

Are you ready for the Antichrist?

Hollywood is and book stores, too. Differing ideas abound and contradict each other, let alone the Bible. What is the Mark of the Beast? Better yet, what is the Beast? Is it a monster super-computer somewhere in Europe keeping track of every living being on planet earth? It looks like we already have that in the TSA, so what else is new? Are we going to be tattooed in our foreheads, or have chips inserted under our skin? Both are pretty scary thoughts. Oh, and what's with this number 666? What mysterious meaning lurks behind those three infamous digits?

Lucky for us—no, a blessing!—the Scriptures provide us with the answers to all these questions and more. Get your Bible ready, because we will be looking at all the important evidence with which we can know for certain just who the Antichrist really is.

Despite popular opinion about the identity of the Antichrist, the Bible plainly states that it is not just a man, and it's not some evil villain that is yet to land on the world stage in the near future. The only mention of Antichrist in the entire Bible is in the little book of first John written by one of the closest disciples of Jesus about the year 30 AD. John was given a series of visions while exiled in the Aegean sea some 60 years later.

In chapter two of his first letter from the Isle of Patmos, John first mentions this ominous title. "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" 1John 2:18. The last time was nearly two thousand years ago? What must it be now! But notice that those to whom John is writing have already heard of the Antichrist. Where did they hear that? And what else John says: "even now are there *many* antichrists."

Many antichrists! Not just one, but a whole crowd of them, perhaps an army of them. Where did John get that idea? From another prophet. While John lived and wrote during the hey-day of the Roman Empire, Daniel lived and recorded his visions during the Babylonian and Persian kingdoms around 536 BC.

Daniel did not use the term Antichrist but he does have a lot to say about a "dreadful beast" that succed-

ed the Grecian empire. And that was Rome! So, both Daniel and John dealt with the rise of the Roman empire. Look how closely they both describe the same power.

1. **This beast had ten horns** (Dan 7:7; Rev 13:1). When Rome collapsed in 476 it fragmented into 10 ethnic groups which became the nations of Europe.
2. **Another horn arises with a mouth** (Dan 7:8; Rev 13:5). World powers express themselves by making decrees and laws, proclamations and edicts.
3. **Speaking great things against the Most High** (Dan 7:25; Rev 13:5,7). John says "blasphemy." The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy "because you being a man make yourself God" John 10:33.
4. **It was more stout for power was given to it** (Dan 7:20; Rev 13:5). It received power and authority from the dragon, "that old serpent, the devil" Rev 12:9.
5. **It was different than the other horns** (Dan 7:24; Rev 13:8). All the earth worshiped the beast.
6. **It would wear out and make war with the saints** (Dan 7:25; Rev 13:7,15).
7. **It would try to change times and laws** (Dan 7:25).
8. **It would reign 3½ times, 42 months, 1260 days** (Dan 7:25; Rev 13:5; 11:3).
9. **It would receive a deadly wound and its dominion would be taken away** (Dan 7:26; Rev 13:3).
10. **Antichrist comes "out from" the true believers** (1John 2:18,19). John says, "They went out from us, but there were not of us." It is not just one person, but a group that left the true church.

This eliminates one popular contender: Antiochus Epiphanes, a Selucid (Greek not Roman) king who persecuted the Jews around 168 BC. He was about 200 years *before* John's time. Though he indeed blasphemed God and His temple in Jerusalem, he was a minor actor that just lacks meeting all the criteria specified by John and Daniel.

Notice the three time periods are all the same. 42 months of 30 days each = 1260 days. $1260 / 3.5 = 360$, the number of days in a year comprised of twelve 30 day months. This formula also appears in the flood account in Genesis 7, where

the waters prevailed for 5 months which are said to be 150 days. So, all three designations are speaking about a 3½ year period of time. But, one more clue is important in determining exactly how long this time period is.

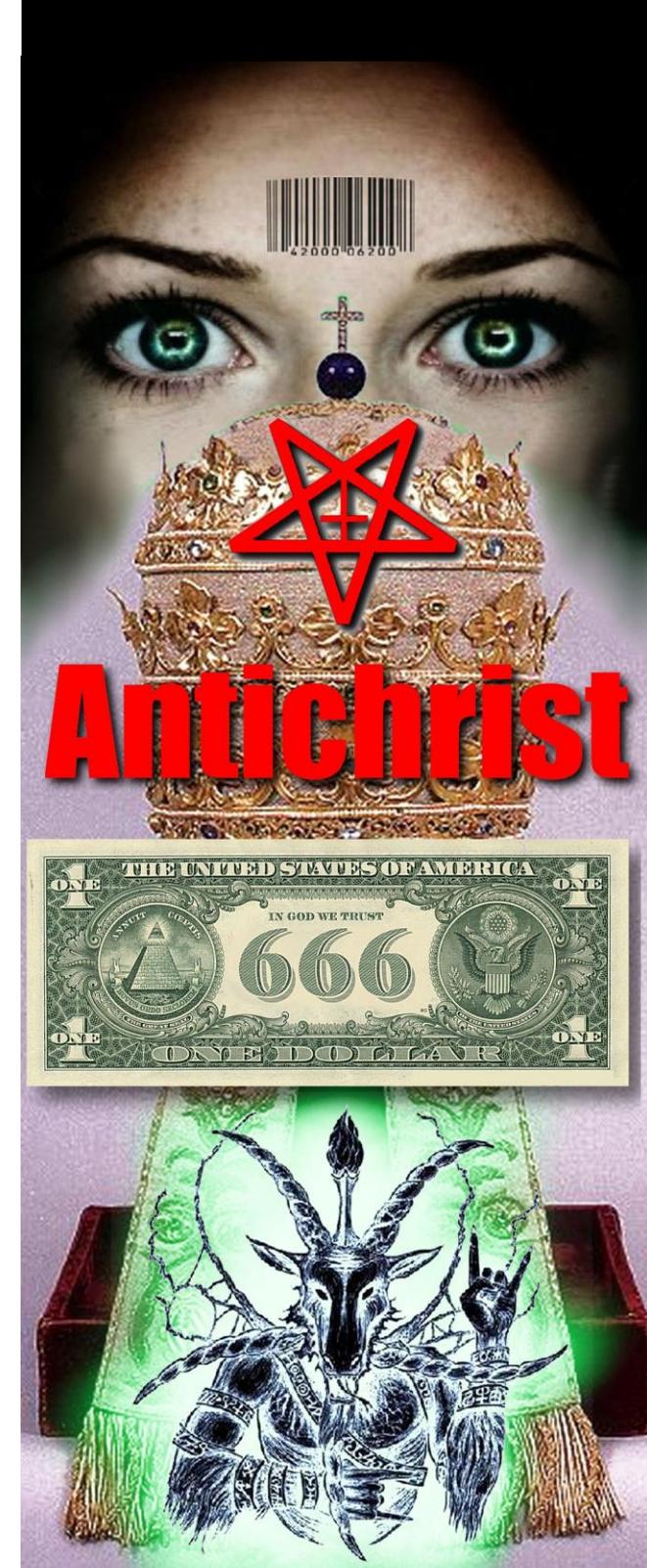
Prophetic Time

A known principle of apocalyptic or symbolic time is that a day of prophetic time is equal to a year of actual calendar time. Several examples illustrate this fact. When the children of Israel were on the borders of the Promised Land, they sent 12 spies on a 40 day reconnaissance mission to gather strategic data before actually going in. Ten of the spies persuaded the people that it would be suicide to venture in; two encouraged the wilderness nation to have faith in God and His power. But they were outvoted, and the lack of faith resulted in a 40 year delay in the desert, "each day for a year" Numbers 14:34. Later, the prophet Ezekiel was instructed to lay on one side for 390 days symbolic of the 390 years of apostasy for the northern kingdom, again "each day for a year" Ezekiel 4:6.

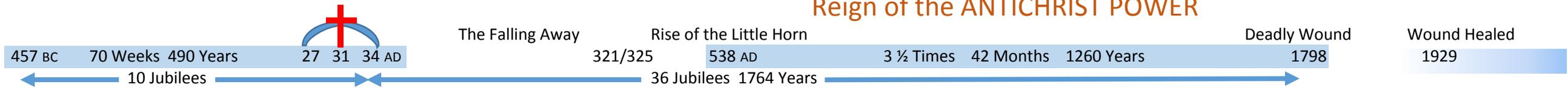
This principle when applied to the 3½ times and 42 months is not simply 1260 days but 1260 years. This definitely rules out Antiochus, Nero and any other individual person as the Antichrist power. So, who is the Antichrist of prophecy? The number of the beast is "the number of a man," 666, a triple six, the number of man created on the 6th day. Solomon received 666 talents of gold annually (1Kings 10:14) an ominous amount, perhaps his doom. Six is one short of seven, the signature of things divine. Seven signifies perfection, complete as seen in the Lamb of God who has symbolically 7 horns (omnipotence), 7 eyes (omniscience), which are the 7 spirits of God going "forth into all the earth" (omnipresence). The beast changes this three-fold perfection to a triple imperfection.

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Reign of the ANTICHRIST POWER



The 70 Week Prophecy

The 1260 year career of the Antichrist power is closely related to the 490 time period assigned or “determined” for Daniel’s people, the Jews (Daniel 9:25). The details of this “70 Week prophecy” is covered extensively in “The Jesus Prophecy” pamphlet free for requesting. The importance of the 70th week is frequently misapplied to the Antichrist instead of Christ, the Messiah. Gabriel told Daniel that the 70 weeks would accomplish a number of things all related to the Messiah:

1. to finish the transgression
2. to make an end of sins
3. to make reconciliation for iniquity
4. to bring in everlasting righteousness
5. to seal up the vision and prophecy
6. to anoint the most Holy

The first four items deal with solving the sin problem by the triumph of righteousness. The vision and prophecy in point number 5 refers to the one in chapter 8 for which Daniel prayed in chapter 9. This is covered in great detail in the pamphlet “Your High Priest” free for the asking. The Messiah’s coming is foretold in verse 25: 69 weeks after the start of the 70, his death in verse 26, and the end of sacrifices in verse 27 both occurring in “the midst” of the 70th or last week of 7 years. Jesus began his ministry proclaiming, “The time is fulfilled” Mark 1:15 exactly on schedule in the fall of AD 27 in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar (Luke 4:1) when he was baptized and preached from Isaiah 61 in Nazareth that it was “the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:16).

Exactly 3½ years later he was crucified on the Spring Passover of AD 31 precisely at the time of the morning sacrifice and died just as the evening sacrifice was being offered. The Lamb of God had given his life for the sins of the world. No more animals need be sacrificed ever again.

Patterns and Connections

The period of 3½ years is an interesting pattern in prophecy. It is always a probationary time that ends in death. Notice the pattern:

1. Elijah prophesied 3½ years of drought and at the end of that time 450 prophets of Baal are executed.
2. Jesus ministers for 3½ years and then dies on the cross of Calvary in the midst of the 70th week.
3. The disciples confirm the covenant for an additional 3½ years and Stephen is stoned to death. (Heb 2:3)
4. The beast of Revelation 13 (the little horn of Daniel 7) wages war against the saints for 3½ times (1260 years) and then receives a deadly wound.

Paul wrote that certain things would happen before Christ could return to this earth. “Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.” 2Thes 2:3,4. The man of sin would presume to take the place of God and claim to be God! This is what makes the little horn power diverse from all the previous powers: it desires worship, and it gets worship!

The dragon, that old serpent the devil (Rev 12:9) aspired to place his throne above the stars of God and “be like the most high” (Isaiah 14:12-14). He is the real power behind the beast. Revelation 13 tells us that the dragon gave the beast “his power, his seat, and great authority” Rev 13:2. The seat of the dragon’s power at the time of the falling away was Imperial Rome under the rule of the Caesars. This was given to the beast to become his capitol as well. The historical development of the little horn is a fascinating story that begins with the Christian “conversion” of emperor Constantine who remained a follower of Mithra his entire life.

Constantine began by enacting the world’s first Sunday Law in 321, and the Council of Nicaea in 325 officially formulated the Trinity doctrine. Controversy over this dogma resulted in many wars and crusades against those who resisted its enforcement. Three nations, the Heruli, the Carthaginians, and the Ostrogoths, were finally exterminated in 538 which fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel 7 “there came up among [the 10 horns] another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots” verse 8. All three of these nations remained faithful to the Word of God which taught that “There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things” 1Cor 8:6. Estimates of up to 100 million “heretics” died during the Inquisitions of Rome.

The Bishop of Rome was given the keys to the city when Constantine vacated and moved his capitol to Constantinople in 324. Nicaea is a nearby suburb. Soon the Bishop of Rome was claiming superiority over all other Bishops which eventually caused the split between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. The titles then expanded to Pope, Viceregent of Christ, His Holiness the Supreme Pontiff, Sovereign of the State of Vatican City, the smallest country in the world with embassies from every other country in the world! Popes began to wield the sword of excommunication against their enemies, denying them the right of baptism, last rights or Christian burial. Over one thousand years the Vatican ruled the kings of Europe symbolically riding on their backs as shown in Revelation 17 where the woman dressed in scarlet and purple (the colors of cardinals and bishops) has written on her forehead the word, “MYSTERY” just what the inexplicable Trinity doctrine is said to be. It denies the true Father and the Son which John says is the very definition of Antichrist (1John 2:22). The Holy

Roman Empire was the medieval union of church and state first embodied in the Old Testament story of king Ahab and his wife Jezebel, priestess of Baal. The church of Thyatira in Revelation 2:18-29 speaks of Jezebel the woman that “teaches and seduces” the servants of God during the Dark Ages.

The prophecy foretold that the beast power would be “killed with the sword” Rev 13:10. For 1000 years the Bible was suppressed and unavailable which is why this period of history is called the Dark Ages. But when the printing press was invented in 1439, the first book to be printed was Gutenberg’s Bible. The Reformation began with Wycliffe in 1330 and Martin Luther in 1517, both translating the scriptures into English and German. The Word of God is the sword that spiritually wounded the papacy (Heb 4:12) but its physical demise came exactly 1260 years after it began.

On February 15, 1798, exactly 36 jubilees after the end of the 70 weeks (36x49), the little horn power came to an end when Louis Alexandre Berthier, Napoleon’s field general, marched into Rome, deposed Pope Pius VI, took him captive and declared Italy a Republic. The pope was taken to Avignon, France where he died the following year and no pope ruled the church for several years. But as the prophecy foretold, “his deadly wound was healed and all the world wondered after the beast” Rev 13:3.

The wound was healed in 1929 when Mussolini signed the Concordat with Pope Pius XI returning the papal states to the Vatican. Since then the prestige and power of the Roman Church has steadily grown. Prophecy states that once again it will have power with the kings of earth “for one hour” Rev 17:12. And they shall make war with the Lamb, but Jesus “will overcome them for He is King of kings and Lord of lords” Rev 17:14. Let us follow the Lamb “whosoever He goeth” Revelation 14:4.