

# Who is (and isn't) the Beast?

## *Part 2: Christ vs. AntiChrist: Miraculous Signs (6/1/25)*

Please turn to 2 Thessalonians 2:1.

### LAST WEEK:

- Purpose of sermon series is to ***remove ourselves from apocalyptic fervor and use the Bible as our guide for discerning who the Antichrist ISN'T***, so that we're not deceiving ourselves, others, and ruining our testimony by making false predictions.
- God gives 3 aspects of discerning the Beast: 1) His characteristics, 2) What he says and does, and 3) Events that take place at his coming and while here.
- In order for anyone to be the Antichrist, **they must fulfill ALL of the above** as written in the Bible. We cannot point to someone through "a preponderance of the evidence" or because we don't like them.
- There is NO ONE in antiquity who fulfilled all the qualifications for him.
- There is NO ONE alive who does either.

TODAY we will learn that ***the coming/arrival of the Antichrist will be very similar to the coming of Jesus.***

WHY? Lucifer wants to be God and imitates Him. **Antichrist wants to be Jesus and will imitate Him—the Bible tells us so.**

Specifically: **the Antichrist will arrive with supernatural signs, wonders, and miraculous events that people will**

**SEE/EXPERIENCE.** Said miracles will be the evidence that "proves" that Antichrist is the new Messiah to follow...just as they were for Jesus.

**Jesus referred to "His works" to prove** that He was the Messiah and He told people to believe in the works:

**[Jhn 10:25 ESV]** 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. **The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me,**"

**[Jhn 10:38 ESV]** 38 "...even though you do not believe me, **believe the works,** that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

**[Act 2:22 ESV]** 22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—"

**The “works” Jesus continually refers to** wasn’t feeding and clothing the poor—it doesn’t take the Messiah to do that. Nor was it preaching alone; anyone can preach.

It was prophesied in books like Isaiah that when Messiah and the Kingdom had come, **there would be specific miracles He would perform to as a sign** to the people that this was “the Guy” and that time had finally arrived.

**Jesus caused a riot in His hometown synagogue** in Luke chapter 4 after He quoted *Isaiah 61:1-2* where Messiah helps the blind to see, etc. and then said “today this scripture is fulfilled in your presence.”

**People followed and believed in Jesus mainly based on His miracles.**

- Miracles took place at His birth: angels appeared to shepherds, a host surrounding his birthplace declaring “glory to God in the highest.”
- Miracles when He was a toddler: mysterious star appearing and leading the wise men.
- Miracles as soon as He went public at age 30: preaches sermon then immediately begins performing every sign from OT: healing blind, deaf, and paralyzed. Casting out demons, raising the dead.

**Antichrist wants to be Christ.** *He wants others to think he’s Christ.*

**He will arrive and be accompanied by supernatural signs, wonders, and miracles to convince many that he is.**

**[2Th 2:1-12 ESV]** 1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is **revealed**, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, **proclaiming himself to be God.** 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? 6 And you know what is restraining him now so that he **may be revealed in his time.** 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. 8 **And then the lawless**

**one will be revealed**, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9 **The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, 10 and with all wicked deception** for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 Therefore God sends them a **strong delusion**, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

These verses are about **the coming of the Antichrist** and several things that are going to happen when he makes his public debut.

I can't go through all of it today, **but verse 4 is a tall order**: he enters the Jewish Temple and declares himself to be GOD.

*Let's jump to verses 10-11: many BELIEVE him and are deceived.*

HOW??? **Something(s) needed to happen to convince millions**, perhaps billions, to worship him, his image, and take his mark. **Those things are miracles**. Not faked, not technology, not illusions, but Bonafide supernatural occurrences that blow people away and trick them.

**Just in case you're wondering why these things can't be tech** or mere stage magician illusions, let's go the Greek on the following 3 words used in verse 9: power, signs, wonders.

9 The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all **power** and false **signs** and **wonders**,

POWER: *dynamis* – “miracle, virtue, mighty.” Same word Jesus used when woman with blood issue touched him and “power/virtue” went out of Him into her. This word denotes the power at hand for anything supernatural to take place whether through a person or an event.

SIGNS: *semeion* – “sign, miracle, occurrence transcending the natural”. A supernatural occurrence that happens as an event (not performed by a person).

WONDERS: *teras* – “a miracle performed by a person/agent.” Supernatural flowing through a person such as Gifts of the Spirit: healing, prophecy, etc.

The Apostle Paul was careful to tell us that *all 3 would be happening when the Antichrist comes*. Specifically:

- That supernatural power would be ready & available when he arrives and is here. We might equate this to when revival happens: it seems as though supernatural power is abundantly available.
- Supernatural events would be taking place at his coming and while here.
- He and the FP would be performing these things.

**The False Prophet is the right-hand man** of the Antichrist and flowing in the supernatural as well. Why? Same reason: the miracles he does will point to the Antichrist as being a god to be worshipped. The purpose is to deceive the masses into believing in him vs. Jesus:

**[Rev 13:11-14 ESV]** 11 Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. 12 It exercises all the **authority** of the first beast in its presence, and **makes** the earth and its inhabitants **worship the first beast**, whose mortal wound was healed. 13 **It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people**, 14 and **by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth**, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.

#### Verse 12:

- the word “exercise” isn’t jumping jacks—it’s performance. He’s actively flowing in the aforementioned supernatural power.
- The word “authority” isn’t just being in charge: it denotes that someone has given them POWER (one of the translations of the word) to ACT. In the context of the verses, the FP has been given the ability to work miracles by the dragon.
- Through the working of supernatural powers, the FP is able to MAKE people worship the 1<sup>st</sup> Beast as a god.

13 It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people,

**Verse 13** repeats the how: the FP performs “great” signs—ones on a monumental scale—the apex of which is calling down fire from heaven. The verse adds something important: “in front of people.” The signs the FP will be working will be public and must be: people need to be convinced to worship the Beast as god.

14 and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived

**Verse 14:** it's BY THE SIGNS the FP works that it's able to deceive people into worshipping the Antichrist. It's by those miracles it's able to command the people to make some sort of idol/image of the Antichrist and worship THAT.

FP does everything *“in the presence of”* the first Beast so that the wonders he performs point to the Antichrist as the Christ... “confirms” him in the eyes of those watching.

### Summary.

- Just as Jesus' identity as the Christ was confirmed by His miracles, so will that of the Antichrist.
- Just as Jesus miracles inspired many to believe in Him, the Antichrist's miracles will inspire many to believe in him.
- Jesus supernatural works caused some to fall down and literally worship Him.
- The Antichrist's miracles will cause some to fall down and worship him.

*Jesus said the same* in His famous Matthew 24 discourse:

**[Mat 24:23-25 ESV]** 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and **perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray**, if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand.

**How does a person convince others that he is the Christ?** Jesus said it: will perform great miraculous signs that deceive others.

- We can be deceived by false teaching.
- We can be convinced by someone with a charismatic personality who makes us feel special.
- We can be persuaded by a person whose great at writing books or public speaking.

**The most convincing person is the one who can perform miracles.**

Especially if said miracles seem fulfill religious Scriptures whether the Bible, Quran, or others. *Just as Jesus didn't perform miracles willy nilly but did ones specifically foretold in the OT, so will the Antichrist and FP.*

**People are the most convinced by a person when miraculous signs & events point to them as being “the guy” and said signs are backed up by prophecy.**

One last thing: **the Antichrist may first come in secret, then openly to the whole world:**

*[Mat 24:26 ESV]* 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it.

**Both his secret coming in the beginning and his worldwide debut will be accompanied by miraculous signs.** Remember that Antichrist is trying to be Christ. Jesus was born accompanied by angels who appeared to the shepherds abiding in the fields by night, then surrounding His birthplace declaring glory to God. After the shepherds went and saw Him, the gospels say they went out and told others. 2 years later, the mysterious star (whatever that was) led the wise men to Jesus and the news got back to King Herod that Messiah was here.

**Jesus infancy and toddler days were a secret that only some knew, but was still accompanied by signs and wonders.**

Jesus talked of something similar with the Antichrist in the verse above: *he will be hidden away* in a secret chamber in the desert, and some will be told and given the chance to go see him. I fully believe said people will later testify they witnessed angelic visitation or some other sign to “confirm” this guy is the Christ. Since this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there might even be video!

**Very little was heard about Jesus from being a toddler to the age of 30.** After turning 30 He was Baptized by John and, visible to everyone present, the Holy Spirit descended from Heaven like a dove and lit on Jesus shoulder. Then a thunderous voice from Heaven—God the Father—spoke audibly for everyone to hear: *“this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased!”*

From there **Jesus went forth to preach and immediately began curing blindness**, deafness, and healing paralytics. Casting out demons, raising the dead, reproducing food...and He did most of these things in public in front of massive crowds.

When the Restrainer stops restraining, **the Antichrist will emerge from being hidden away** and I believe he will do the same: preaching and performing miracles at the same time.

**All of the Biblical evidence that I've read suggests he remains HIDDEN from the public eye until he's finally released to make himself known.**

**There is NO evidence to suggest that he's already a well-known** political, religious, or militaristic figure. NONE.

**Chances are really good that anyone alive whose already famous and in power is NOT the guy.**

**There's not a person alive or dead whose fulfilled all the things we've reviewed today.** Not one. Not even close.

**I'm thankful the Lord gave us the Bible to be our guide through even the most exciting and turbulent times** so that we don't have to fall into false predictions or finger pointing that only subtract from the testimony that God has given us through Jesus.

There's lots happening in the world right now and let's remember what the Lord tells us during these times:

[Isa 41:10 ESV] 10 fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.