

The Antichrist's efforts are held in check now by the Spirit of God and the prayers of the saints. However, when the Church of God is taken out of the world at the Rapture, and the Spirit of God is no longer present to restrain the Antichrist's activities, he will operate in full sway and dominion. The safe course is to believe in the Lord Jesus today, follow His instructions, and be ready for the Rapture.

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# THE ANTICHRIST

## ARCHDECEIVER OF THE END TIMES

**One of the most  
foreboding characters  
in the Word of God, the  
Antichrist embodies  
the very essence of  
godlessness.**

Christ is coming again, and His return will be just as literal, physical, and visible as was His going away. This Second Coming of Christ encompasses two separate events: the Rapture of the Church, when Jesus comes to claim His awaiting Bride; and the Revelation of Christ, when He comes with His saints from Heaven to execute judgment upon the ungodly and to set up His Kingdom and reign on this present earth for a thousand years.

Concerning the Rapture of the Church, a theme of imminence is interwoven through all the passages of Scripture that reference it. There is a repeated emphasis that it will take

place suddenly and without warning. Jesus told His disciples, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). The Early Church lived in anticipation of Christ's soon return for His Bride, and believers of every era are challenged in God's Word to live in that same continual state of readiness.

In contrast, God's Word tells us that many signs will precede the Revelation of Christ, including apostasy. We read in 2 Thessalonians 2:3, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first."

#### **THE TRIBULATION**

An interval will take place between the Rapture of the Church and the Revelation of Christ. During this time, the world will experience the Tribulation. For seven years, God will pour out His judgment and righteous fury upon Israel and the unbelieving world. A detailed account of the environmental catastrophes and terrible suffering that will take place during that time is given in chapters 6-19 of the Book of Revelation. In foretelling the event, the prophet Daniel said, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" (Daniel 12:1). Jesus affirmed Daniel's

prophecy, saying, “Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved” (Matthew 24:21-22).

### **THE ANTICHRIST**

The dominant figure of the Tribulation will be the Antichrist—the “man of sin.” Scripture alludes to him as “the son of perdition” and also the “beast,” for just as Christ was the express image of the Father, so the Antichrist will be the incarnation of Satan. He will be a phenomenally persuasive and brilliant man, but a monster of iniquity, and the greatest imposter in the history of the world. He will be part of an evil trinity, allied with the Dragon (identified as Satan) and a second beast referred to as the False Prophet (see Revelation 12-13).

Initially, the Antichrist will expand his empire through diplomatic ventures, subtle “peace” diplomacy, and “flatteries” (Daniel 11:21). During the first part of his reign, he will deceive the Jewish people, and they will enter a seven-year peace treaty with him. Among other things, the treaty will offer security and allow the Jews to resume the ancient sacrificial system of Temple worship. However, in the middle of his seven-year reign, the Antichrist will break the

covenant by proclaiming himself to be God while blaspheming the one true God. He will “cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (Daniel 9:27), substituting worldwide worship of himself and his image. His actions will reveal his demonic nature to the Jewish people who will rebel under his cruel and despotic rule. This will begin a time of intensified suffering known as the Great Tribulation.

From this point, the Antichrist’s ascent to world power will be rapid. Authority will be given him by Satan to deceive the nations of the world. Power will be given him “over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Revelation 13:7). All whose names are not written in the Book of Life will worship him (see Revelation 13:8). The false prophet will be his promoter, setting up an image of the beast in the Temple and causing all who will not worship the image to be killed.

As the Antichrist gains control of the world, the false prophet will force those who follow him to receive an identifying mark. The mark or seal of the beast will be literal; it will be placed in the right hand or forehead of his followers. Those who do not have the mark will not be allowed to buy or sell, and if they continue to resist his edicts and dominion, they will suffer martyrdom. Those who receive the mark,

however, will seal their own eternal damnation, for the Word says, “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb” (Revelation 14:9-10).

### **THE KING OF KINGS**

Toward the end of the Tribulation period, the kings of the world will gather their armies to battle against Jerusalem and the Jews in the Battle of Armageddon. According to Zechariah 13:8-9, only one in three Jews will have survived, and these will cry out for their Messiah to come and deliver them. When all seems lost, the Revelation of Christ will take place. Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, will come with His armies from Heaven to end the reign of the Antichrist and the False Prophet. They will be “cast alive into a lake of fire” (Revelation 19:20). The Dragon, which is the devil, will be cast into the bottomless pit.

At that time, Jesus will set up His literal kingdom upon earth and reign for a thousand years, commonly referred to as the Millennial

Reign. What a glorious time that will be! Those who believe in the Lord Jesus, do His will, and follow His instructions given in the Word of God, will be included among the overcomers who enjoy the glories and privileges of the Millennium.

### **THE SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST**

The spirit of Antichrist is at work in the world today; we read that “the mystery of iniquity doth already work” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). His influence is the force behind every attempt to discredit the authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ, and the reality of His Second Coming. Any teaching that causes people to doubt the efficacy of the Blood of Jesus and its power to eradicate sin originates in the kingdom of Satan (see 1 John 4:3).

As we look at Christendom today, we see in many circles a departure from the faith, people turning away from God and holiness, often “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5). The falling away includes some professing Christians who have grown lukewarm, linking hands with the world. However, the Word says, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15).