

THE ANTICHRIST

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*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall
make you free" (Jn. 8:32)*

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The Antichrist is a key figure in the kingdom of darkness which is engaged in a full-scale war against the kingdom of light. The area in which this war is waged is the lives of people who have been created in the image of God. The methods employed range from direct spiritual influencing and the use of occult powers, to the deceiving of millions of people who practise false religions. Every effort is made to falsify or destroy true Christianity.

Satan's final objective with the struggle is to gain control over all people and to establish the Antichrist as king and universal messiah on earth. From God's point of view this great conflict will lead to the final defeat of Satan and his followers, and the establishing of a government of righteousness on earth. The power of darkness will be broken and all its supporters condemned to an eternal hell.

This war continued unabated through the ages. It started when Lucifer and the fallen angels were cast out of the heaven. When God created man, Lucifer saw in it an opportunity to destroy the works of God's hands. He deceived Adam and Eve to disobey God and thereby to rebel against Him. On that moment, Adam and Eve died spiritually and also brought physical death over themselves. All their descendants became a fallen race of spiritually blinded men and women who had a natural propensity to sin.

With the advantage that man's deprived nature offered to the kingdom of darkness, large-scale cultural and spiritual degeneration followed. During the thousands of years until the coming of Christ all the heathen nations on earth were spiritually blinded by Satan to worship idols. For extended periods, apostasy also prevailed in Israel as the people of God. There were times when it seemed as if the entire Israel would succumb and be destroyed in the fierce battle that raged against them. Even the prophet Elijah at one stage despaired and almost abandoned the struggle against the enemies of God:

“Lord, they have killed Thy prophets and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baal*” (Rom. 11:3-4).

With the coming of Christ the command was given to evangelise the entire world. The great commission resulted in an intensifying of the battle, as people from all nations were to be saved from the power of spiritual darkness and brought into the kingdom of light. God’s intention is that a Christian world should be established. When the gospel has been proclaimed to all nations, Jesus will physically return and establish a literal kingdom on earth. He will rule from the throne of David in Jerusalem. In the meantime it will be a spiritual battle that Christianity has to wage against a spiritual enemy. In this battle, the Lord Jesus is spiritually with us through His Holy Spirit.

Right from the outset Satan actively resisted the plan of world evangelism. His plan was, and still is, to create an antichristian world. At present he pursues his objectives by way of spiritual deception, but physical manifestations are soon to follow. As an alternative to Christ’s bodily return to earth to establish His kingdom, Satan promises to humanity a world empire under the leadership of a world messiah, called *the Christ*. His counterfeit Christ will be the Antichrist who will be the head of a satanic new world order.

During the entire church dispensation, the followers of Christ have been actively opposed by the satanic spirit of the Antichrist. In this struggle, the kingdom of darkness mobilises as many people as possible to persecute and try to destroy Christianity. Tyrants like Nero, Stalin, and many others, may rightly also be called antichrists. They are fore-runners to the end-time Antichrist:

“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” (1 Jn. 2:18).

Revelation of the Antichrist

The following Scripture gives several details about the revelation of the Antichrist:

“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... And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now [restrains] *will do so* until he be taken out of the way. And then shall the Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thes. 2:3-12).

In this section, Paul gives two indications of things that must happen first before the Antichrist can be revealed. In verse 3 he says that the “falling away” must first occur. The root meaning of the Greek word *apostasia* which is here translated as *falling away*, is *depart*. When the truth departs, then great apostasy sets in, as implied in this text. However, it is not necessarily only in an abstract sense the truth that departs, but the Christians who depart during the rapture.

In a new, authoritative book by eminent evangelical theologians on the subject of eschatology (*When the trumpet sounds*, edited by Thomas Ice and Dr. Tim Demy) the word *apostasia* is rendered *rapture*. In one of the chapters, Prof. House indicates that seven Bibles translated this term as

departing first and not as *falling away*. These Bibles are Wycliffe (1384), Tyndale (1526), Coverdale (1535), Cranmer (1539), Breeches (1576), Beza (1538), and the Geneva Bible (1608). In his article, Prof. Paul Feinberg agrees with this view.

A great falling away will at any rate occur in the last days (2 Tim. 3:1-5), particularly after the sudden departure of the Christians, and great spiritual darkness will prevail on earth. The Antichrist will then be revealed as *the man of sin* and *the son of perdition*. He will lead a world-wide rebellion against Christian norms by establishing and encouraging a culture of sin and violence.

The second reference to the important event that must occur before the revelation of the Antichrist is in verse 7-8: "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now [restrains] *will do so*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall the Wicked be revealed..." The one who withholds or restrains is the body of Christ, i.e. His church on earth that will suddenly be raptured and taken out of the way. Great spiritual darkness will then descend upon the world and offer the Antichrist the opportunity to reveal himself without any resistance.

Some people are of the opinion that the one who withholds is the Holy Spirit. However, after the rapture many people on earth will still be saved (Rev. 7), and a fresh outpouring of the Spirit will occur over Israel (Zech. 12:10). The Holy Spirit does, therefore, not depart from the world during the rapture. Because the Christians are also temples of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16), it is true that directly after the rapture the Holy Spirit will not have channels through whom He can work. That will allow the Antichrist the opportunity of revealing himself. Shortly after his revelation a Holy Spirit worked revival will occur in Israel.

All these facts indisputably point to the rapture before the revelation of the Antichrist and the beginning of the tri-

bulation period of seven years. A surprise element is associated with the rapture because the time of it can't be calculated. All Christians must at all times be ready for it. The promise of the rapture at a time when nobody expects it, was meant to be a motivation to all believers through the centuries to live holy lives and to be spiritually worthy to appear before Christ when He comes.

For this reason, Christians have a Christ expectation and not an Antichrist expectation. We are waiting for the Lord Jesus and not for the appearing of the man of sin. In the meantime we have to be the salt of a corrupt earth, withhold the rise of antichristian forces and warn all people against his godless strategies. But we are not destined for his cruel dictatorship if we are true believers. That is why we don't occupy ourselves with survival strategies for the great tribulation, but we do the work of Christ.

A further important statement that is made with regard to the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians 2, is that he is an end-time figure. He will appear on the scene shortly before the second coming of the Lord Jesus, and be a living person when Christ puts His feet on the Mount of Olives. On that day, the Antichrist will be destroyed:

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming” (2 Thes. 2:8).

Those who hold historicist views about the prophecies related to the Antichrist are out of touch with what the Bible says about this subject. To brand Nero or certain of the popes as the Antichrist, only ends up in contradictions. How can they be destroyed as living persons at the second coming of Christ? That they may be called antichrists in the sense that they paved the way for the end-time Antichrist, is acceptable. But they were not *the Antichrist*. The final fulfillment of the prophecies about the Antichrist are still future because he acts clearly within an eschatological situation during the seven years before the public coming of Christ.

It is also important to note that the Antichrist will be a *person* and not an impersonal *system*. He is called *the man of sin*, *the son of perdition*, and also *the self-declared God* and *the Wicked One*. The Bible says that he will be cast into the lake of fire alive on the day when Jesus comes (Rev. 19:20). That he will have a unique *system* of government as well as an *ideology* in terms of which he will rule, is sure. But as the head of this system he will be a living person who will form a two man government with the false prophet to subject all people to Satan's authority.

The four horsemen

According to Revelation 6:1-8, the Antichrist will be revealed in a highly deceptive way as an *angel of light* in an effort to first mislead people, and later to extend his merciless dictatorship over them. In the first stage of his rule he will appear to the world as a global peacemaker who brings hope and new opportunities of survival to a conflict-ridden and poverty-stricken world (*the rider on the white horse*). In a show of clever diplomacy he will deceive the people into accepting a new world order under a one world government which will operate in close association with an alliance of religions in order to accomplish international unity.

When his peace initiatives and reform policy of peace and unity collapse after 3½ years, the Antichrist will turn to violence in order to enforce his authority on all mankind. He will then become a cruel military dictator (*the rider on the red horse*). The next logical action will be stringent economical control and the rationing of food during the severe wars and famine in the world (*the rider on the black horse*). After these calamities, the only activity left for the Antichrist is his ride as the angel of death to reap as many souls as possible to join him in perdition (*the rider on the pale horse*).

In His prophetic discourse, Jesus Christ described a similar sequence of events that will occur during the coming tribulation period (Mt. 24:4-9):

- “Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many” (*the white horse*);
- “And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars:.... For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (*the red horse*);
- “...and there shall be famines, and pestilences” (*the black horse*);
- “Then they shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you” (*the pale horse*).

Identity of the Antichrist

In Revelation 13 more details are given about the identity and character of this evil world leader. He is described as *the beast with seven heads* and his co-ruler, the false prophet, as *another beast*:

The Antichrist: “And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon (*Satan*) gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. And 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. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, *Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?* And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months... And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues and nations...” (Rev. 13:1-7).

The false prophet: “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth... And he exerciseth all the power of the first

beast before him, and causeth the earth and those who dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image of the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he hath power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and 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. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore *and* six [666]" (Rev. 13:11-18).

In Revelation 17, another intimate ally of the Antichrist is mentioned, from whom we may learn more about the beast. That is the harlot woman who represents all the false, antichristian religions of all times:

"...and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns... And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABEL THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:3-5).

This woman is the mother of the apostates, and as such a spiritual parent organisation (an alliance or ecumenical body) of all the false religions. She was closely associated with the previous world empires and will also enjoy official recognition in the future kingdom of the beast. In Revelation 17 we are given more information about her and the beast on which she is riding:

“An here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. And there are seven kings: five have fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition” (Rev. 17:9-11).

The first conclusion that we must make about this Scripture is that John is *not* referring to the seven mountains of Rome, and therefore did not prophesy about the Roman Catholic Church. He says that the seven mountains are seven apostate kings (or kingdoms) that succeeded one another chronologically. We know that he did not refer to Roman emperors, as between Nero and Constantine alone there were ten antichristian caesars in power. In this passage God gives us a broad perspective on seven consecutive world empires as the major strongholds of heathen religions through the centuries. In Genesis, Isaiah and Daniel mention is made of these empires. They are:

- ① The ancient Babylonian Empire established by Nimrod.
- ② The Assyrian Empire that took the ten tribes of Israel captive in the 8th century BC.
- ③ The neo-Babylonian Empire that conquered the kingdom of Judah in the 6th Century BC and took many of its subjects captive to Babylon.
- ④ The Medo-Persian Empire.
- ⑤ The Greek Empire.
- ⑥ The Roman Empire.
- ⑦ The restored Roman Empire in the tribulation period.

In Revelation 17:10, John says that during his time five of these empires had already fallen; one was existing and the seventh one was yet to come. In the year 95 AD, when the book of Revelation was written, five of the empires were past – that is from the ancient Babylonian to the Greek Empire. The Roman Empire ruled at the time, while the end-time empire of the beast was still future. This last empire is symbolised by the head with the ten horns.

A common characteristic of the first six empires is that all of them were extremely hostile towards the kingdom of God on earth. Their occult practices, pantheism, immorality, the deification of their leaders, humanism, and rebellion against God, will culminate in the seventh empire of the Antichrist and descend to even greater depths of spiritual darkness and deception. The unanimity among them has its roots in mystery Babylon, the immoral mother of all the false religions. She exerted a tremendous influence on the previous world empires, and was responsible for their wicked nature. "The woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth" (Rev. 17:18).

The same evil alliance between a world government and a false world religion will be characteristic of the reign of the beast. It will form part of the age old struggle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. For this reason, the beast and his end-time kingdom must not be viewed and interpreted in isolation but as the grand and final manifestations of their evil predecessors.

The Antichrist is so closely identified with the previous world empires that he is depicted with the body of a leopard, the paws of a bear, the mouth of a lion and with ten horns on his head (Rev. 13:2). These symbols correspond with those in Daniel 7 where the Babylonian empire is represented as a lion, the Medo-Persian empire as a bear, the Greek empire as a leopard and the Roman empire as a ferocious beast with ten horns on its head:

- ❑ The Antichrist will follow the tradition of the Babylonians who deified their kings. He will declare himself above all that is god and even challenge the authority of the God of heaven. He will cause an image of himself to be erected in the temple and force all the citizens of his global empire to worship the image. Those who refuse will be executed. He will also make relentless attacks on the Jewish state after they have abrogated their covenant with him, and try to annihilate all of them.

- ❑ As in the Medo-Persian Empire, he will trample upon all the nations, make an end to their independence and incorporate them into his own empire. He will establish a merciless government and rule over his kingdom with the irrevocable and unchangeable laws of the Medes and the Persians. He will also order the destruction of the Jewish people.
- ❑ The Greek Empire was depicted by Daniel as a leopard with four wings. It operated highly mobile armies characterised by skilful military manoeuvres that enabled them to carry out their attacks with speed and efficiency. The Antichrist will revive these tactics in his well-disciplined armies. He will be able to deploy striking forces practically overnight in any part of the world. An anti-Jewish policy also ruled supreme in the Syrian province of this empire. The Greek dictator, Antiochus Epiphanes, was a fanatical hater of the Jews and as such also a type of the Antichrist.
- ❑ The fourth beast with its ten horns and teeth of iron had a terrible appearance. This is symbolic of the harshness, unapproachability and unrelenting attitudes by which the Roman Empire made its authority and sovereignty felt. During the invasion of Israel and the siege of the city of Jerusalem, hundreds of thousands of Jews were gruesomely murdered, crucified on trees and sold as slaves, while many of the survivors were taken as captives of war to other parts of the empire. An even more devastating war of annihilation will be waged by the Antichrist during the great tribulation.

It is evident that the empire of the Antichrist won't only be a revival of the Roman Empire, but of all the great world empires. It will have particularly strong Babylonian features. For this reason it is wrong to regard Western Europe as the revived Roman Empire and to allege that the Antichrist must come from Rome. His origin will be from a country that formed part of all the previous world empires, viz. the land

of *the king of the north* (Dan. 11:36-45). This land lies to the north-east of Israel and was during various times in history referred to as Babylonia, Assyria, and Syria. It is presently known as Syria and Iraq, but its heartland is in Iraq. That is also where the city of Babylon is situated, which is now being rebuilt. The book of Daniel is of great help to determine the Antichrist's country of origin:

- ◆ He is initially depicted as one out of ten (Dan. 7:7-8), being one of the ten countries of the old Roman Empire. The Syrian province, which included the present Iraq, was part of this empire.
- ◆ In a following scenario his country of origin is indicated as one out of four, being the four provinces of the divided Greek Empire (Dan. 8:8-9). Syria (including the present Iraq) was one of these provinces.
- ◆ He is finally identified as one out of two, i.e. the countries of *the king of the north* and *the king of the south* in the divided Greek Empire after Alexander the Great (Dan. 11). The historical battle between these two kingdoms is described in Daniel 11:1-35, while the end-time king of the north, the Antichrist, is described in Daniel 11:36-45. It can thus be concluded that he will originate from Syria or Iraq.

In Isaiah is another important prophecy on the revival of the ancient Assyrian Empire in the end-time. It is discussed within the context of *the day of the Lord* (Is. 10:20) and the Antichrist is described as *the king of Assyria*:

“Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done *it*, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man” (Is. 10:12-13).

The Antichrist will, without any trouble, remove the boundaries between the nations to internationalise them. He will also appropriate their treasures and gain control over the world economy. The blind and deceived political leaders of that time will give their full co-operation to him:

“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast” (Rev. 17:12-13).

Israel as well as the nations of the world will be delivered from the dictatorship of the end-time king of Assyria at the second coming of Christ (Is. 10:23-25; Mic. 5:4-6).

Power bases of the Antichrist

During the first 3½ years of the tribulation period the Antichrist will reign as prince of peace and pursue world unity. Then he will make his big move to gain absolute power. The Antichrist's change of image and strategy in the middle of the tribulation will be so dramatic and terrifying that he will endeavour to force all people into satanism. After he has received a deadly wound and came to life again, the devil will no longer manifest through him as a prince of peace and an angel of light.

He will now reveal his true nature as a power-hungry dictator who will give full expression of his propensity for blasphemy, sadism and brutal murder. He will establish a dictatorship that will be power-based on politics, religion and the control of economic resources. On each of these spheres, totalitarian control will be exercised with the main objective to reduce all people to absolute slavery. They won't be granted political rights, religious liberties or economic freedom outside the unitary structures of the new world order. The three power bases are:

☆ Political power

In the political sphere he will be the sole ruler of the world during the last 3½ years, and base his power on military

strength. No alliance will be able to match him because “power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Rev. 13:7). There won’t be a single nation with a sovereign government, as all of them will be subjected to the decrees of the Antichrist’s military regime. Political disloyalty won’t be tolerated and rulers who don’t subject themselves to his absolute authority will be pulled down from their thrones (Is. 10:13).

The Antichrist will be a modern Nebuchadnezzar who will order the world citizens of his empire at will. The brutality of historical world dictators such as Nimrod, Alexander the Great, Nero, Hitler, and Stalin will be repeated in his reign in a surpassing way. His military campaigns will not only be directed at earthly targets as the greatest military deployment in the history of mankind will occur in Israel against a heavenly army (Rev. 19:19). That will give rise to the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:14, 16).

✠ **Religious power**

After the false peace has expired and the last 3½ years of the great tribulation take effect, it will also spiritually be the darkest time in world history. The satanic triumvirate of the dragon (Satan), the beast (Antichrist), and the false prophet will then assume dictatorial powers on earth. They will make concerted efforts to crush the power of the Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, by destroying all people who worship the God of heaven. The Antichrist will claim the position of God for himself on behalf of the devil, and will be assisted by the false prophet:

“...the falling away (*the departing*) [will come] 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” (2 Thes. 2:3-4).

Daniel also warned against this end-time god-man who will arrogantly exalt himself to be God to the deceived masses of his world empire:

REIGN OF THE ANTICHRIST

<p>FALSE PEACE (3½ years)</p>	<p>GREAT TRIBULATION (3½ years)</p>
<p>J The Antichrist is revealed as Prince of Peace. He bases his global leadership position on political, religious, and economic structures.</p>	<p>J The Antichrist desecrates the temple, abolishes the sacrificial service and declares himself as God. Israel abrogate their covenant with him.</p>
<p>J The new world order with its universal government and world peace force is instituted, and it greatly empowers the alliance of world religions.</p>	<p>J The alliance of world religions (the false world church) is destroyed and replaced by the forced worship of the Antichrist as the God of this world.</p>
<p>J The Antichrist concludes a covenant with Israel as their Messiah. All other religions accept and worship him as the universal Messiah.</p>	<p>J Severe persecution is instituted against Jews and Christians who refuse to worship the Antichrist as God. They are hunted down, convicted and executed.</p>
<p>J The third temple is erected in Jerusalem next to the Islamic mosque. The lie is proclaimed that all religions on earth worship the same God.</p>	<p>J The Antichrist becomes sole ruler and military dictator. He controls a cashless world economy by means of computerised 666 related numbers.</p>
<p>J Babylon is rebuilt in Iraq as the New Age capital and a symbol of world unity. A temporary economic recovery and a false peace prevails on earth.</p>	<p>J An unprecedented death-toll is caused by wars, pestilences, and natural disasters. Military mobilisation for the battle of Armageddon occurs in Israel.</p>

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods... Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers... But in His [place] shall he honour the God of forces” (Dan. 11:36-38).

The Antichrist will exalt himself to the position of God. But his fraud will be evident because he will still recognise a power higher than himself – that is Satan who is the God of forces. Satan teaches his followers to wage war and capture fortresses and strongholds, and thus to achieve their political and religious objectives by force.

Revelation 13:3-4 clearly confirms the rise to religious power by the Antichrist, and that all the deceived people in the world will worship him. Through the mediation of the false prophet, who will do great signs and wonders to deceive the masses, an image of the beast will be erected in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, and it will be compulsory to worship the image (Rev. 13:15).

Such an absolute form of religious slavery will necessitate the disbanding and destroying of the alliance of false religions that will be formed during the first part of the tribulation period under the auspices of the Antichrist as universal messiah (Rev. 17:16). Only then will it be possible to force all people to worship the beast as God.

▼ Economic power

Besides the political and religious macrostructures, a cashless world economy under the control of the Antichrist will be instituted. With the use of numbers and codes, he will control a computerised system of funds transfer from a central part of the world (Rev. 13:16-18).

From this scripture it is obvious that numbers or codes will be allocated to people, without which no one will be able to buy or sell. Cash will be withdrawn from circulation. The system of electronic funds transfer will only be accessible to people who have “the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:17).

The condition to obtain this number or code is that an oath of allegiance will have to be made to the universal messiah and his world government. Only then will a personal identity number (PIN) be issued. However, a transaction of this nature will involve the selling of your soul to Satan for temporary economic gain. By signing the oath of allegiance the Antichrist will be recognised as the sole political, religious and economic head of the new world order.

Many theologians allege that there will never be any spiritual dangers attached to a cashless monetary system and the accepting of the Antichrist's number. They spiritualise this prophecy by saying that the Antichrist will only affect a person's ability to work (the hand) and his way of thinking (number in the forehead). Even though the Antichrist may issue a literal number or code system for funds transfer it will, according to them, be quite harmless. In this way they are joining Satan's propaganda campaign in which people will be deceived and brainwashed to accept the coming anti-christian new world order.

If you are worthy to escape the tribulation period, the number of the Antichrist can never be imposed on you. If you are among those who are left behind, you will have to settle your case with the Lord at that time. Your allegiance to the true Messiah will imply that you will have to utterly reject the false messiah, his world government, his alliance of false religions, his demand for personal worship, and his number for electronic funds transfer, irrespective of the severe consequences that you will have to face.

Those who declare their allegiance to the Antichrist by accepting his number, will be enfolded by the darkness of eternal condemnation:

“If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy

angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Rev. 14:9-11).

Those who will gain the victory over the Satanic conspiracy by not bowing the knee to Baal, will eventually be in the presence of God in heaven:

“And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass...” (Rev. 15:2).

Character of the Antichrist

The Bible mentions a number of key aspects of the Antichrist’s distorted character:

- ◆ He will be the *Wicked One*. After he who withholds (the true Church of Christ) has been taken out of the way, complete spiritual darkness will set in and the *Wicked One* shall be revealed. *Wicked* means *a morally bad person who rejects the righteousness of God*.
- ◆ He will be *without integrity*. Through political fraud he will gain a position of leadership, and by the use of clever diplomacy (political lies) he will soon become world leader (Dan. 9:27).
- ◆ He will be the *big briber*. Double standards, bribery and corruption will be the order of the day in his wicked regime. Special favours will be done for his accomplices: “...he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain” (Dan. 11:39).
- ◆ He will be a *satanic reformer*. “And he shall... think to change times and laws” (Dan. 7:25). He will suspend various traditions and laws. He will possibly abrogate the institution of marriage and also change the days of the week. In the political sphere he will remove the bounda-

ries among the nations and institute an integrated Babylonian world order of planetary citizens (Is. 10:13; Rev. 13:3).

- ◆ He will be *the man of sin*. Disobedience, immorality, rebellion, and utter selfishness are manifestations of the spirit of sin, and will pave the way for the revelation of the man of sin. There will be no limits to the conceit and evil intentions of this dictator's perverted character. He is called *the son of death and destruction (or the son of perdition - 2 Thes. 2:3)*. His close companion, the false prophet, will be one of his foremost butchers and use occult powers to achieve his purpose.
- ◆ He will be the self-declared *God of this world*. After he was honoured as world messiah for 3½ years he will proceed to the most extreme form of rebellion against God by declaring himself as God and to demand the worship of all people.
- ◆ *Pride and self-exaltation* will motivate him to deify himself.
- ◆ He will be a *blasphemer* of the true God and the saints (Rev. 13:5-6; Dan. 7:25).
- ◆ He will be the greatest *anti-Semite* (hater of Jews) of all times. Although he will be accepted as Messiah by the Jews during the first 3½ years, he will order the killing of all Jews after they have suspended their covenant with him (Mt. 24:15-22).
- ◆ He will be a notorious *occult practitioner* who will make use of the great powers given to him by Satan (Rev. 13:2). His coming will be "after the working of Satan with all power and lying wonders" (2 Thes. 2:9).
- ◆ He will be the *great deceiver* of mankind. His coming will be "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish" (2 Thes. 2:10). "And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries" (Dan. 11:32).

- ◆ He will be a *man of violence* and a *murderer*. “But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him: therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to make away many” (Dan. 11:44).
- ◆ He will be a *psychopath* with a schizoid personality: a man with many faces as he is also seen as a beast with many heads. At times he will be exceedingly friendly and charming when he deceives people – to the extent that nobody will believe that there is anything evil in him. But there will also be the times when the dark side of his character gets the upper hand and induce him to commit the most unimaginable cruelties. During the first half of the tribulation period the innocent, angel of the light part of his personality will be dominant. In the second 3½ years the dark and vicious part of him will be openly manifested. Because of his lack of moral principles he will be completely unpredictable.

Emanating from the example of the Antichrist as a violent person and a man of sin, a culture of violence and sin will be established world-wide.

Philosophy of the Antichrist

The underlying philosophic principle upon which the Antichrist will base his global system of religious, political and economic governance is *monism* – *everything is one*. It is obvious from the prophecies that the Antichrist will be heading a new world order based on the concept of unity. During the first half of his reign unity will be promoted by nice sounding slogans of peace, globalism and reconciliation, but in the second half unity will be enforced by military power.

The following ideologies of unity will form the basis of the Antichrist's global empire:

○ Political ideology

The political ideology of the Antichrist will be that of globalism, or world unity. It will entail an entirely new world order of internationalism. Nations will have to surrender vital as-

pects of their sovereignty to become provinces or regions in the world state of the Antichrist. Only a limited degree of local autonomy will be retained by them. Most of their functions will be the implementing of the policies and decisions of the world government.

The need for international unity and harmony, as well as the finding of solutions for world problems and regional conflicts which are beyond the capacity of single countries to solve, will be the motivation for the establishing of a world government. Shortly after his revelation this new leader will distinguish himself as a diplomat of unusual stature. He will almost overnight reach agreements for the ending of conflicts that afflicted the world for many years. As a result of his astounding success he will be praised and supported everywhere, and quickly rise to a position of world-leadership. He will ride the wave of popular opinion and command the respect of all governments and communities because of his success and the amazing way in which he achieved unity, peace, and reconciliation among all nations:

“And all the world wondered after the beast... and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations” (Rev. 13:3, 7).

The Antichrist's new world order based on a false, humanistic peace and the socialistic grouping together of all people into a single class of planetary citizens will only last for 3½ years. Opposition will start to develop against his rule, especially when he declares himself to be God in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and demand the worship of all people (2 Thes. 2:4; Rev. 13:15). An assassination attempt will then be made on him, but with a display of satanic powers he will survive the fatal wound and recover completely (Rev. 13:3, 12).

Dramatic changes will occur after this event as the Antichrist will suddenly change his appearance from international prince of peace to military dictator. From that moment onwards his ideology of world unity will be enforced with

military power. The kings who ruled with him previously will, possibly under coercion, surrender all their power to him in order for him to become the sole ruler of the world: "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (Rev. 17:13). That will bring about the end of the Antichrist's 3½ year long neo-Babylonian world empire in which various evil allies worked together: In a combined effort the beast and the false prophet will join forces with the harlot woman (the alliance of false world religions) and the ten kings (the rulers of the revived Roman empire) to achieve their common purpose of uniting the world. According to Revelation 17: 11 that will constitute the seventh head of the beast. It will be followed by the eighth world empire of the beast's openly satanic rule over the world.

The last 3½ years of the tribulation is referred to as the *great tribulation*. The world will then be ruled by a satanic triumvirate: the dragon (Satan), the beast (the Antichrist) and the second beast (the false prophet). On the outward, physical level, it will be a two man government consisting of the Antichrist and the false prophet. However, from the spirit world Satan will be the main force behind this government. He will take the decisions and delegate his power to the Antichrist:

"...and the dragon gave him [*the beast*] his power, and his seat, and great authority" (Rev. 13:2).

The antichristian new world order with its nice sounding slogans and promises of unity, peace, and harmony will be initiated under the guidance of a deceptive *angel of the light* (2 Cor. 11: 14-15). Its end will be an openly luciferic world state in which oppression, violence, murder, and the forced worship of Satan and the Antichrist will be the order of the day. Warfare will be the beast's ultimate objective:

"And they worshipped the dragon [*Satan*] which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. 13: 4).

o Religious ideology

Universal religious unity, i.e. the inherent unity of all faiths on earth, will be the religious ideology of the Antichrist. The starting point for this ideology is theistic universalism: all the faiths worship the same God in different ways and by using different names. Despite the differences that meet the eye, all the religions are allegedly the same on an esoteric level. The logic conclusion from this surmise is that the various religions are awaiting the same universal messiah, even though they use different names for him.

That is indeed the ideology that paves the way for the coming of the Antichrist. He will have many faces: he will be the Christ to the Christians, the Messiah to the Jews, the Imam Mahdi to the Muslims, Krishna to the Hindus, and the Maitreya Buddha to the Buddhists. He will unite these religions into a tight alliance under his supreme leadership. They will take hands to form the ecumenical body referred to as the mother of harlots in Revelation 17:5. She will be recognised, carried, supported, and used by the beast.

The Babylonian inter-faith body (the harlot woman) will be the bride of the Antichrist as an imitation of the church which is the bride of the true Christ. He will give her a position of power, including the right to persecute and even execute the evangelical believers who refuse to worship the beast (Rev. 17:6). He will greatly use her in his campaign to establish world unity. All her followers will be made conscious of their common unity, and that belief will be the foundation of an international mystical brotherhood of all people. Once this ideology has been established, the realising of social, political and economic unity will be expedient.

In accordance with his nature as an unfaithful person, the marriage of the Antichrist with his bride (the false religions) will not last very long. After 3½ years he will declare himself as God and demand the worship of all people. By then, the different religions, their churches, temples, synagogues and mosques will become redundant and be des-

troyed. The Antichrist will offer his bride the option to either accept his increased status from universal Messiah to God and worship him as such, or to be executed because of disobedience. The world alliance of religions and their association with the Antichrist will then be terminated:

“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire” (Rev. 17:16).

The final religious objective of the Antichrist will be for him and Satan to be worshipped as God (Rev. 13:4, 8). Thus, satanism will be the only official world religion during the great tribulation (the second 3½ years).

The first phase of the Antichrist’s religious ideology is now being implemented in preparation of his coming. It will move through the following stages to its final purpose:

- ◆ **Religious equality.** All religions are of equal standing and the one is not better or more important than the other. The playing-field is equalised, and they are all encouraged to join ecumenical bodies such as the World Council of Churches, the World Conference on Religion and Peace, and the World Parliament for Religions. They can collaborate on moral and ethical issues.
- ◆ **Religious unity.** All religions worship the same God, and should therefore also give religious expression to their common ecumenical ties. Because of this premise they should reject the evangelical believers who bluntly refuse to join the ecumenical movement.
- ◆ **An intimate alliance of world religions.** When the Antichrist appears as the common messiah of all faiths, he will unite this body as his bride on condition that all of them recognise and worship him. Great power and honour will be bestowed upon them, and they will function as a corporate body. They will use their power and influence to persecute the evangelical Christians who refuse to take hands with them in worshipping the beast.

- ◆ **Forced worship of Satan and the Antichrist.** The body of false religions will, to their utter shock and disillusionment, be rejected and sentenced to death by their universal messiah unless they are prepared to denounce their religions and worship the beast and Lucifer as God. If they do that, and also accept the number and name of the beast, their end will be in the lake of fire where they will share the eternal condemnation of the Antichrist, the false prophet and the devil (Rev. 14:9-11; 19:20; 20:10).

The Antichrist will order the execution of all Christians who refuse to accept and worship him (Rev. 6:9-11; 13:7, 15; 20:4). During the last 3½ years of his reign in the great tribulation, he will increasingly and continuously blaspheme the true Christ and the true God while using all his power to destroy those who confess God's Name:

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven” (Rev. 13:5-6).

The Antichrist's last big mustering of power on earth will be in Jerusalem where he will await Jesus Christ to wage war against Him. That will be the last desperate bid by the beast to save his satanic world empire from collapse.

○ **Economic ideology**

The economic ideology of the Antichrist will be aimed at the centralised monetary control of the world. This control will be exercised with the aid of a computerised system of electronic funds transfer. People will be allocated numbers without which they cannot buy or sell (Rev. 13:16-18). Through monetary control the Antichrist will achieve the following:

- + He will enslave people and monitor all their movements.
- + He will blackmail people to worship him as God before they can get a number that will allow them to be economically active.

- + He will redistribute the wealth of the world and in this way rob most nations of their assets.
- + The inevitable result of his evil economic ideology will be unemployment, hunger, deprivation, and unspeakable suffering for millions of people.

The fate of the Antichrist

From the onset of the tribulation period, the Antichrist will know that he has limited time to establish Satan's kingdom on earth, as the true Christ promised to personally return and judge the Antichrist. However, he will not accept the inevitability of biblical prophecies and do everything within his power to oppose it. The tremendous personal attacks on Jesus at the time of His first coming, as well as the fierce efforts to eradicate the early Christian church, will be repeated during and prior to His second coming.

The seven year long tribulation period has a fixed time span of which the two halves of 3½ years each are expressed in terms of years, months and days. Nobody knows when the rapture will occur or when the year-week of the tribulation will begin, but once it has started, it will be general knowledge when it will end and when Jesus will come.

The promises about the second coming of Christ will infuriate the Antichrist and he will do everything possible to eradicate Christianity from the face of the earth. He will also try to destroy Israel as God's chosen people in order that the promises of the Messiah's reign of peace and the restoration of the throne of David in Jerusalem (Acts 15:16-17), remain unfulfilled. However, the Lord will protect a remnant of Israel in the wilderness for 3½ years (Rev. 12:14) to meet Him at the Mount of Olives when He comes.

The Antichrist will commit himself to an evil plan by trying to prevent the promised meeting between the remnant of Israel and the true Messiah. His main military camp will be on the plain between the mountains of Judea and the Mediterranean Sea (Dan. 11:45). From this camp he will deploy soldiers in the valley of Jehoshaphat in Jerusalem:

“For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will [enter into judgement] with them there for My people and *for* My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land” (Joel 3:1-2).

The remaining Jews will go up to the Mount of Olives in anticipation of the coming of the Messiah. While doing so, they will be surrounded by the armies of the false messiah and threatened with extermination. Great chaos will prevail in Jerusalem:

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled...” (Zech. 14:2).

At the height of this war of Armageddon, Jesus Christ will descend with His heavenly hosts and put His feet on the Mount of Olives:

“And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, *and there shall be* a very great valley... And ye shall flee *to* the valley of the mountains... In that day, the light shall not be clear... but at the evening it shall be light” (Zech. 14:4-7).

When Christ returns, He will save the remnant of His people who will take refuge in the valley of the Mount of Olives. Darkness will prevail when God’s judgements are poured out over His enemies. They won’t be able to pursue Israel any more and will be consumed by divine judgements:

“And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouths. And... a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them” (Zech. 14:12-13).

The main objective of the Antichrist with the siege of Jerusalem will not be the destruction of the remnant of Israel, but to fight against the Messiah of Israel and to try and conquer Him. That will be his last fatal effort to save his satanic empire from annihilation. What a futile exercise will it prove to be to fight the One who has all power in heaven and on earth! That will be the last public appearance of the Antichrist and his evil accomplices on earth. Their demise will be swift and final:

“And I saw the beast [*Antichrist*], and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him [*Christ*] that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which *sword* proceeded out of His mouth: and all the [birds] were filled with their flesh” (Rev. 19:19-21).

Comparison between Christ and the Antichrist

CHRIST	ANTICHRIST
✝ He descended from heaven and appeared as man, but He is of a heavenly origin (Jn. 3: 13; 6:38).	J He will ascend out of the bottomless pit and emerge as man from the sea of nations (Rev. 17:8 and 13:1).
✝ He is the Son of God who has come to reveal His heavenly Father to the world (Mt. 16: 16).	J He is the son of perdition who will reveal the evil character of his father to the world (2 Thes. 2:3).
✝ He is the true God and eternal life (1 Jn. 5: 20).	J He will declare himself as God (2 Thes. 2:4).

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| ✠ He is without sin (2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15). | J He is the man of sin (2 Thes. 2:3-10). |
| ✠ He came in the Name of His Father (Lk. 10:22). | J He will come in his own name (Jn. 5: 43). |
| ✠ He came to glorify the Father (Jn. 17:4). | J He will glorify himself and blaspheme God (Rev. 13:6). |
| ✠ He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and came to reveal the Father (1 Jn. 5:7; Jn. 14:9). | J He will form a triumvirate with the dragon and the false prophet and represent Satan on earth (Rev. 13: 4, 11-12). |
| ✠ He is the Saviour of the world and came to redeem us from the power of Satan (1 Jn. 4: 14; Jn. 8:36). | J He will make people slaves of his satanic empire of darkness and control their lives (Rev. 13:7, 15-18). |
| ✠ He came to the world as a humble Servant to offer His life as a ransom for our sins (Mk. 10:45). | J He will be exalted in his own eyes and be a dictator who will ruin people's lives (Dan. 11: 36; 2 Thes. 2:4). |
| ✠ He came to save sinners for His kingdom (Lk. 19:10; Mt. 25:34). | J He will come to scatter people abroad and to destroy them (Dan. 11:44). |
| ✠ He came to establish God's righteousness on earth (Phil. 3: 9). | J He will promote wickedness and unrighteousness on earth (2 Thes. 2:3). |
| ✠ He came to fulfil the law (Mt. 5:17-18). | J He will change times and laws (Dan. 7:25). |
| ✠ He brings true peace in men's hearts (Jn. 14:27). | J He will create a false peace on earth (1 Thes. 5:3). |
| ✠ He came to unmask Satan and to destroy his works (Col. 2:15; 1 Jn. 3:8). | J He will worship the god of forces [Satan] with everything he has (Dan. 11:38). |

- ✚ He strongly condemns greed and the accumulation of material wealth (Lk. 12:15).
- ✚ He came to proclaim the truth about God, sin, salvation, heaven, and hell to people (Mt. 22:16; Jn. 1:17 and 8:31-32).
- ✚ He only associates with the true church that confesses His name and rejects the idols (Jn. 14:6; 2 Cor. 6:14).
- ✚ His bride, the true church, will be with Him for all eternity (2 Cor. 11: 2; 1 Thes. 4:17).
- ✚ He convicts people through the Spirit of truth (Jn. 16:13-14).
- ✚ He will come from heaven and put His feet on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4-5).
- ✚ His kingdom will endure forever (Rev. 11:15).
- ✚ He will conquer the Antichrist and achieve the final victory (Rev. 19:19-21).
- ✚ His followers will all inherit an eternal and imperishable kingdom of everlasting joy (Col. 1: 13-14; 2 Pet. 1:11).
- J He will gather vast riches and use it to bribe people in his kingdom (Dan. 11:39, 43).
- J He will deceive humanity into believing lies that will lead to their own ruin (Mt.. 24:4-5; 2 Thes. 2:9; also compare Jn. 8:44).
- J He associates with all the false religions who are prepared to accept him as their messiah (Rev. 17:3-6).
- J His bride, the false world church, will be destroyed after 3½ years (Rev. 17:16).
- J He convicts people through the spirit of deceit (2 Thes. 2:9; 1 Jn. 4:3, 6).
- J He will emerge from the desert and be seen on television (Mt. 24:26).
- J His kingdom will be short-lived (Rev. 17:9-12).
- J He will be condemned to hell forever when Jesus comes (2 Thes. 2:8).
- J His followers will share his eternal fate with him in hell and forever blame and curse one another (Rev. 14:9-11).