
CHAPTER 6

THE LAST DAYS' KEY PLAYERS

The doctrine of future events deals with the final destiny of man. It encompasses the end of man (with death being only an intermediate state), the Church Age, the Second Coming of Christ, the Rapture, the Rewards, the great Tribulation, the millennial reign of Christ, and the New Jerusalem. We are for now concerned with the Second Coming and the End of the Ages in which event it is necessary to distinguish the key players.

JESUS CHRIST

The Godhead by sovereignty oversees all creation and controls the universe from start, in the beginning in eternity past until the consummation in eternity to come (Dan. 2:20-22). God is the righteous Judge but has committed all judgment to His Son, Jesus Christ (Acts 10:42). Sin must always be judged by God's standard of holiness. God is holy; He is also merciful though just. For the sake of salvation, Jesus Christ has by His death paid for the sins of all who would believe in Him. This way, He becomes the foundation and Head of the Church and the bridegroom of all His saints, the Church.

As the Creator, God exercises sovereignty over all creation through His Son, Jesus Christ. He will redeem and also punish the wicked. He will remove curse from the earth when He rules on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords in the millennium. He will hence deal with Satan and his followers and finally destroy death and Hades in Hell fire. Finally, He will hand over everything to the Father in the New Jerusalem, when the old creation gives way to the new Earth and new Heaven.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of the Father and the Son, magnifies and

extends the Church, as He is poured out unto all believers in the Church Age. He was sent to reveal and glorify Jesus during the Church Age. He was sent as the promise of the Father to endure with power and anoint the Church for service. He was sent as the promise of the Son to be another Comforter, to provide the Church what Jesus would supply her. He, the Holy Spirit, though active as God in all ages, will specially operate in the specific capacity from the Day of Pentecost until the Rapture of the Church (Acts 2: 17-20, 38, 39; 13:52). During and after the Tribulation and in the Millennium, He will still lead people to know the Messiah and obey King Jesus and worship God. He will play a very active role in all resurrections as the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:11).

THE CHURCH

The Church will be the agent for revealing, exerting or expanding the kingdom of God (Matt. 16:13-19), until its Rapture from the earth. It is presently the center of divine activity on God's time zone and seasons (read Rev. 1-5). It is composed of all born-again believers in Christ Jesus - both living and dead, Jews and Gentiles (Rom.1:16-17; 1Cor 12:13; Eph. 3:4-6; Gal. 3:26, 27). Nothing is directly said about it in Old Testament eschatological prophecies. It is the mystery of God revealed in the New Testament (Matt. 16:16-19; Eph. 1:17-22; 3:1-10; 5:22-32). The Church Age begins from the Day of Pentecost up to the rapture of the saints (Joel 2:28-31; Acts 2:17-21, 38, and 39).

Hence the length of the Church Age is only known to God; it one thing or something not disclosed to any man or to angel. This is why no attempts should be made at setting dates for the rapture of the Church. On the contrary, normal activities must be pursued knowing that once the ark (here the Church) is started, the flood (the Lord's return) will come unexpectedly (Matt. 24:36-44).

Characteristics of the Church

The Church must be characterized by worship and the service of the living God (Matt. 4:10; Acts 2: 38-47). This is seen in its members:

- a. Love for the Lord Jesus implying total obedience to the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit (Psalm 119:9; John 14:15-23; Col. 3:16; Rom. 8:14; John 14: 15-23; Acts 2:42; 1Cor 16:22).

- b. Devotion and commitment to worship and service to one another (John 4:21-23; Rom. 12:1, 2; 1Thess. 5:11, 12).
- c. Faithfulness, devotion and commitment to God's work (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 5:42; 1 Cor. 4:1, 2; 15:58; Eph 4:11-16; 1Pet 4:10, 11;).
- d. Holy Living and good deeds as a way of life and in anticipation of and in readiness for His imminent coming (Tit 2:11-14; 1 Peter 1:15, 16; 1Thess 4:3; 5:1-8; 1John 3:1-3).
- e. Absolute reliance on the Lord (1Thess 5:17-23; 2Thess 2:13-17).

ISRAEL

The Jews would be scattered after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Matt. 23:37-39). This literally took place in A.D. 70 under the Roman General Titus. Israel and, especially Jerusalem, would again become the centre of action during the Tribulation in accordance to the word of prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27). However, Jerusalem was to be destroyed to give way for God's agenda of the salvation of believing souls from the gentile nations during the Church Age. Gentiles would trample upon Jerusalem until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Luke 21:24). Secondly, the fullness of gentile converts is to be grafted into the kingdom of God through conversion into the true church of Christ (Rom. 11:25-27).

Presently all we can say is that the Jews are back to the Promised Land. The new site of Jerusalem according to archeological descriptions fits the 2500 year-old prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer.31: 38-40). Nobody can explain the mystery behind this, only God knows! For from 1917, the dry bones of Ezekiel 37 began to come alive. On May 15, 1948 Israel was reborn. The United Nations declared it as a sovereign state. There have since been wars against it, but it will never again be plucked up or thrown down! So we live in exciting times.

Israel is still waiting anxiously for the day of the Lord and the revelation of the Messiah to them. So, of-course, the Jews have returned in unbelief. It is God who has drawn them back there, as we read from Ezek. 34:11-14: *"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.*

I will bring them out from the nations and gather them from the countries, and I will bring them into their own land. I will pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in all the settlements in the land. I will tend them in a good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing land. There they will lie down in good grazing land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture on the mountains of Israel." (NIV)

After the rapture, God's attention will again center on the Jews. Temple worship would resume; and for this the fourth Temple would have to be built (of course only God knows when and how fast this will be done with modern technology). Standing on the temple site are the two Muslim domes, the Dome of the Rock (the Mosque of Omar) and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. This holy site has been the biggest bone of contention between the Jews and Arabs. Over the years, countless Jews, Muslims and Christians have been killed in their attempt to control this land. The question now has been how the Jews would fully possess this site, destroy the domes and build the fourth Temple. Research continues and Rabbis are meticulously searching the site, and it is possible after all, that, the domes are sitting on the site of the outer court of the Temple. If this proves so, which I believe could be the case; the Scriptures would be made beautifully plain right after the Rapture.

The real Mount Moriah, the traditional Temple site (Gen. 22:2; Ex. 15:17; 2Sam. 24:18; 1Chron. 21:18) would be some meters away from the domes and could easily give way to the building of the Temple leaving the domes still standing on the site of the outer court. When this happens, which could be the case; we shall get the picture from John's account in Revelation Chapter Eleven. Rev. 11:1-2 states: "*Then I was given a reed like a measuring rod. And the angel stood, saying, "Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. "But leave out the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months"*". On the other hand it is also possible that the domes would be destroyed during the Ezekiel 38; 39 Gog and Magog War, and the Temple rebuilt at the time.

At the beginning of the Tribulation, two special witnesses (prophets) will then be sent by God (Rev. 11:3f); and the Lord through

their ministry will seal 144,000 Jewish evangelists during this time for God's purposes. Many Jews and Gentiles will be saved, with many martyred for their faith. The Jews will be persecuted severely after the Anti-Christ breaks the pact and desecrates this fourth Temple. God will finally intervene when the Son of Man appears in the clouds, in the valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:1-17).

ANTI-CHRIST

The Bible speaks of antichrists that operate in our time (1John 2:18; 2 John 7). However, the real Anti-Christ, a political leader, will be revealed immediately after the Rapture of the Church, just at the beginning of the Tribulation. He will hail from and rule over 10 kingdoms inside the old Roman Empire after the Rapture, which will at the time be a sea of a troubled world (Dan. 9:26; Rev. 13:1-10). He will make a pact with Israel only to break it after 3½ years (Dan. 9:27).

Through him, Satan shall try to form a counterfeit tri-unity of Satan, Anti-Christ (Rev. 13:4) and the False Prophet (second Beast; Rev. 13:11f) as opposed to the Godhead - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Yet, before long, Anti-Christ will actually operate as (false) God demanding worship (Rev. 13:8), with the second Beast emerging as a false Messiah, as well as liberated demons (Rev. 16:13, 14), imitating the Holy Spirit. As his nature goes, he shall be a seemingly highly successful political leader and religious and will demand worship from all mankind. Having also military might and commanding a lot of wealth, he will be very influential, backed wholly by Satan's deceptive intelligence and power.

Somehow, he will be controlled by Satan and will become the devil incarnate, for God will allow Satan to fully take possession of him. He will be a false man of peace probably during the first half of the Tribulation (1Thess. 5:2, 3); run a one-world government (Rev. 13; 17:15); try world religion (Rev. 17); and a one-world economy (Rev. 13; 16). Anti-Christ will be very blasphemous and vehemently oppose and attack anything godly (Rev. 11:5; 12:1-8; 13:6, 7). Many scriptures describe him vividly, and the following are key reference texts: Daniel 7:8-26; 11:36-45; 2Thess. 2:2-12; Rev. 12 & 13; 19:20.

Other Symbolic Names of Anti-Christ are :

The Assyrian (Is 10:5-12); The king of Babylon (Is. 14:4); The Spoiler (Is. 16:4, 5); The little horn (Dan. 7:8); The prince that shall come (Dan. 9:26); The vile person (Dan. 11:21); The willful king (2Thess. 2:3); The son of perdition – one indwelt by Satan (2Thess. 2:3); The Beast (Rev. 13:1); The king of fierce countenance (Dan. 8:23); The king of the north (Dan. 11:36-45); The lawless one (2Thess. 2:8); The man of sin (2Thess. 2:3).

It seems Anti-Christ will combine all the characteristics **the kingly powers** of ancient Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. In Revelation, Anti-Christ as the Beast, combines all the characteristics of all the other four kingly powers of the book of Daniel. A comparison of texts from Daniel and Revelation below would explain this point. By description, Anti-Christ will initially be the political head which arises out of a three nation confederation. Seven (7) other heads within the revived Roman Empire signified by the 10 horns will submit to him.

From the description of his activities and influence, he will gain influence over cities typified as Babylon; 1) Rome now capital of Italy, and which also will be Anti-Christ's capital (the prince to come [Dan. 9:26],) ruling kingdom called Mystery Babylon in Revelation (Rev. 17); and 2) the revived Ancient city Babylon in modern day Iraq (Rev. 13:1f). The descriptions found in Daniel 7:8, 19-25; 8:23-25; 9:26, 27; 11:36-45 all refer specifically to Anti-Christ. Major Bible descriptions of the Anti-Christ may also be found in 2Thess. 2:3-8; Rev. 13:4-10. For instance as:

1. The Little horn, [Dan. 7:8, 11, 21, 25-26]. He will:
 - a. Speak pompously and arrogantly; vs. 8, 11
 - b. Persecute and make war against saints for three and a half years; vs. 21, 25
 - c. Blaspheme the true God; vs. 25
 - d. Attempt to change laws and times; vs. 25
 - e. Be destroyed and thrown into lake of fire; vs. 11, 26
2. The King, [Dan. 11: 36-45]. He will:
 - a. Magnify himself above every god; vs. 36
 - b. Blaspheme the true God; vs. 36

- c. Be a secular king who puts full confidence in military strength; vs. 38, and be a false man of peace through his charisma to negotiate peace deals (1Thess 5:1, 2).
 - d. Be a brutal conqueror; vs. 39-42
 - e. Control the world's finances; vs. 43
 - f. Meet his end or captured between the seas inland; vs. 45
3. The Lawless one, [2Thess. 2:3-9]. He will:
- a. Be the man of sin; vs. 3
 - b. Be the son of perdition; vs. 3
 - c. Oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God; vs. 4
 - d. Be highly religious but will seek to be worshiped; vs. 4
 - e. Be revealed in his own time in the end, when the restraining force is removed; vs. 6, 7
 - f. Surely be revealed but the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; vs. 7
 - g. Be overpowered when the Lord returns; vs. 8
 - h. Be indeed lawless according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders; vs. 9
4. The Beast, [Rev. 13:1-10, 17, and 18]. He will:
- a. Be a world leader of revived but extended Roman Empire; vs. 1, 2
 - b. Be a secular king who puts full confidence in Satan's power and super-human wisdom to temporarily solve earth's crises at the time; vs. 2
 - c. Work for the dragon; vs. 4
 - d. Blaspheme the true God; vs. 6
 - e. Persecute and make war against saints for three and a half years; vs. 7
 - f. Be a brutal conqueror; a ruthless, unfeeling dictator; vs. 10
 - g. Collaborate with the false Prophet; vs. 11-18
 - h. Control the world's finances; vs. 17
 - i. Be a man with 666 as the number of his name; vs. 18

Other rulers described in Daniel do not refer to Anti-Christ but to his types. For example the little horn of Dan. 8:9 would be the historic Antiochus IV or Antiochus Epiphanes and not Anti-Christ of Dan. 7:8.

It is worthwhile to state here that the scriptures refer to Anti-Christ as one that will be revealed. Hence, he will live on earth as a normal human being going about normal business, for some time before he is made manifest as Anti-Christ. It is also necessary to reason that anti-christs are at work already in the world in many ways, as we are in the last hour (1John 2:18). This refers to the spirit that works in men in opposition to the saving work of the Lord Jesus. This does not mean that anyone whose name when calculated in Roman numeral adds to 666 (as some say of Emperor Nero during whose reign the book of Revelation was written, and of many such earthly rulers) is Anti-Christ-in-the-making.

Anti-Christ would be only one specific person who is not yet revealed! The number 666 given him, as recorded in the book of Revelation, could simply refer to his diabolical, satanic counterfeit tri-unity of Satan, Anti-Christ and False Prophet, for he will indeed become thoroughly evil, being the devil incarnate or devil-impersonated together with the false Prophet.

Of course, Anti-Christ will not be revealed until after the “falling away” comes (2Thess. 2:3) and the “restraining force” (2Thess. 2:6, 7), is taken away according to Paul. Hitherto, a good deduction on the “restraining force” could be the work of out-poured Holy Spirit, from within the Church, which will be taken away, with the Rapture of the Church. So the Holy Spirit is the restrainer, but only in relation to His work with the presence of the Bride, the Church on earth. The falling away or great apostasy could be the formation of the apostate Church on earth, which would emerge after the Rapture of the true Church.

The nature of kings and kingdoms from the book of Daniel and Revelation gives clue to the nature and rule of Anti-Christ in the following chart:

COMPARISON OF KINGDOMS FROM THE BOOKS OF DANIEL & REVELATION ON ANTI-CHRIST'S RULE

Kingdom	Dan. 2	Dan. 7	Dan. 8	Rev. 13
Babylon	gold	lion		lion
Medo-Persia	silver	bear	Ram	bear
Greece	bronze	leopard	Male Goat	leopard
Rome	iron	a beast (dreadful, terrible, and strong)		the beast (of the anti Christ which combines all the others)
Dan. 2:31-33		Dan. 7:1-3		Rev. 13:1-2
Babylon (gold, lion)	Dan. 2:32, 38	Dan. 7:4		Rev. 13:1-3
Medo-Persia (silver, bear, ram)	Dan. 2:32, 39	Dan. 7:5	(Dan. 8:20; 10:20; 11:2-4)	Rev. 13:1-2
Greece (bronze, leopard, Male goat)	Dan. 2:32, 39	Dan. 7:6	(Dan. 8:21-22; 9:26)	Rev. 13:1-2
Rome (beast)	Dan. 2:33, 40	Dan. 7:7		Rev. 13:1-2

Rev. 13:1-2 contrasted with Daniel 2:31-40; 7:3-7, suggests that Anti-Christ would combine the characteristics of all the other kings mentioned in the book of Daniel. Furthermore, Dan. 7:8, 11, 19-25; 8:23-25; 9:26, 27; 11:36-45 together with Rev. 13:1-10, 17, 18 describe Anti-Christ. [It may be noted here that, through-out this book, I have assigned a descriptive name 'Anti-Christ' to the would-be real anti-Christ described above].

