
The Book of Daniel

Part 8 by: Ronald L. Dart

No word from the Bible conjures up more dread than the word 'Antichrist'. It is kind of unfortunate because the word is not used in the Bible, in the sense that we use the word.

'Antichrist'

It is John who introduces the word 'antichrist' in his first New Testament letter. He wrote, "Little children, it is the last time and as you have heard that 'antichrist' shall come, even now there are many antichrists and that's how we know it's the last time." That's first John two and verse 18. It seems inescapable when you read this, that while John and Paul accepted Jesus' admonition that no man knows the day or the hour of His return, or of the end of the age, both men had a strong feeling, maybe a hope, that they were living in the last days.

But John's usage, even though he thought it was the last days, does not speak to a singular world ruling 'antichrist', which is what most people mean when they use the term.

John did say, "You have heard that antichrist shall come," which I think is fascinating. The term is unique in John's letter, but the idea cannot be new, or his readers wouldn't have had a clue what he was talking about, when he said, "You have heard that 'antichrist' shall come.

Man, of Sin

Now. Paul does speak of such a one, he doesn't call him the Antichrist, but he puts a finger on one powerful person who is a harbinger of the last days. He speaks of him in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Paul said, "Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our being gathered to Him, we ask you, brothers, {2} not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report, or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the 'day of the Lord' has already come."

Now, actually it was Paul's fault, that some of them thought the 'day of the Lord' had already happened, due to his first letter to them, but he had to clarify it. He said, "Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the 'man of lawlessness' is revealed, the man doomed to destruction." I like the King James version better here, I was just reading from the N.I.V. The King James says, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there comes a falling away (an apostasy) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." This is an interpretation in the N.I.V., the man

doomed to destruction, and it may be right, but the passage calls him the 'son of destruction' using the root that forms one of the names of the devil, Apollyon (Revelation 9:11), the destroyer. Now if Daniel is any guide, this man will be a son of the devil and a destroyer.

Paul continues in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2 and verse 4, "He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God." Now it is pretty unlikely that there are two of these in history. Daniel describes him this way, Daniel 11 verse 36, "The King shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods and shall prosper until the indignation be accomplished: for that is determined shall be done."

Now dismiss from your mind, any idea that the 'man of sin', or the 'antichrist' is a Muslim, or an Islamic figure. It isn't possible for a Moslem to do this and maintain the leadership of other Muslims.

Daniel continues to speak of this man, {37} "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god, for he shall magnify himself above all." Adolf Hitler is a useful image to consider when you think about this man.

What is Holding Him Back?

Now. Paul continues in second Thessalonians 2 verse 5, "Don't you remember that when I was with you, I used to tell you these things? {6} And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time." Now, I've read this several times and I still am not sure what Paul is talking about. That is the disadvantage you have when you are reading someone else's mail. The Thessalonians were able to put this together in a way that you and I probably can't, because of what they knew that we don't.

Paul says, {7} "For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work, but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so until he is taken out of the way. {8} And then the lawless one shall be revealed whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming." Now when you read this, you have to conclude that the 'man of sin' is some future end time figure. I have heard many explanations of what's holding him back, who is holding back, what's taken away means. I strongly suspect, comparing this with Daniel, that Paul is talking about some spirit being, some great angelic figure, who is restraining this development until the right time, and when he lets him go, he's going to come on the scene.

The 'lawless one' will be revealed and Jesus will destroy him with the breath of His mouth and destroy him with the splendor of his coming.

'Man of Sin' is an End Time Figure

We have to conclude, like I said, the 'man of sin' is an end time figure. 2 Thessalonians 2 verse 9, "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, {10} and every sort of evil that deceives those

who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and thereby to be saved, {11} For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie, {12} and so, all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness." Take your pleasure in wickedness? Take your entertainment in wickedness? These are the people who will be condemned and finally destroyed.

The Abomination Of Desolation

These counterfeit miracles, these signs and wonders are fascinating. Consider what Jesus said in the light of Paul and in the light of what Daniel said about this man. It is in Matthew 24 verse 15, in that sermon we call the Olivet Prophecy. Jesus told His disciples, "When you therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place." Wow, when you read Daniel, and a lot of people who read Daniel, think that all of those prophecies have been fulfilled. It's all done away with. We don't have to pay attention to that anymore. But here's Jesus, who comes along and says, "Hold it!" {15} "When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place." Then Matthew throws in this little caution, "Whoever reads, let him understand."

Jesus said, {16} "Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains, {17} Let him who is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house:" clear out of here, {18} "Neither let him who is in the field turn back to get any clothes." Just go. {19} "And woe to them that are with child, and those who give suck in those days! {20} Pray that your flight is not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day. {21} For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." This is that one time in the history of all the world, the worse tribulation that ever has been or ever would be again. It is a unique day and it had not occurred when Jesus said this, nor has it occurred to this day.

For the Elect's Sake

Now just how bad will it be? Well, Jesus continues in verse 22 of Matthew 24 and says this, "Except those days should be shortened, there would no flesh be saved alive, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. {23} Then, if any man says to you, Lo, Here's Christ, or there he is, don't believe it. {24} For there shall arise false Christs, false prophets, and they will show great signs and wonders, so much so that if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. {25} Look, I've told you before, {26} so if they say to you, Christ is in the desert, don't go out there. If they say to you, He is in the secret chambers, don't believe them. {27} For as the lightning comes out of the East, and shines even to the West, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." This is not talking about sunrise. This is talking about horizon to horizon lightning, probably with accompanying thunder. It will be very hard to miss.

Jesus continues, verse 29, "Immediately, after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, the moon will not give her light, the stars will fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens will be shaken {30} And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, because they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. {31} He will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the

other." This is the time of the resurrection of the Saints. This makes my hair stand on end to think about what Jesus is describing here.

It all shines a light back into the book of Daniel, on some things Daniel said, that even Daniel would have loved to have understood.

He Will Honor a god of Fortresses

Daniel 11 verse 38, Daniel continues talking about this man who has set himself up above every god, and then he says something odd, he says, "Instead of those gods, he will honor a god of fortresses, a god unknown to his fathers he will honor with gold and silver with precious stones and costly gifts. {39} He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god, and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him, he will make them rulers over many people, and distribute the land at a price." Now this is the little horn of Daniel's vision that is doing all this.

But who is this foreign god? Who is this god of fortresses, this god unknown to his fathers? Some scholars point toward Rome, whose gods were certainly foreign to the Middle East. Now I can't blame you if you feel confused making your way through this, but after all, Daniel was just as confused as we are, as we will find out later.

The Book of Revelation

Daniel didn't have the book of Revelation to clarify certain issues, if clarification is the word for it, because the later pattern of these events is found in the book of Revelation.

Hang on and I will try to make sense of this for all of us. Revelation chapter 13. John is in vision. "I stood upon the sand of the seashore. And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and 10 horns and up on his horns 10 crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. {2} The beast I saw was like a leopard, his feet like a bear, his mouth as the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his seat and his great authority." Now a person who studied Daniel will likely see the great visions of Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar in a new variation. All the imagery is there, the leopard, the bear, and the lion. The dragon though is kind of a new thing here. Where does the power come from? A strange god? Perhaps from the Dragon itself.

All the World Wondered After the Beast

John said in Revelation 13 verse 3, "I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. {4} And they worshiped the dragon, that gave power to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, who is able to make war with him?" Now the beast goes through some kind of transition, he suffers a great setback, a wound that should've been deadly, and is rescued, by whom? By the Dragon.

"And there was given to him," {5} "a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given to him to continue 42 months." Now here we have that time frame again, 42 months, that's 3 1/2 years, also called a time and times and a half. We saw that in Daniel also.

"He opened his mouth," {6} "in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and all them that dwell in heaven. {7} And it was given to him to make war with all the people and overcome them and power was given to him over all kindreds and tongues and nations." This is a world-class ruler here, who is turned against God, against God's people, against His tabernacle, His dwelling place. Will there be a tabernacle in Jerusalem? He makes war against the holy people, Christian persecution perhaps? War against the Jews, also likely.

Verse 8, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. {9} If any man has an ear, let him hear. {10} He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity. He that kills with a sword must be killed with a sword." This great beast which is wreaking such havoc among the saints is himself going to suffer. "Here is the patience and the faith of the Saints."

"As I watched {11} another beast comes up out of the earth, this one is not out of the sea, but out of the earth. He has two horns like a Lamb and he spoke as a dragon." In Daniel we had a little horn on the fourth beast. The fourth beast was Rome. And the little horn did great things.

Here we have a second beast that does some of the same things. The implication is that in Daniel's vision it is the little horn and in Revelation, it is that second beast. In a way it has two horns like a lamb, implying that he is Christlike, but who speaks as a dragon.

Verse 12, "He exercises all the power of the first beast before him and causes the earth and all them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." And here we go again. {13} "He does great wonders, he makes fire to come down from heaven in the sight of men {14} And deceives them that dwell on the earth, by means of those miracles which he had the power to do in the sight of the beasts, saying to them that dwell on the earth, they should make an image to the beast who had a wound by the sword and did live."

You know this suggests a very strong correlation with what Jesus was saying would happen in the very last days. Remember, this is a vision. It's a nightmare if you will, don't be too literal in reading it.

The Mark of the Beast

Let's continue in Revelation 13 and verse 15, "He had the power to give life to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as it would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." This is a time of complete domination of people, forcing people to bow down and do obeisance to this great beast, this great national power, and I gather it is some kind of a religious leader, who is turning people to worship and do obeisance to this beast.

"And causes everyone," {16} "small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in therefore foreheads that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast or the number of his name. {18} Here is wisdom, let him that has understanding count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man." Now this is important to understand. What we have here, in this second beast, is a man. A man who pretends

to be a Lamb perhaps pretending to be the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, but who speaks for the Dragon. It is the number of a man and his number is six hundred and sixty-six. Six, six, six. It kind of sends a chill down your spine doesn't it?

More than one person has turned down a license plate or a phone number with the number six - six - six in it but this isn't about numbers. The Greeks use letters for numbers and it's the code, in numbers, for the name of a man. In John's day, the numbers fit the name, Nero Caesar, and you can kind of look at Nero and Antiochus Epiphanies and if you wish at Adolf Hitler for people who walk in the spirit or who follow the spirit or were led by or even possessed by the Dragon to understand where all this is going.

There was every reason for John to think this should fit Nero.

The Time of the End

Now let's return to Daniel's prophecy about this little horn, this man of sin, this son of the devil. Daniel 11 verse 40, "At the time of the end, the King of the South will push at him, and the King of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. {41} He will invade the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. {42} He will extend his power over many countries, Egypt will not escape."

I can recall the first time in my life I ever heard anyone talk about the end of the world. I was sitting on the front porch and it was summertime. There was no air-conditioning, so we were staying outside because it was cool. I was about 10 years old, World War II was going on, and the issue was in doubt. So, I was sitting on the front porch in the cool of the evening when my mother sitting in the porch swing behind me remarked to my dad that one of the signs of the 'end of the world' was when the King of the South pushed against the King of the North.

I did not like what I was hearing there. I thought the world was pretty good. I liked where we lived. I liked the things I could do. I liked the hillsides and being able to roam around looking in caves and wading in creeks and I thought the world was grand. The end of the world! I did not want to know about that but there it was. I had to start thinking about it from way back then.

Now what this is talking about, at the time of end, the King of the South, whom if I'm going to look at this in a modern context almost certainly has to be an Islamic power. A new Caliph perhaps, who pushes at the King of the North, which if you follow this whole thing through Daniel has to be something in the nature of the old Roman Empire, and this is almost certainly Europe.

Continuing in Daniel 12 verse one, "At that time Michael shall stand up, that great prince, which stands for the children of your people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time, and at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone that is found written in the book." We just keep coming back to this time, don't we? That time of trouble which is unique in all of history.

"Many of them," {2} "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." So, we're all the way down to the resurrection and we never even got a clue when we left Antiochus Epiphanies, did we? {3} "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, they that turn many to righteousness shall shine like the stars for ever and ever, {4} But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, knowledge shall be increased. {5} I, Daniel, looked and there was beside the other two, there was one on this side of the river bank and the other on the other side {6} And one said to the man clothed in linen upon the waters of the river, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" {7} And I heard the man clothed in linen upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven and swore by him that lives forever, "It shall be for a time and times and a half." That's 3 1/2 years.

Continuing in verse 7, "And when he shall accomplish to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. {8} "I heard it," Daniel said. "But I didn't get it" and I said, "Oh my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" {9} And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed to the time of the end." So, you and I shouldn't feel too bad if we don't absolutely understand this.

"Many," verse 10, "shall be purified, and made white, and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly and none of the wicked will understand." Only the wise will understand. The implication is even the wise are not going to understand until a certain time.

Verse 11, "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away," so there will be one! "And the abomination that makes desolate set up," and there will be one! "There shall be 1,290 days. {12} Blessed is he that waits and comes to the 1,335 days. {13} Go Your Way, Daniel, till the end be, for you shall rest, and stand in your lot at the end of the days." But even Daniel didn't know when that would be.

The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit RLDEA.com where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.

Discussion Questions

1. Who or what do you think may be the antichrist?
2. What do you think is holding the lawless one back?
3. What are your thoughts about the fact that before the end there will be a falling away?
4. What do you think about Jesus' statement that the end days will be shortened for the elect sake because if they weren't no flesh would be alive?

5. Do you see the similarities with the Messiah's teachings and Daniel's prophecies?
6. Who do you think the "god of fortresses" is?
7. Do you agree with Mr. Dart that the King of the South is probably going to be an Islamic power and that the King of the North is European?
8. Does it bother you when people try to use Daniel's prophecies to predict the end time?
9. Do you agree that many of the points in prophecies are going to remain hidden until the end?
10. Was there anything new in Mr. Dart's Daniel studies that you learned?