

Studies in Daniel #8 – The “AntiChrist”

The overall theme of Daniel is: **God’s kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.** Dan. 4:3, 4:34, 6:26, 7:14, 7:27, Ps. 145:13

In the first three lessons, we looked at who God is: the source of true wisdom and knowledge and the revealer of secrets, that he is absolutely sovereign, and that he has an eternal kingdom. Concerning man, we saw the need for complete loyalty and obedience to God, for humility vs. pride, and for repentance. Then we studied the one called the “Son of God” and the “Son of man”.

Theme #7: The Antichrist

What do we mean by the commonly-heard term “Antichrist”? Usually it is referring to a yet future person who will be inspired by, and representative of Satan himself, rising in world power to be a counterfeit messiah. The world will think he is the answer to all major problems, and so he will demand worship as if he were God. He will be especially antagonistic to Jews and Christians and will persecute them to the death. He will come to power during a 7 year period called the “Tribulation”, which by many scriptures is divided into two 3 ½ year halves. In the end he will be utterly defeated by Christ at the Second Coming, and will be cast into the lake of fire.

The other meaning of antichrist is not this individual person, but spirits who so work in people and systems to pervert the gospel and turn people away from Christ. These spirits, and people, are called antichrists, or we could say, they are anti-christian. The specific term “antichrist” only occurs 4 times in the Bible, in 1 Jn 2:18, 22, 4:3, and 2 Jn 7. 1 John 2:18 shows that it was a common expectation at that time that an “Antichrist” would come, but John was showing that even before that time, we should recognize the presence of spirits of antichrist at work. He used the term especially for those who would pervert or deny the basic doctrines of Christ.

Because of this double meaning, I usually capitalize “Antichrist” when referring to the one particular man to come, and leave the word uncapitalized when referring to antichristian spirits, people, and systems already here.

We must be careful to get our understanding of the Antichrist and other end-time subjects from the Bible itself, and not from popular books and movies.

There are many other places in the Bible (besides 1 and 2 John) that speak of the Antichrist, with other names or descriptions of him, as, “man of sin”, “son of perdition”, “that wicked one”, “beast”, “little horn”, “king of fierce countenance”, the “prince that shall come”, and the “willful king”. Many of these are in the book of Daniel, but we will start with the fuller description in 2 Thessalonians, then work back to the more veiled references in Daniel, and end with references from Revelation.

2 Thess. 2:1-12 - the Man of Sin

The day of Christ (often called the “day of the Lord”) is not imminent (although the rapture is). Certain things must occur first: a great falling away first, and the revelation of the man of sin.

He exalts Himself above God and even sits in temple as God; comes after the working of Satan (power, signs, lying wonders); deceives those who have no love of truth; consumed by Jesus at His coming.

But the man of sin cannot appear until 'that which prevents' is taken out of the way. v.6-7 - the mystery of iniquity already works (the spirit of antichrist, as in 1 John), but there is something currently hindering the Antichrist from being revealed. What is this hindrance? I believe it is the overcoming, sold-out-to-Jesus part of the church which is the salt (preservative) of the earth. How will it be taken out of the way? By the rapture. When? In God's own time.

Dan. 7 - Vision of the 4 Beasts (especially 7:19-27)

lion, bear, leopard, terrible 4th beast = Babylon, Media / Persia, Greece, Rome

the little horn - subdues 3 kings; a mouth speaking great things; stout look; makes war and prevails against the saints ('wears them out'); speaks against God Himself; tries to change times and laws; saints given into his hand for 'a time and times and the dividing of time' (3 ½ years)

Dan. 8 - Vision of the Ram and He-Goat (especially 8:8-12 and 20-25)

ram = Media / Persia, he-goat = Greece

great horn = Alexander the Great; little horn = Antiochus Epiphanes (175-164 BC)

Antiochus Epiphanes ("God Manifest") was also called Antiochus Epimanes ("the mad"). He took Jerusalem and forced its Hellenization (taking on the Greek culture) by forbidding the worship of God (Yahweh), on pain of death. He erected an altar to Zeus in the temple, and a statue of himself before which people were required to sacrifice. He even compelled the Jews to sacrifice a pig on the altar, an unthinkable abomination against them and God. These actions brought on a successful Jewish revolt led by Judas Maccabeus.

For more info, see Britannica.com, the apocryphal books 1 and 2 Maccabees, and Josephus.

While Antiochus Epiphanes was a partial fulfillment of the predicted antichrist, the ultimate antichrist is still to come, as evidenced by the NT. The NT depicts the Antichrist as yet future, so the predictions couldn't have been completely fulfilled by Antiochus Epiphanes almost 200 years previously.

the little horn, a king of fierce countenance - waxes great; very wise (in an evil way); mighty but empowered by another (Rev.13 - Satan); a destroyer and a great persecutor of god's people; a man of policy; destroys many through peace; magnifies himself even to God; takes away the daily sacrifice and casts down the sanctuary; ultimately destroyed ('broken without hand' - by Jesus at His coming - Rev.19)

when? - v.17, 19 - at the time of the end. V.23 - in the latter time of their kingdom when transgressors are come to the full

Dan. 9:24-27 - Vision of the 70 Weeks (especially 9:26-27)

the prince that shall come; makes a covenant with many for one 'seven'; breaks covenant in midst of week by causing sacrifices to cease; sets up abomination of desolation

Dan. 11:20-45 - the 'Vile Person' King (especially 11:20-23, 30-37, and 45)

Comes in peace by flatteries and deceit; becomes strong with a small people (perhaps this is the reason he is earlier called a little horn); takes away the daily sacrifice and sets up the abomination of desolation; causes many to fall by sword, flame, and captivity; does according to his will; magnifies self above every god, even God; sets up his throne in Jerusalem; prospers as long as it is appointed him, but then comes to his end

Rev. 13 - the Beast with 7 Heads and 10 Horns

Leopard (cunning viciousness), bear (raw power); lion (cruelty, pride). Empowered by dragon (Satan). A mouth speaking great things, allowed to continue 42 months (=3 ½ years); blasphemes God and them that dwell in heaven (the ones that were raptured?); makes war against saints and overcomes them (physically); rules over whole world; receives worship; causes all to receive mark; controls all commerce; 666.

Rev. 19:11-21 - His Final Destruction at the Coming of the Lord

Beast is gathered with armies of earth (to Jerusalem, see Zech.14) to fight against the Lamb and His army from heaven; cast into lake of fire

Sunday school teaching notes are available at: <https://hnslack.wixsite.com/mysite>