

1. The Rise of the Antichrist

2nd Coming of Christ

The topic of the Second Coming of Christ is a challenging topic, due to the many interpretations put forth by biblical scholars of differing viewpoints. In this study I will seek to interpret, as best I can, the scriptures pertaining to the coming of Christ in the Book of Revelation and other prophetic books. I will also seek to highlight and interpret the significance of current events, as I believe they relate to the days we are living in, and the last days leading up to the coming of Christ. As a disclaimer, I would like to state that I do not claim to have exclusive truth, or that my interpretations are the only ways to view this topic, but my beliefs that I will express here are conclusions that I have arrived at through careful study of God's Word, and various scholar's interpretations of this subject. At times the things that I will say will disagree with some of my favorite Bible teachers, and maybe yours too! I have the utmost respect for those teachers but I am committed to teaching what I see in scripture. Lots of Bible teachers will avoid the things that we are now diving into because it can stir up heated debate. Let us agree to disagree agreeably! Be gracious in all things. After all, our interpretations can be wrong, but God's Word is never wrong.

The purpose of doing this study is to focus on the coming of Christ, and to better prepare us for His coming. The early Christians in the first century would often talk of His coming and encourage one another by looking forward to the day when Christ would return. If that was so for centuries ago, how much more should we be anticipating His coming in the days in which we live? Now more than ever, it is important that we remember often to lift up our heads and say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

I would like to say something about the hermeneutic (how one interprets what is found in scripture) that I use when I seek understanding of what has been written, especially when it relates to prophecy. If the normal sense makes sense, seek no other sense. In other words, I use a "face value hermeneutic." I take what I read at face value seeking to understand what is written in its normal, natural, customary sense. I reason that if Jesus fulfilled so many scriptures in His first coming at face value, why would it be any different with His second coming? Of course, there are other times when I approach a passage, such as the beast of the Book of Revelation (Revelation chapter 13), in which case it is obvious that we are not talking about a literal beast coming up out of the sea, I therefore seek to understand it in a symbolic sense.

God wants His church to know what He is doing

I once heard someone use the expression; "What on Earth is going on?" For some reason, it took hold in my mind and I thought it would be a great question to start with as we consider the events leading up to the coming of Christ. What on earth *is* going on? What is God doing now on planet Earth? How do the events that we see unfolding around us relate to what we are told in the Bible will happen before Christ's return? In this seven-session study, one thing we want to observe is what *God* is doing on planet Earth. What is He unfolding, or allowing, in order that He may bring His Kingdom into full view?

What does He tell us about the things that will happen in the future, so that when we see those things begin to occur, we can look for the signs of His return? He does not want us to be ignorant of His plans, otherwise John the Apostle would not have been given the vision and revelation that he received while on the island of Patmos.

Amos the prophet spoke about God's desire for you and me to know what He is doing on planet Earth in this way:

*⁷Surely the Sovereign LORD **does nothing without revealing his plan** to his servants the prophets (Amos 3:7. Emphasis mine).*

Why do you think God gave His revelation in the way of dreams and images? Why doesn't He give us the facts exactly as they will occur with specific dates?

The Lord speaks to us for a reason. He does not waste words, yet He has chosen to speak in veiled terms in the language of the Prophets. He could have chosen to give us definite dates when every event would happen. Is there a reason that God chooses to speak to us in dreams and visions, instead of giving us clear factual details, which cannot be disputed? Images and dreams cross cultural and language barriers. Some of the things portrayed in the visions given to Daniel, Ezekiel and John were not things that were common to their understanding. Therefore, they had to describe the pictures, or visions as they saw or perceived them. Daniel, for instance, when he couldn't understand as much as he wanted to, was told: *"Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. ¹⁰Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand (Daniel 12:9-10).* We live in the time where God is unsealing what Daniel wanted to look more into. There may be many reasons why God speaks in picture form and visions, but one of the reasons, I believe, is that God wants His whole church throughout the church age to be always ready, and continually awaiting His return. I trust that you, dear reader, are one of those who are wise and made spotless and that this series will draw you closer in wisdom and understanding of the times we live in.

A King's Dream (Daniel 2)

Here is a hypothetical question for you to answer. Put yourself in this situation: If secret service men with dark glasses were to come into this room with sharpshooter rifles and loaded automatics aimed at our heads, and seconds later the President of the United States walked in following them, would it be a bit of a surprise? What if the president was to say to you, "I know that all of you are interested in prophecy, therefore I would like you to interpret my dream that I had last night. If you cannot interpret my dream, my secret service men will proceed to shoot every last one of you." After recovering from the shock of such a proposal, I imagine that you may very nervously reply with something like this: "Please tell us your dream and we will do our best." How would you then feel if he told you that he wasn't going to tell you the dream and demanded that you tell him what the dream and interpretation was? Would it put your heart in your mouth? Daniel, a

prophet of God in the Bible, and three young men with him were placed in such a situation. The Bible tells us that when the king of Babylon asked his wise men to tell him his dream, along with its meaning, they replied that what the king had asked of them was impossible. He then ordered them all to be put to death, which included Daniel and his three friends. They were given time to seek God for the dream and interpretation and during the night Daniel received a vision with the answer:

²⁷ Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, ²⁸ but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these: ²⁹ "As you were lying there, O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. ³⁰ As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind. ³¹ "You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. ³² The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. ³⁴ While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth. ³⁶ "This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. ³⁷ You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; ³⁸ in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold. ³⁹ "After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. ⁴⁰ Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. ⁴¹ Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. ⁴² As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴³ And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay. ⁴⁴ "***In the time of those kings,*** the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵ This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. "The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy" (Daniel 2:27-45).

I find it interesting that God would give this dream about what would happen in the future to a pagan King! Only when Daniel's life and the lives of his friends were threatened did he seek God for the answer and move into a new realm of giftedness. I wonder how many of us, if we were pushed by God through some life-threatening incident, would begin to seek God in a life transforming way. Daniel is the one that God wanted to understand the future so that the people of God, having been dispersed from the land of Israel to Babylon could be encouraged. God will intervene in the affairs of men, setting up His kingdom--A Rock (King Jesus) that will break the kingdoms of this world. God wants His people to know what on Earth is going on! He used the king of Babylon as an instrument to bring His word forth.

If we are diligent to search the scriptures to know what God has revealed, He will open our minds to know what on Earth is going on. He does not want to hide His purposes from us, but He does want us to seek Him. Like the prophets of Amos' day we also are to be listening for God's voice in a dark period of history when He wants to reveal His plans to those who will still seek after Him.

The Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

In this passage we are told of four world kingdoms that would come one after the other and occupy the land of Israel. We see here a time line from the tip of the head of the image to the ten toes of the feet. I hold the popular opinion that this dream speaks of the major world powers from the time that Nebuchadnezzar received the dream in his second year on the throne (604 BC), until the return of Christ. Daniel makes it clear that the first kingdom, the head of gold, represents king Nebuchadnezzar. He says to the king; "*You are that head of gold, and after you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. So we see that the first, the head of gold, was King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Empire (Daniel 2:37). The second was the Medes and Persian Empire under Darius the Mede (Daniel 8:20). The Medes and Persians were allied together in destroying Babylon. The third was the Grecian Empire under Alexander the Great (Daniel 8:21), and the fourth is the Roman Empire, which succeeded the Grecian Empire. The first three kingdoms existed in Daniel's day (although the kings mentioned did not), but Rome did not then exist. We know from history that each kingdom succeeded the other. For the sake of time we will concern ourselves just with the fourth kingdom, which in our time line of the image, is where the Rock cut out of a mountain, the Kingdom of Jesus the Messiah, will come and break to pieces the world systems of Satan.*

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 11:15).

Some would say that this prophetic timeline has already been literally fulfilled because King Jesus came during the Roman occupation of Israel and set up His kingdom, the kingdom of God. They would quote Paul as saying, "*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Romans 14:17). I agree with that statement to a certain extent, but it sure doesn't seem to me, though, that the Rock has broken the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold

to pieces and scattered them to the wind without leaving a trace (verse 35 and 45). I believe that the Rock that smashes the kingdoms of this world is a picture of the Second Coming of Christ to put down all sin and rebellion. So what does it mean?

Although the Roman Empire became a dominant power after Greece, it has not been around for several centuries now. When one thinks about the last two thousand years, the Africans, the Indian Subcontinent, or even Asian nations haven't dominated the world. The peoples of the Roman Empire still dominate the world scene in the sense that the Roman Empire covered most of the countries of Europe. The legs of the vision more than likely symbolize the fact that the Roman Empire was divided into two parts, the eastern Byzantine leg situated in Constantinople, which is present day Istanbul, Turkey, and the western leg situated in Rome. The European people have been strong as iron and weak as clay over the last 1700 years with several people seeking to bring about a unified Europe, men such as Charlemagne, Napoleon and Hitler amongst others. Many see the Treaty of Rome, signed on March 25, 1957, as the seedling that has grown into the [European Union](#). This treaty introduced the European Economic Community. It wasn't signed in London or Paris, Vienna or Amsterdam, but it was signed in Rome. Verse 42 of Daniel's prophecy speaks about the toes of this statue, and this is also interesting, as the European nations fit this description very well. France at times has been strong and then very weak. Germany has been strong but also very weak. We can say the same about England, Italy and Spain too. In the days in which we live we see a push by the elites of Europe and the USA (descendants of the Roman Empire) to a one-world government.

The clash with the Rock comes upon the feet of the statue (Verse 34). Verse 44 says that, "in the time of those kings," God will set up His kingdom, which will never be destroyed. It is not clear from the passage what kings or leaders are being mentioned, but I believe the kings that are mentioned are ten kings symbolized by the ten toes of the image, the last stage of the fourth kingdom. We will see this confirmed by the two following passages we are studying today (Daniel 7 and Revelation 13). These ten leaders of nations, I believe, will be in power when the Antichrist comes to power.

A Little Horn Amongst Ten

In Daniel chapter seven, Daniel has his own dream and in it there are four beasts that arise out of the sea. In scripture, the sea is symbolic of a sea of people (Revelation 17:15). The four beasts, I believe, refer to the same empires we have just read about in Daniel chapter 2. Daniel indicates that they are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth: "The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth" (Daniel 7:3, 17). Again, for the sake of time, we will focus our attention on the fourth kingdom:

*"After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast—terrifying and frightening and **very powerful**. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. **It was different from all the former beasts**, and it had **ten horns**.⁸ While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was **another horn, a little one**, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This*

horn had eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ⁹"As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. ¹⁰A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. ¹¹"Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. ¹²(The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.) ¹³"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. ¹⁵"I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. ¹⁶I approached one of those standing there and asked him the true meaning of all this. "So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: ¹⁷"The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. ¹⁸***But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.*** ¹⁹"Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, which ***was different from all the others*** and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. ²⁰I also wanted to know about ***the ten horns*** on its head and about ***the other horn that came up***, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. ²¹***As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them***, ²²until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. ²³"He gave me this explanation: "The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms ***and will devour the whole earth***, trampling it down and crushing it. ²⁴The ten horns are ten kings ***who will come from this kingdom. After another king will arise***, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. ²⁵***He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.*** ²⁶" "But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. ²⁷Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him" (Daniel 7:7-27. Emphasis mine).

We are told in verse 21 that this little horn (Antichrist) was waging war against the saints and defeating them, what do you perceive is happening here? Who are the saints and what does defeat look like for the saints?

I personally do not believe that defeat refers to the persecution of Christianity that will take place. Persecution has never defeated Christianity; it has only stimulated the church to grow deeper roots in God and numerically grow too. I do believe that the church will go through persecution, but I believe that the defeat the passage is talking about refers to the Church losing the culture war. Many in the Church have just given up and refuse to stand up and fight against the evils that are going on in modern times. When the movie *Gone With the Wind* came out in 1939, and Clark Gable spoke his famous “d” word, it shocked the USA so much that it was front page news, such was the controversy that the culture had stooped so low to use such a word. The culture of the day has completely thrown away any godly morals at all. The Church, called to be salt and light to the world (Matthew 5:13-16), to the most part, has now gone into spiritual sleep mode, and even more so when the Antichrist comes to power.

There is coming a time, scripture tells us, when many who have a form of godliness, will fall away from the faith. Jesus said, “<http://biblehub.com/matthew/24-10.htm>At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other” (Matthew 24:10). Paul the apostle also wrote about this event that will take place when many shall rebel against the faith of Christ: “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” (2 Thessalonians 2:3). We will explore in a later study what prophesied event will take place that will cause such a departure from the faith. Revelation 12:11 tells us that the true church of Christ will not be overcome by this war against the saints by Antichrist:

**They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony;
they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death (Revelation 12:11).**

So let’s go over some of the things that we’ve read about above:

- 1) The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom (v.23) that, in its last stages, will devour the whole earth. Rome did not conquer the whole earth.
- 2) There will be a time where there will be a unified purpose with ten leaders who will be from European descent (the area of the Roman Empire, v.24). Don’t rule out America from this confederation of ten world leaders, for America is made up mostly of the people groups of the Old Roman Empire. ²⁴**The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom (7:24).** We can’t be dogmatic about this, but I do believe that America, along with Canada and Mexico, mostly populated by descendants of the old Roman Empire, will be one of the ten power blocs, and this seems verified by the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement.
- 3) It seems that at some point **after** (v.24) the ten nations begin working together another king (The little horn) will arise. I believe that this is the Antichrist mentioned by John the Apostle. He will speak against the Lord and begin to oppress the saints. We are also told that he will try to change the set times and the laws (verse 25). It is possible that this means he will seek to change the year, getting rid of the Gregorian calendar so that it is no longer called A.D.

(Anno Domini means, In the Year Of Our Lord), it may also mean getting rid of religious holidays such as Easter and Christmas.

- 4) Verse 25 says that the saints will be handed over to Him for three and one half years (time, times and half a time). Verse 21 also says that he will go to war against the saints.

What do you think is meant by the phrase, “**the saints will be handed over to him?**” The word *saint* comes from the Hebrew word, *Kaddish*. The Greek word for saint is *Hagios*. It means something that is separated from ordinary common use. It is something or someone who is set apart as holy and he or she have been brought into relationship with God and designated by Him as having a sacred purpose or special significance to Him.¹ If a person is born-again of the Spirit and walking with Christ, he or she is seen as set apart for holy use and these individuals are what the Bible calls *saints*.

When you think of the events of the last days leading up to the Second Coming of Christ, what is your greatest fear? How do you think Christ would answer your fear?

Whatever your fear is, you do not face it alone. Jesus said again and again, “**surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age**” (Matthew 24:20). When Nebuchadnezzar threw Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego into the fiery furnace, there was a fourth one in the fire with them (Daniel 3:25). When you go on a train journey, you get your ticket before you board the train. Don’t spend time worrying about it. He will give grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). Isn’t that exactly Paul the apostle’s testimony?

¹⁶At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. ¹⁷**But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth (2 Timothy 4:16-17).**

Those that have been given the responsibility of teaching the scriptures all enjoy sharing the things that are uplifting and encouraging, but we must not shy away from teaching what the Bible says; otherwise we will be guilty of withholding truth that is important for the Body of Christ’s growth. Verse 25 says that there will be a period of three and one half years (verse 25), time, times and half a time is three and a half years. Elsewhere it is called forty-two months (Revelation 13:5), and in another place 1260 days. 360 days (Jewish Year) times three and a half equals 1260 (Revelation 12:6). During that time, the Antichrist will rule dictatorially over the whole world and for part of that time he will persecute and oppress the saints. God will allow it for His own reasons, but only for the period of time that He has designated. The saints will be delivered before God pours out His wrath on a sin loving world. There are scriptural indications that the time of persecution will be cut short: **If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened (Matthew 24:22).** But is this word, the *saints*, referring to Jews that become believers or to the Church? Some say the Church is taken up in the Rapture before the Antichrist comes to power, and are not

¹ Key Word Study Bible, AMG Publishers, Page 1572, 41. Hagios.

around for this persecution. I would like to look at the whole topic of the Rapture in another session, but for now let's look at specific passages in the book of Revelation, chapter 13, and see if we find similar images that we have already seen in the Book of Daniel:

The Beast of the Book of Revelation

¹And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had *ten horns* and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. ²The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. *The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority.* ³One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was *astonished* and followed the beast. ⁴Men worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? *Who can make war against him?*" ⁵The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise his authority for *forty-two months*. ⁶He opened his mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. ⁷*He was given power to make war against the saints and to conquer them.* And he was *given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation.* ⁸*All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life* belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world. ⁹He who has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰If anyone is to go into captivity, into captivity he will go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword he will be killed. This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of the saints (Revelation 13:1-9).

- 1) In this passage again we see a 10 nation confederacy, symbolized by the ten horns as it was in Daniel 7:7.
- 2) The Antichrist is described as having the same characteristics as the three former beasts in Daniel 7. In that passage we are told that Babylon was like a lion (7:4). The Antichrist will have an ability to speak great things that will sway people just as Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did. The second beast, which we know to be the empire of the Medes and Persians, is likened to a bear (7:5), which perhaps symbolizes antichrist's ferocity and power. The third beast, a leopard (7:6) is indicative of the speed of Alexander the Great who conquered the Middle East and Western Asia in just over three years. In the same way Antichrist and his kingdom will have an ability to react with speed to world events, symbolized by the leopard.
- 3) He will be inspired and empowered by the dragon (Satan).
- 4) One of the heads of the beast will have what many think to be a fatal blow. I don't know what this means, but perhaps it could be that one of the countries of his alliance has what will appear to be a fatal blow but is healed miraculously. Some say it could be an assassination attempt and he is miraculously healed afterwards. If this interpretation is correct, it will certainly increase his popularity and cause

people to elevate him. This could enable him to present himself as one to be worshipped as a god.

⁴He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshipped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God (2Thessalonians 2:4).

- 5) The whole world was *astonished* (Verse 3) and followed the beast. The Greek word used here, *thoumazō*, means to wonder, have in admiration and to marvel at.² The emphasis in this verse certainly seems to be at a time when *the whole world* will admire what this man is able to accomplish through his ten nation confederacy. Passages like this is why I believe this passage and associating passages are still future. Those that are Preterists (Preterists believe that this passage was fulfilled in the first century A.D.) have difficulty interpreting this passage at face value, Rome in the first century had no way of making the whole world be astonished at any of the Caesars of Rome.
- 6) His ability to make war far outstrips other nations, “who can make war against him?” Technological advances in the 10-nation confederacy will leave other nations behind to the point where the beast will intimidate other nations into submission.
- 7) He will have charisma in the way he talks (Verse 5). He will utter blasphemies and proud words. There will be an ability to sway people with convincing words; Adolf Hitler has got nothing on this guy.
- 8) Here’s the part that I don’t like, he will be given power to make war on the saints. Remember that this is what we also read in Daniel 7:25. Remember also the fact that his authority over the whole world was only for 3½ years (time, times and half a time, Revelation 13:5 says the same amount of time, calling it forty two months (3½ years—the Israelite nation follow a lunar calendar of 360 days to a year).
- 9) He will call for everyone on planet earth to worship him, all whose names are not written in the book of life (Verse 8). The scripture seems to emphasize that this pertains to all inhabitants of the earth; verse 7 tells us that his authority will be over every tribe, people, language and nation. In the first century A.D. this did not happen. This passage has to be future, as I see it. Those who have committed their lives to Christ will not go along with this edict, which is perhaps the very reason that they are persecuted, some going into captivity and others being put to death (Verse 10).

Revelation 13:11 then talks about a second man who will arise that will be a religious figure; many call him the False Prophet. He will perform miraculous signs and will force people to worship the first beast, the Antichrist. There are two things he does which will cause true Christians (saints) to rebel against the authority of these two men:

¹⁵The second beast was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast,

² Word search on e-sword.com on *thoumazō*, Revelation 13:3.

so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed.¹⁶It also forced all people, great and small, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hands or on their foreheads,¹⁷so that they could not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of its name.¹⁸This calls for wisdom. Let the person who has insight calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man. That number is 666 (Revelation 13:15-18).

- 1) He will set up an image of the Antichrist that speaks and demands worship of him, threatening those who will not with death (Revelation 13:14-15). We are not told where this image is set up in this passage, but it perhaps ties in with Jesus' warning to the saints that, "when you see standing in the holy place the abomination that causes desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then...there will be great distress" (Matthew 24:15, also v.21. KJV uses the word *tribulation*, NIV uses the word *distress*). 2 Thessalonians also mentions this same time, I believe, when Paul says that the Antichrist 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." (2Thessalonians 2:4).
- 2) He will force everyone to comply with his demands to take a mark signifying allegiance to their regime. "He also forced everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name. This calls for wisdom. If anyone has insight, let him calculate the number of the beast, for it is man's number. His number is 666" (Revelation 13:16-18).

The Mark of the Beast

How could it ever come about that nothing could be bought or sold without having a mark? I certainly do not see a situation at any time in history where everyone, small and great, could not buy or sell without using cash. With the use of credit cards and bank accounts with computers, we are in a time where buying and selling can be done completely without cash. It certainly could not have been fulfilled before the present time. Take a look at everything you buy in the stores and see if you can see the RFID tag (Radio Frequency IDentification) on it. Some of you might have seen the ones on music CD's, they are little white plastic boxes, or inside books at Barnes and Noble.

Did you know that there is a plan in place by major corporations mostly from America, Canada and Europe, but in fact going on all over the world, where everything that is bought and sold will have a microchip called an RFID tag on it? In 1999 Proctor and Gamble along with Gillette and MIT got together and looked into tagging all their products with these little computer chips that will record and track every bit of information from production to the home. Each tiny chip, some as small as the period at the end of a sentence on this page, is hooked up to a tiny antenna that picks up electromagnetic energy that is beamed to it from a reader device. The reader device

allows the item to be remotely identified as each chip has its own unique number. The plan is now being put into the systems of many companies all over the world to track every item that is produced and where it ends up. With bar code technology, every can of Coke has the same UPC or bar code number (a can of Coke in Toronto has the same number as a can of Coke from Cincinnati). In the next few years, with RFID each individual can of Coke will have a unique ID number, which will be linked to the person buying it when they scan a credit card or a frequent shopper card (i.e., a "registration system").

The second way it's different from a bar code is that these chips can be read from a distance, right through your clothes, wallet, backpack or purse, without your knowledge or consent, by anybody with the right reader device. In a way, it gives strangers the ability to spy on you, to identify both you and the things you're wearing and carrying. Imagine walking through a doorway and having a hidden reader device identify the books in your briefcase and the brand of your underwear. Not only will everything have its own chip, but also plans are being made for every person to have a chip that can be read at point of sale.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVcgoO761po>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDyqhcy1L-0>

Both commercials that are above do not illustrate how the money is transferred from the shopper to the grocery store, but it will more than likely be transferred at point of sale by you passing your hand over a reader device and your bank details being read and digital money being transferred.

This idea sounds wonderful to some because if there is a person suspected of being a terrorist, his every move and everything he buys can be tracked. There will come a time when if a person does not have a chip embedded in his skin in the future, he will not be allowed to buy or sell. IBM has even developed a device actually named the "person tracking unit" that can zero in on your RFID tagged products and use them to watch you like a hawk.³ Katherine Albrecht and Liz McIntyre, two consumer rights activists, have written a book about this technology called *Spychips*. This is not a Christian book, and it was not written with the intention to make a link between this technology and the mark that we read about in Revelation, but the possibilities and similarities of this mark are startling. There are many people who are not Christians who are already warning others of the loss of privacy and freedom that is at our doorsteps.

Many people, however, will view this technology as a good thing. For instance, there will be reader devices that will be placed on major roads that will track the tag in every car that is produced. Technology like this is already being used. There are some major highways in Chicago, Miami and other cities where reader devices debit money out of your bank account when you go through a certain place on the toll road. For a certain

³ *Spychips*, written by Katherine Albrecht and Liz McIntyre, Published by Nelson Current, Page 34

amount of money I can pay for the ability to see on the Internet a map, which will show me just where the tracker unit on my son's cell phone is. He won't be able to hide his location. It will even tell me the speed his car is travelling at. There are many good reasons and advantages that make this technology seem useful and helpful, and this may explain why people will welcome having a personal chip embedded in his or her skin, especially when it comes to people stealing your personal identification data.

With terrorism being such a major concern, some will argue that having such a chip mandatory for everyone would be in the best interest of the majority, arguing that it is for the safety, or for the common good of the people, making it worth the sacrifice of privacy and freedom. It is said that the Royal family of England have chips embedded somewhere in their skin, so that if they are kidnapped and held for ransom, they can be easily found via satellite. Think of the advantages for the military. If one Israeli soldier such as Gilad Shalit was kidnapped, satellites could find him right away before him having to spend 5 years in captivity. What if a US pilot was downed, they could be found on a map via a satellite-tracking unit. Think of the advantages for the stores; security chips that are attached to products and items of clothing would not be able to be stolen; a hidden reader device would be set off near an exit. Everything on planet Earth will be tracked via RFID. Nothing will be bought or sold at some point in the future except it has the stamp of ownership on it to Antichrist's world kingdom. Taking the Mark of the Beast will be tantamount to selling your soul to Antichrist. There will be a commitment along with the Mark to worship Antichrist's image:

"If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives his mark on the forehead or on the hand, ¹⁰he, too, will drink of the wine of God's fury, which has been poured full strength into the cup of his wrath. He will be tormented with burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb (Revelation 14:9-10).

Click on this link to a video to see some of the things happening in our world:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWgUTrvRIA4>

We are living in a world that is changing fast, and not always for the better. What on Earth is going on? Jesus is coming, that is what is going on. Jesus said that: **"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near"** (Luke 21:28). This is a time for us to get to know God, to be intimately acquainted with Him and to practice walking by faith. This is also a time to make sure of where you are going in life and in death. Do you know Him? He has told us clearly through the prophetic writings that He has overcome death and hell, and that He is coming back for His people. Have you committed your life to Him? Is He your Savior? He said, "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Acts 2:21). Give your heart totally to Him in absolute trust...you will not be disappointed!

Prayer: Father, as I consider the things that I have read today, I want to have assurance that I will be with you in your eternal kingdom. I commit my life and my future to you. I know that you hold the future. I choose this day to place my heart and my life in your hands. Please forgive me of my sins, I want to turn my life around and walk with You. I

receive the gift of eternal life, which you have purchased for me through the substitutionary death of your Son. Thank you for dying in my place so that I can spend eternity with you. Please come into my life and make me a brand new person (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Keith Thomas,

Email: keiththomas7@gmail.com

Website: www.groupbiblestudy.com