

The Biblical Revelation of Antichrist

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Because there is such an End Times midset with fear of the future among the majority of Christians today, it is important to define antichrist according to the Scriptures. So many in the Body of Christ relate "antichrist" to Revelation Chapter 13. It may be a shock to many of us to learn the word "antichrist" is not found in the entire Book of Revelation, nor is the concept of antichrist found in Revelation Chapter 13.

The word "antichrist" is found only in the two apostolic letters of 1 & 2 John. To rightly define what antichrist is, we will look at the four verses that mention antichrist from these two Epistles, and interpret the meaning of antichrist in that light:

1 John 2:18-22

"Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared from this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son."

- 1 – "Antichrist" was already in the world when John wrote this Epistle.
- 2 – Antichrists came from the Church and were heretics.
- 3 – We have an anointing from the Spirit. By the Spirit we can discern error from truth. We can see antichrists are easily recognizable to believers.
- 4 – The antichrist is a person who rejects the true identity of Jesus Christ as the Son/Messiah. By rejecting the Son, one denies the Father who sent Him.
- 5 – "Antichrist" is a false teaching spirit and/or person who teaches according to this mindset.

1 John 4:1-3

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world."

- 1 – Antichrist is a spirit of false prophecy which denies the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.
- 2 – Antichrist was already in the world at the time John writes his letter, and more are coming.

2 John 1:7

"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist."

1 – Antichrists are false teachers and deceivers who deny the Incarnation of Jesus Christ as God in the flesh.

These are the only four verses that mention antichrist in the Bible. The context of these four verses teach us that antichrist is a false spirit and/or false teacher who came out of the Church; denies the truth of Jesus Christ as God the Son who came in the flesh; and was present at the time these verses were written.

Early Church Father Irenaeus gives the following account: “On meeting in the public bath at Ephesus, the Gnostic heretic Cerinthus, who denied the incarnation of our Lord, John refused to remain under the same roof, lest it might fall.”

John, the Beloved, may have had this particular man in mind when he wrote the Epistles of 1 & 2 John, as he had ministered in Ephesus for many years.

Therefore, from this Biblical Text, we do not see a futuristic person who would be possessed of the devil and rule the world at the end of the New Covenant dispensation, so we can rest assured that “antichrist,” according to the Scriptures, is also not characterized in Revelation 13:16-18 as the Beast.

We will now take a deeper look into these verses to see the proper interpretation of what this section of Scripture actually means according to historical evidence and truth.

Revelation 13:16-17

- a) In the First Century, the marketplace was called the Agora. This was a place where all the services, shopping, banking, legal matters, buying and selling was conducted. At the entrance of the Agora was a statue image of the Roman Emperor, who was currently Nero, at that time. The only way to enter the Agora, was to offer a sacrifice to the Roman Emperor in order to enter (similar to paying an entrance fee). To distinguish one had offered his worship (he paid to get in), he received a mark of ashes on the right hand or on the forehead. This act of worshiping Nero allowed him to enter the Agora so he could buy or sell.
- b) It is important to note that John was writing to First Century Christians who would be tempted to compromise their faith by “cheating” Christ the worship He deserved in order to buy or sell.
- c) The Christian community really struggled with this matter. Paul touched on this very subject in 1 Corinthians 8.
- d) John was giving the Church a clear warning to not compromise in their devotion to Jesus Christ.

Revelation 13:18

- a) John clearly gives the reader of Revelation the specific identity of who the Beast is by

naming him in code: 666. The Greek text clearly says the name is a number “of a man,” not the number “of man.”

- b) Caesar Nero in Hebrew adds up to 666. The Hebrew spelling of the name Nero Caesar was NRWN QSR (English Transliteration). $N = 50 + R = 200 + W = 6 + N = 50 + Q = 100 + S = 60 + R = 200 = 666$
- c) In many manuscripts of the Book of Revelation, the number 616 is either in the margin, or in the body of the text. If one transliterates Caesar Nero in Latin, the name adds up to 616. This was done so that a believer who is not familiar with the Hebrew language could still discern the number of the Beast – which is 666 – and is identified with Nero.
- d) It was common knowledge Nero was nicknamed “The Beast” by the Romans. Here are some very disgusting facts about Nero, the "Beast": Nero dressed up like an animal/beast and tortured naked Christians, even mauling their private parts with his teeth. Nero kicked his pregnant wife to death, and murdered his mother. After this, Nero castrated a 10-year-old boy named Sporus and married him. Nero raped Christian men and women. He burned Rome to the ground and blamed the fire on the Christians to begin his bloody persecutions. Nero covered Christians in pitch/tar and set them on fire in order to light his palace gardens at night. There are many more crimes Nero committed against humanity, but this short list is enough to see his base character, therefore, we will move on.
- e) It is easy to see the number 666 is Nero, and he exemplified the true nature of his father, the Dragon.

Considering real history in the context of the times during the First Century, we can rest assured knowing “The Beast” and “The Mark of the Beast” are in the past; they are defeated. We need not fear a future of facing a satanic inspired Beast with his persecutions.

It is time for the Church to transcend eschatologies that give no hope for the future. It robs us from our true mission, which is to overcome all kingdoms by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We – the Church – are to transform society into the image of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Excerpt from “Light, Love & Life: A Commentary on 1 John - Appendix A”*