



martyrs
ESSENTIALS OF THE CHURCH

autumn teaching week

The End Times

Monday 24th - Friday 28th October 2011
Dr Alan Cairns



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A TEACHING WEEK FOR ALL CHRISTIANS

Hosted by Martyrs Youth Fellowship

**...Tell us, when shall these things be?
and what shall be the sign of thy coming,
and of the end of the world?**

Matt 24:3



THE END TIMES

Antichrist and the Great Tribulation

I. Antichrist

A. His Identity

1. Names and Titles

- a. Antichrist, 1 John 2:18
- b. The little horn, Daniel 7:8; 8:9
- c. The King of Babylon, Isaiah 14:4
- d. The Assyrian, Isaiah 14:25
- e. Lucifer, Isaiah 14:12; note he is a *man* (v. 16), though no doubt the name reflects the fact that Satan is his inspiring force. *Lucifer* means “the morning star;” contrast Christ’s titles, *the bright and morning star*, Revelation 22:16.
- f. The King of Fierce Countenance, Daniel 8:23
- g. The Prince that Shall Come, Daniel 9:26
- h. The Vile Person, Daniel 11:21
- i. The Man of Sin, 2 Thessalonians 2:3
- j. The Son of Perdition, 2 Thessalonians 2:3
- k. The Lawless One, 2 Thessalonians 2:8

2. Scriptural Pictures

- a. The Beast out of the Sea, Revelation, 13:1. Note that he has all the ferocious force of the four beasts in the prophet’s vision in Daniel 7:3-8. See Revelation 17:3, 8-12.
- b. Scripture Foreshadowings: Pharaoh, Haman, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod

3. Is the Pope or the papal system the Antichrist?

a. Arguments used in favour

- i. By definition the Pope is the Antichrist. He claims to be *The Vicar of Christ*; *Vicar* means substitute. He is in place of Christ, the very meaning of *Antichrist*.
- ii. Antichrist was in the world in apostolic times (1 John 2:18) and since he will still be standing when Jesus returns (2 Thessalonians 2:8), Antichrist is a system, not a single person.
- iii. No other system so meets the biblical criteria as the papacy.
- iv. Daniel’s prophecies invariably link Antichrist with Rome
- v. The Pope is well described by 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4. He arises out of a great apostasy; sits in the temple (church) claiming to be God, for the Pope arrogates to Himself the names of all three Persons in the Godhead: *Holy Father, Vicar of Christ, and as such King of Kings and Ruler of the World*.

vi. Antichrist is the great deceiver of men, as is the Pope,
2 Thessalonians 2:9-10

- b. **Arguments against**—admitting that popery is antichristian and that therefore the Pope may be justly termed *antichrist in the church*, we reject the argument that he is the final Antichrist, the *little horn* of Daniel or Paul's *man of sin*, or John's *beast out of the sea*.
- i. Antichrist reigns over the area of Roman empire. This has never been true of the pope, not even ecclesiastically.
 - ii. The Antichrist is likened to a *leopard* (Revelation 13:2), which is the symbol of Greece (Daniel 7:6) and Daniel traces his rise to the Greek part of the empire. The pope has always been distinctively Latin, never Greek—in fact his attempts to gain dominance in the Greek world have been constantly repulsed by both the Greek Orthodox Church and Islam.
 - iii. The pope actually does *not* fulfil the criteria of 2 Thessalonians 2. He does make blasphemous pretensions but he presents himself as the *servant* of Christ and does not claim to be *above* Him and claim to be God in place of the Trinity.
 - iv. Antichrist sits in the temple of God, 2 Thessalonians 2:4. Is the Vatican or the Church of Rome God's temple and not rather the *synagogue of Satan*?
 - v. The Antichrist has a false prophet who directs that he is to be worshipped, causes fire to come down from heaven, and does many other miracles to lead men to worship Antichrist, Revelation 13:11 *f*. The pope has never had such a false prophet and no papal henchman has ever been able to cause *them that dwell on the earth to worship* him.
 - vi. The false prophet had power to give life to the image of Antichrist and enable it to speak, Revelation 13:15. No one has ever done this with an image of any pope.
 - vii. The false prophet will cause all who refuse to worship Antichrist to be killed, Revelation 13:15. Despite the persecutions Rome has executed against believers, even she has never been able to kill all non-papists.
 - viii. The false prophet causes all to wear Antichrist's mark in their right hand or forehead, without which mark none may buy or sell, Revelation 13:16-17. This has never been true of popery and certainly is not true today.
 - ix. All except true believers will worship the beast and those who worship him can never be saved, (Revelation 13:15; 14:9-10; 20:4). Were the papacy the beast, then, *no one who had ever been a Roman*

Catholic could ever be saved and those who rejected papal claims would be saved. Both conclusions are self-evidently false.

- x. The claim is that the *system* fits the criteria and so if this were true the papal system would bear all these marks, which it does not.
- xi. Therefore, the papal system is not the Antichrist.
- xii. Indeed no *system* can be the Antichrist, for the language of Scripture demands that he be an *individual*. For example, he is *cast alive* into the lake of fire, Revelation 19:20, and *is tormented day and night forever*, Revelation 20:10. These statements are meaningless if applied to a system, as are many other in places such as Daniel 11:36-45.

B. The True Source of His Power:

It is from Satan: Daniel 8:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:2, 4.

C. His Supporters

1. The nations that help him
 - a. The 10 horns of the beast, that is, ten kings from the area of the old Roman empire (Daniel 7:7, 24; Revelation 13:1; 17:3, 12; 19:19).
 - b. A confederacy of nations, termed Gog whose land is Magog, Ezekiel 38:2, 14-16.

Magog was a son of Japheth (Genesis 10:2). The name *Gog* is connected with *Og*, king of Bashan (Deuteronomy 3), *Agag*, an Amalekite name (Numbers 24:7, where the Samaritan Pentateuch reads *Agog* and the LXX reads *Gog*; 1 Samuel 15:8). It appears to be a confederacy of nations north and east of Israel. Ezekiel 38:5-6 shows that also in the confederacy will be Persia, Ethiopia and Lybia (cf. Daniel 11:43), Gomer (located in north Asia Minor, modern Turkey), Togarmah (Armenia?).
2. The Beast out of the earth, Revelation 13:11
3. The Babylonian harlot, Revelation 17

D. His Opponents

1. Israel, her land, people and temple, Daniel 8:9, 11; 9:27; 11:31, 41, 45.
2. *The saints of the most high*, Daniel 7:21, 25—cf. v. 8, 27
3. Some western powers, Daniel 11:30
4. The kings of the north and the south (Syria? and Egypt), Daniel 11:40
5. An unnamed eastern power, Daniel 11:44; Revelation 16:12.
6. The two witnesses, Revelation 11:3-11
7. Finally and victoriously, the Lord Jesus Christ, Zechariah 14:3-4; Revelation 19:11-15, 19-20.

E. His Character and Actions

1. His Character

- a. We have seen this under his titles and names. He is a Satan-inspired vile person, one who is inherently wicked and lawless, a flatterer, a deceiver, a ruthless killer, a liar and truce breaker, a hater of God, His temple and all who worship Him.
- b. Yet he will in some respects be an attractive person or leader. Supported by deceitful signs and lying wonders, he will gain by flatteries the honour that was at first denied him, Daniel 11:21.

2. His Actions

- a. He will overthrow 3 of the 10 kings who support him, Daniel 7:8.
- b. He will speak many great swelling words, Daniel 7:8, 11
- c. He will make war with the saints and wear them out, Daniel 7:21; 8:24; Revelation 13:7
- d. He will set his eyes on the land of Israel, Daniel 8:9
- e. He will take away the daily sacrifice and set up an abomination in the temple, Daniel 8:11; Matthew 24:15; all in breach of a solemn covenant he will contract with the Jews, Daniel 9:27; 11:21-24.
- f. He will cast down the truth and he will be effective, Daniel 8:11.
- g. He will honour the God of forces, Daniel 11:38, and, having come in on a platform of peace, Daniel 11:21, will conduct ruthless wars, Daniel 7:21 (against the saints); Daniel 7:24 (against three of the ten kings); Daniel 11:25 (against the kings of the north and the south); Daniel 11:44 (against the eastern power that will opposes him); Israel and Jerusalem and ultimately the returning Christ (Zechariah 14:2; Revelation 19:19).

F. His Duration

1. After he is revealed, he will continue for 42 months, three and a half years. Revelation 13:5; Daniel 7:25; 12:7.
2. He will continue in the full exercise of his power until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, Daniel 7:21-22; Daniel 11:45; 12:1; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:20-21.

G. His End

1. Utter defeat, Revelation 19:20
There will be some earthly opposition to Antichrist and even some attempts to help Israel (Daniel 11:30; Revelation 12:6), but it is not by any such intervention that he is defeated. He is *Antichrist* and it is therefore none other than the *CHRIST* who overthrows him.
2. Everlasting punishment, Revelation 20:10

II. The Great Tribulation

A. The Meaning and Use of the Term

1. The Greek word translated “tribulation” means “affliction.” The term, especially when the adjective *great* is added to it, refers to period of unparalleled trial and terror launched by Antichrist and many of the nations of the world against Israel and the saints of God before the Christ’s return.
2. Matthew 24:21 describes a period of *great tribulation* and Revelation 7:14 (Greek text) speaks of *the tribulation, the great one*. So to speak of *The Great Tribulation* is entirely Scriptural and the statement of Daniel 12:1 about its unique level of affliction justifies the use of capital letters to distinguish it from all other periods of suffering.

B. Relevant Scripture Passages

1. Jeremiah 30:4-9, *the time of Jacob’s trouble* following which the Lord will remove the yoke of every oppressor forever.
2. Daniel 2:40-45; 7:7-8, 19-21; 8:13-14, 23-26; 9:27; 11:21-45; 12:1, 8-13. The vision of the ravages caused by Antichrist under the symbol of a wild and terrible beast or a king of fierce countenance emphasize the extreme violence of the Great Tribulation.
3. Zechariah 12:14 record the judgments through which Israel will be sifted and purged in a time of the final great conflict with the nations and transformed into the holy nation of the Lord at the return of Christ to earth.
4. Matthew 24:9-29; Luke 21:25-28 give our Lord’s description of the Great Tribulation, especially as it affects Jerusalem, in which He uses the terrible destruction caused by Titus in A.D. 70 to prefigure the even more terrible violence of Antichrist.
5. 2 Thessalonians 2 describes the days before the Lord’s return as a time of *a great apostasy* and the revelation of the Antichrist, in which the *mystery of iniquity* will be fully expressed without restraint.
6. Revelation 4-19 give a detailed description not only of the workings of Satan and his Antichrist against God’s people (as in chapters 12, 13, 17, for example) but of the Lord bringing divine judgments against His enemies (described under the heads of 7 seals, 7 trumpets, the last three of which are called *woes*, 7 vials of the wrath of God).

C. Description of the Great Tribulation

1. It is yet future. Preterists hold that the events of Matthew 24 have already been fulfilled (A.D. 70). As we have seen in earlier studies, this is an impossible interpretation of the Scriptures.

2. It will be a time of unparalleled persecution, Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 12:1; Matthew 24:21. This fact alone disproves the notion that the fall of Jerusalem to Titus exhausts the prophecy of Matthew 24, for despite all its viciousness it was not unparalleled and was surpassed in evil and extent by the horrors of the holocaust in the mid-20th century.

D. Details of the Great Tribulation

1. It is associated with Antichrist and the setting up of his image: Daniel 7:8, 21, 25; 8:8-12, 23-25; 9:27 with Matthew 24:15.
2. It centres on the Jews in their own land, Jeremiah 30:7; Daniel 11:41.
3. It spreads over the earth against the saints of God, Daniel 7:25; Matthew 24:9; Revelation 13:6-8.
4. Refusal to worship Antichrist or bear his mark will be the immediate cause of persecution, the instrument of which will be the false prophet, Revelation 13:13-15.
5. The *Dragon*, who is *that old Serpent, the Devil*, is the power behind the Antichrist, Daniel 8:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 12:9, 12; 20:2. It is significant that *sorceries*, literally *enchantment with drugs*, will form a major part of Satan's strategy, Revelation 9:21; 18:23.
6. As well as the witness of God's people in refusing to bow to the Antichrist, God will bless their witness to the salvation of an innumerable multitude, Revelation 7:9, 14.
7. In addition, there will be the ministry of the *Two Witnesses*, who will employ miraculous powers to the evident discomfiture of Antichrist and his hosts throughout the Great Tribulation period, Revelation 11:1-12.
8. Immediately following the end of their ministry, there will be a great earthquake, a decimation of the remaining population of Jerusalem, and then the last trumpet will sound, announcing the glorious truth that *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever*, Revelation 11:13-15.

E. Duration of the Great Tribulation

1. It starts in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, lasting 3 1/2 years until the return of Christ, Daniel 9:27; cf. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 11:3; 12:6, 14.
2. This time is fixed, Daniel 12:7, for the Lord will curtail the duration of the Great Tribulation for His elects sake.