship we enjoy the eternal life he promised us.

26 I am writing these things to warn you about those who want to lead you astray.

27 But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ.

While those of us who believe and follow Jesus don't have to fear the antichrist, we do need to be aware of the antichrist spirits that tempt and threaten us every day. They're real and they're ever present all around us.

It should change how we live... how we protect our families and those we care about. Because until the ultimate punishment comes to Satan and all his demons, he's there.

Revelation 19:20 (NLT)

And the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who did mighty miracles on behalf of the beast—miracles that deceived all who had accepted the mark of the beast and who worshiped his statue. Both the beast and his false prophet were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur.