

EARTH'S FINAL DICTATOR: NOW IN THE WINGS?

Do you remember the global euphoria after the 2008 election of Barack Obama as U.S. President? If you do, you may recall that there were all kinds of folks who wondered if he might be the coming world leader who could bring about global peace. Some actually suggested that he was the Messiah. Obama did little to discourage such sentiment, claiming that his election would mark the moment when “the oceans ceased to rise, and the planet began to heal!” The world-wide response to him, along with that of the Americans, was literally astonishing!

Many religious observers, especially evangelicals, wondered if he might be the Antichrist!

Well, five years later we know for sure that Obama is not going to produce world peace, or heal the planet. In fact, in the light of his recent actions in regard to Syria, and many others before that, he has been unmasked. Not only is he NOT the Messiah, but he has been revealed as an extremely poor, weak, dithering leader, who is now mocked in much of the world.

But my point is that The world-wide unrealistic acceptance of Obama when he was first elected, and the unthinking adulation showered on him, indicates how it will be possible for a charismatic man to come on the scene and be followed blindly by the masses of earth. I think that, in a small way, it hints at how the Antichrist will be able to gain global support and rule the world.

And, indeed, as we will see this morning, The Bible clearly predicts the end-time reign of a Satanically-energized false christ, a powerful but diabolical ruler, who—in unprecedented fashion—will exercise total control over all of mankind. My goal today is to examine briefly what the Scriptures tell us about this coming

dictator, his person and program, and then to look at how rapidly preparations are apparently being made for the very scenario which the Bible foretells.

But first: a very quick review. As indicated in the chart we have distributed, the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will occur in two stages. First will be the Rapture, when Christ comes to the air for His own—all who have come into a relationship with Him by faith, both those who are dead, as well as those alive when He comes. At this point the way will become clear for the Antichrist to rise to power and rule during the seven years of Tribulation, at the end of which Christ will return to earth in the Revelation, with His saints, to defeat the false christ and to establish His 1,000-year reign.

We have noted that there are six major indicators in prophetic Scripture which precede the Revelation. Because the Rapture is imminent (that is, because it could occur at any time) no signs are given relating to it. The Rev signs are:

1. The re-gathered nation Israel
2. Preparations for an invasion of Israel
3. The emergence of the final human empire
4. The rise of a global counterfeit religion
5. The birth-pang signs Jesus predicted
6. The setting of the stage for the Antichrist's reign

What does the Bible tell about this false christ? He is called the Antichrist in four different places in Scripture: I John 2:18, 2:22, 4:3 and II John 7. The name Antichrist means that he will be **against** Christ, but in the Greek the prefix *anti* also means “**instead of.**” Both meanings apply: The Antichrist will not only overtly oppose Christ and Christians, but he will pass himself off as Christ himself.

Several other names are used in Scripture to describe this one:

- A fierce king (Daniel 8:23)
- A master of intrigue (Daniel 8:23)
- The prince (ruler) who is to come (Daniel 9:26)
- A contemptible (despicable) person (Daniel 11:21)
- The lawless one (II Thessalonians 2:3, 8-9)
- The Beast (Revelation 13:1)

The Antichrist is the second person of Satan's evil counterfeit trinity. Just as we have the divine Trinity of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit, so we have the trinity of Satan (who seeks to counterfeit God the Father), the Antichrist (who is the counterfeit of the Lord Jesus Christ) and the False Prophet, (who counterfeits the Holy Spirit). These three evil personages together in their end-time activity are seen in Revelation 12 & 13.

Revelation 12:12-13 describes Satan

Revelation 13:1-4 introduces the Antichrist (here called 'The Beast')

Revelation 13:11-17 describes the False Prophet

The Antichrist's Personality

He will be A charismatic leader (Daniel 7:8 & Revelation 13:5) with a mouth that speaks boastfully, indicating that he will be an eloquent, persuasive communicator who will capture the attention and admiration of the whole world.

He will be A cunning leader (Daniel 11:21-23) –a deceitful person who will seize power through intrigue. His ascent to power within the ten-kingdom final empire will come as he uproots three of the ten and abrogates their power to himself.

He will be A cruel leader (Daniel 7:23-25) described as ‘devouring the whole earth, trampling and crushing it, as well as oppressing the saints’.

It is believed that the Antichrist will be a Jew. This is not something which can be proven from Scripture, but which makes sense simply because to counterfeit Christ would logically necessitate being what Christ was: a Jew.

The Antichrist’s Power

The Antichrist will be empowered by Satan. Daniel 8:24 says that *...he will become very strong, but not by his own power*. Revelation 13:2 says that *...the dragon (Satan) gave the Beast (the Antichrist) his power and his throne and great authority*. II Thessalonians 2:9-10 declares that *...The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan*.

Most Bible scholars interpret Daniel 11:37-38 to mean that the Antichrist will be intoxicated by this power which Satan gives him, worshipping such power and using it ruthlessly.

From the human perspective His power base will be earth’s ten-entity final empire. Revelation 17:12 says *The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received authority, but for one hour will receive authority along with the beast. They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the*

beast. Daniel 7:7-8 also prophesied that the ten horns are ten kings over whom the Antichrist will become supreme.

The Antichrist's Program

What will the Antichrist do? The Bible reveals ten aspects of his program, which (because of time constraints) we will have to present in point form, only, with Scripture references.

1. He will become supreme ruler of the final human empire.

Daniel 2:31-44; Daniel 7:24; Revelation 17:12-13

2. His rule will be over all the earth. Revelation 13:5-8

3. He will make a seven-year treaty with Israel. Daniel 9:27

4. He will break that treaty at its mid-point (3 1/2 years) Dan 9:27b

5. He will recover from an apparently fatal wound. Revelation 13:4

6. He will set up an image of himself in the restored Jerusalem temple

and demand that he be worshipped. Daniel 9:27; Matthew 24:16;

II Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:14-16

7. He will enforce this worship through total financial control of everyone in the entire earth by way of a mark. Revelation 13:15-18

8. He will destroy all religion except worship of himself. Revelation 17

9. He will particularly seek to destroy Jews and the saints. Daniel 8:24-25; Revelation 7:14; Revelation 13:7

10. He will marshal the whole world to make war against God Himself in

the battle of Armegeddon. Daniel 8:25; Revelation 16:13-16

Despite his enormous Satanically-given power and total control of the world, the reign of the Antichrist will be brief—just seven years, with the final three and a half being the most awesomely horrific. When he gathers the armies of earth to Israel to battle the Lord Jesus Christ and the armies of heaven, he meets his doom. He and his hosts are defeated, he and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire, while Satan is bound for a thousand years and Christ's millennial reign is begun. (Revelation 19:19-21)

Could it come to pass soon?

What indications are there that the rule of the Antichrist could soon happen as the Bible has predicted it? I believe that there are many, too many to consider during one brief message.

However There are at least four major essential conditions or situations which **must** prevail in order for the Antichrist's reign to occur.

1. There must be in existence the final human world empire, as the prophecies of Daniel 2 & 7 and the Apostle John in Revelation require.
2. There must be the kind and degree of globalization which will make possible the total control of all mankind by one ruler or authority.

3. There must be a rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem, in a re-gathered Israel, in which the Antichrist can set up his image and demand that it be worshipped.
4. There must exist the technological ability to exercise total economic control over **all** mankind.

1. A Revived Roman Empire

The reason for believing that there must be a final ‘empire’ which arises out of the old Roman Empire, as a condition for the emergence of the Antichrist, comes primarily out of Daniel’s prophecy of the march of empires in Daniel 2 and 7. It’s a prophecy with which I’m sure you are familiar, and so I will only briefly summarize it—also in part because of time constraints.

Daniel’s prophecy foretells the rise of four empires, followed by the later re-emergence of the fourth in a different form. That revived form of the fourth empire is the one which will be ruled over by the Antichrist, and during the existence of that empire, the God of heaven will establish His kingdom, which will have no end.

History has documented the accuracy of Daniel’s prophecy, to date, in great detail. The first empire, actually in existence at the time the prophecy was uttered, was the Babylonian. It was followed by the Medo-Persian, which in turn gave way to the Grecian. The Roman Empire succeeded that and left its major impact on the world. We know, however, that the Roman Empire in its historic form was not the final empire, but rather that its **future** ten-kingdom form is the final empire.

We know this because such a prophesied ten-leader form of the Empire has never existed in history, nor has such a kingdom ever been suddenly crushed as the prophecy indicates it will be. I agree with Dr. David Jeremiah who has said: “We must therefore conclude that some form of the Roman Empire must emerge in the end times, and be in place prior to the Revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to rule and reign over the earth.”

There are many reasons to believe that what is happening in the establishment of the European Union is the revived Roman Empire, and is the beginnings, at the very least, of earth’s final human empire. To explain why this is so, and to document such a view, would take several messages in themselves. Thus, all I can do this morning is to point you to your own church website clivechristianfellowship.org on which you will find a message I gave last year during the fall conference. Entitled “The Coming Supra-Religion and the Emergent Church” it details why the European Union is believed to be the final empire. I also encourage you to look at a four-part presentation by Dr. Robert Congdon entitled “The European Union and the Supra-Religion.” It is available on the Pre-Trib Research Center website.

These, and other, resources clearly indicate why It looks like the prophesied revival of the Roman Empire—the ten toes of Daniel Two and the final form of the fourth beast in Daniel Seven—is currently taking shape in the European Union.

2 A Major Pervasive Globalization of our Planet

The desire for a one-world human government is not new. In fact, it first surfaced following the flood, as recorded in Genesis 11. It was then that mankind decided to build a tower—the famed Tower of Babel, which was the first effort to establish a global human empire. This attempt was led by Nimrod, whose name means “we will revolt.” According to Isaiah 47:12-13, this was also the beginning of what the Bible calls “Mystery Babylon,”—an entity which incorporates a world religion, a world empire and a world ruler.

You know the story of how God confused what was a single language into multiple languages so that mankind was scattered over the whole earth. This is because, as the Apostle Paul declared in Acts 17:26, “...*God made from one man every **nation** of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation.*”

Obviously, God’s plan is for **independent nations, not a single global government**. Nevertheless, rebellious mankind has made many attempts throughout history to create a global empire under the rule of man. None have succeeded. However, in recent years there have been increasing calls for, and attempts to create, a new world order—a globally-unified mankind.

Part of the reason for this renewed urgency is the fact that mankind has achieved the horrifying potential of being able to literally destroy everything. Thus, the need for a global government, enforced by global ‘police,’ is seen as being more urgent than ever.

And steady progress toward this goal has been, and is being, made. Over the years many organizations and pieces of legislation with a view to globalization have been formed or enacted. In the aftermath of World War I it was the League

of Nations, followed by the United Nations after World War II. We now have a plethora of international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization. There are numerous ‘free trade’ agreements. We have a World Health Organization, a World Court, and world-wide business regulators such as the International Standards Organization—without whose sanction it is virtually impossible to conduct international business. And negotiations and agreements related to globalization are regularly undertaken.

Prophecy expert and prolific author Dr. Thomas Ice summarizes this growing trend in his article “Globalism: Preparation for the Antichrist.” He writes:

“ We see the drive for globalism in at least the following areas: government, economics, religion, the environment, military, commerce and trade, manufacturing, banking, business, population control, education, publishing, personal health, wealth distribution, agriculture, law, science, travel, electronics, the internet and information availability...and so much more.”

Dr. Ice is unquestionably right. And were time not a factor we could easily document how the drive for a global authority to deal with mankind’s global problems is accelerating. The inexorable march of science and technology, coupled with the aforementioned potential of the complete destruction of all human life, has created a perceived need, a climate, and an urgency to solve our problems through **human global government.**

3 A Rebuilt Jewish Temple in Jerusalem in a re-gathered Israel

One of the most intense desires of religious Jews is for a Temple in Jerusalem. Israel has had two such temples: Solomon's incredibly magnificent temple (I Kings 5-8), and a 2nd one built under Zerubbabel, which was enlarged & made more magnificent by the wicked King Herod. (Ezra 3:7-6:18, Matt. 24:1-2)

Both were destroyed by invading armies as a result of God's judgment on Israel for her sin and disobedience to Him.

The Bible predicts that there will yet be two more Temples in Jerusalem: the first of these described as "The Tribulation Temple" (II Thessalonians 2:4, Revelation 11:1-2) and the second as "The Millennium Temple" (Ezekiel 40-42, Isaiah 2-3, 56:7) from which Christ will reign during the 1,000 years following the Battle of Armageddon. The Tribulation Temple is the one in which the Antichrist will set up his image and demand that he be worshipped as God.

Currently there is a good deal of speculation about the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple, as seen in articles in respected journals such as *TIME*, *Christianity Today*, *The Jewish Press*, *The Jerusalem Post* and others. Just a few weeks ago under the *Israel Today* headline "Should Israel rebuild the Temple" Israelis say "Yes" there was an interview with the Israel Housing and Construction Minister Uri Ariel who said "We need to build a new Temple on the Temple Mount."

The location is part of the problem, because the Temple Mount is currently occupied by the Dome of the Rock, the second most sacred Islamic shrine. Any attempt to build a Jewish temple there would spark an enormous backlash.

Nevertheless, as Dr. Thomas Ice and Dr. Randall Price, co-authors of the book *Ready to Rebuild*, maintain there is solid evidence that efforts to do so are

unquestionably underway. Based on their extensive first-hand investigations, the authors subtitled their book “*The **imminent** plan to rebuild the last days temple.*” Numerous photos include a shot of the four-ton Temple cornerstone prepared by one of the rebuilding groups, the Temple Mount Faithful, and reproductions of pages of text used by the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva, a school where Jews of priestly descent are being prepared for service in a rebuilt Temple.

Other Temple-related activities include the search for the Ark of the Covenant and the ashes of the red heifer. The temple-ruling Sanhedrin, reinstated in 2004 for the **first** time since A.D 70, is focusing their efforts on a restored Temple and Temple worship. Several years ago they announced a plan to prefabricate the Temple, just as Solomon did with the first Temple. And another group, called The Temple Institute, has completed their preparation of all of the required Temple furnishings and utensils.

The fact that serious efforts are being made to soon rebuild the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem certainly serves as another indication that the time of the Antichrist’s rule must be nearing.

4 The technology to enable total economic control over mankind

Probably the best-known and most controversial prophecy in the entire Bible is the one found in Revelation 13:16-18, especially the last part of it. *And he [the False Prophet—the Antichrist’s ‘press agent’] causes all, small and great, and the rich and the poor and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on [or in] their right hand or on [in] their forehead, and he provides that no one will be able*

to buy or sell except the one who has the mark, either the name of the Beast or the number of his name. Here is wisdom: Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast, for the number is that of a man, and his number is six hundred and sixty-six (666).

I have lived long enough, and spoken about prophetic matters long enough, to have had many people literally scoff at me for believing what the Bible says: that there will come a time when it will be impossible to buy or sell without having a mark, which will be the equivalent of worshipping the Antichrist. People don't scoff anymore.

Dr. John Ankerberg, in his book *One World*, summarizes it well: "Our generation is the first to understand how it is possible that no one on earth will be able to engage in economic transactions without a special identification mark which the Bible calls 'the mark of the beast.' Today we have communication satellites, world-wide electronic banking networks and vastly sophisticated computers regulating markets and international transactions. The technological capability for total economic control certainly already exists, and appears to be steadily and rapidly developing in both scope and capability."

I personally experienced something like this almost 25 years ago when I returned to the U.S. for a second term of ministry. Somehow my earlier Social Security number had gone missing, and I found that—without a number—I was unable to do **anything** economically. I couldn't get a driver's license; I couldn't open a bank account; I couldn't even open a department store account. I couldn't buy a house, or even rent one. I was *completely* unable to function economically until I had the number. And the control is far greater today than it was back then.

There simply isn't time for us to present the vast amount of documentation that is available on this subject. I will mention only one aspect—the concept of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), which relies on the implantation of a very tiny micro-chip beneath the surface of the skin. Then, utilizing global positioning satellite technology, the whereabouts of anyone can be easily found. The system has all sorts of benefits in finding lost people, tracking valuable property and so on. But it could easily be used to control people economically, which has a lot of people concerned.

The system is already in use, to some extent. For many years now the U.S. military has utilized what is called “electronic dog tags” for their personnel. RFID has been used to track racehorses, show cattle, valuable farm and ranch animals, pets, property, commercial shipments and so on. Digital Angel, a leader in this technology, is able to implant a rice-grain-sized micro chip directly into pets, animals, property **and** people. The device is permanently operative because it is powered electromechanically through the movements of muscles, and can be activated either by the wearer or by a monitoring device.

Whether such technology is what the mark of the Antichrist will be is the subject of debate. Some prophecy students maintain that the mark will be something that is visible, like a tattoo. They quote translations of Revelation 13 which say the mark is “**on**” people. Others believe that the best translation of the word *charagma* (from the Greek *charax*—which means to “stake down into” or to “stick into”) states that the mark is placed ‘**in**’ hand or forehead. Did the Apostle foresee a hypodermic needle injecting a rice-grain-sized something under the skin?

We can't be dogmatic. Nevertheless, this much is certain: the technology that would make possible total economic control is here right now. And without sensationalizing, we must admit that the major pre-conditions for the emergence of the Antichrist are certainly already all around us today:

1. The foreshadowing, at the very least, of the revived Roman Empire.
2. The steadily growing globalization of our world.
3. The desire & potential for the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, and
4. The development of technology capable of total economic control.

There is one other significant factor that **must** occur before the Antichrist comes on the scene. That is the Rapture of the Church, for the false Christ—Earth's final dictator—cannot begin his reign until the Church has been removed from the world. One of the main reasons why this so, is explained in II Thessalonians chapter two. In verses 3 to 5 the Apostle Paul describes the Antichrist and his plan to set himself up in the temple and proclaim that he is God.

But then, Paul says that there is someone holding back the Antichrist.

Verses 6-8: *And now you know what is holding him back [from being revealed]... For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work, but **THE ONE WHO HOLDS IT BACK WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO UNTIL HE IS TAKEN OUT OF THE WAY. Then the lawless one will be revealed...*** Who is this one who is holding back the Antichrist from appearing? There are several different views concerning the identity of this "hinderer," as he has been called. However, after intensive study I am personally convinced that the most logical view, and

the one that best fits the other prophecies concerning the end-time events, is this: The hinderer is the Holy Spirit AS HE INDWELLS THE CHURCH—the Body and Bride of Christ. As the indwelling Spirit, He will be removed from the earth, **IN THAT SENSE**, when the Church is raptured to heaven.

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit will be absent from the earth. He is God, and as God He is omnipresent. He ministered during Old Testament times by coming *upon individuals* for specific ministries. But at Pentecost, when the Church was born, He came to *indwell individuals and to baptize them into one body*—the Body of Christ—the Church. And so, when the Church is raptured, the Holy Spirit (as the indwelling spirit of Christ's body on earth), will, **in that role**, be taken out of the way, and then the Antichrist will be able to come to power.

So, the fact that the prophecies concerning the coming of the Antichrist appear to be rapidly lining up should cause us to know that the Rapture, which prevents the Antichrist's appearance, must indeed be very near.

And what should that mean for us? Two different things, depending on our relationship to Christ. For any who are not certain that you have been born again and are a part of the Body of Christ, it is essential and imperative that you come to Christ in repentance and faith and be born again.

For all those who know that we have been born again, the fact that the Rapture must be nearing should cause us great joy as we anticipate seeing and being forever with the Lord. It should motivate us to live holy lives.

If the thought of the Rapture does **not** bring us joy, because we know that we have not been living lives of obedience to Christ, the fact that our Lord could

come at any moment should cause us to repent, and to get into a right and intimate relationship with our Saviour. For, as the Apostle John was inspired to write:

Everyone who has [the hope of the Rapture] in him, purifies himself even as Christ is pure. (I John 3:3)