

Lesson 15

Who ... or what ... is the antichrist? Evil alliance—or sinister individual? Some say his appearance is still in the future. Others say he appeared long ago in the days of ancient Rome. But the Bible indicates that he is alive today! Bible prophecies teach that this antichrist power will play a crucial role in the final events of earth's history. Do you know who he is? Are you sure? You need to be, for you can't understand last-day events until you understand this evil power. Be prepared for one of the most intriguing Study Guides yet!

This Study Guide is based on the book of Daniel chapter 7 and clearly and unmistakably identifies the antichrist. But it is only an introduction. Future lessons will reveal details of some of his activities that will have worldwide impact. What you discover today

may displease or sadden you, but please remember that the prophecy of Daniel 7 comes from Jesus, who loves you. Pray for God's guidance as you delve into this urgent subject. Be sure to read Daniel 7 before studying this lesson.

1. As chapter 7 begins, Daniel sees four beasts coming up out of the sea. In prophecy, what does a beast represent? What does the sea represent?



“The fourth beast shall be a fourth kingdom on earth” (Daniel 7:23).

“The waters ... are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (Revelation 17:15).

Answer: A beast represents a kingdom or nation. Water represents multitudes of people or large populations.

2. The four beasts of Daniel 7 represent four kingdoms (verses 17, 18). Babylon, the first



kingdom (Daniel 2:38, 39), is represented as a lion in Daniel 7:4. (See also Jeremiah 4:7; 50:17, 43, 44.) What do the “eagle’s wings” mean? What do the “four winds” of verse 2 represent?

“The Lord will bring a nation against you ... as swift as the eagle flies” (Deuteronomy 28:49).

“Says the Lord of hosts: ... a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the farthest parts of the earth. And ... the slain of the Lord shall be from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth” (Jeremiah 25:32, 33).

Answer: The wings of eagles represent speed. (See also Jeremiah 4:13; Habakkuk 1:6–8.) Winds represent strife, commotion, and destruction. (See also Revelation 7:1–3.)

3. What kingdom does the bear represent (Daniel 7:5)? What do the three ribs in its mouth symbolize?



The bear with three ribs in its mouth symbolizes Medo-Persia.

Answer: Read Daniel 8. Notice that the beasts in chapter 8 parallel those in chapter 7. Daniel 8:20 specifically names Medo-Persia as the kingdom that precedes the male goat—that is, Greece—of verse 21. Medo-Persia is the second kingdom—the same power as the bear of Daniel 7. The empire was made up of two groups of people. The Medes came up first (represented in Daniel 7:5 by the bear raising up on one side), but the Persians eventually

became stronger (represented in Daniel 8:3 by the ram's second horn that grew "higher"). The three ribs represent the three principal powers conquered by Medo-Persia: Lydia, Babylon, and Egypt.



The leopard beast of Daniel 7 represents the world kingdom of Greece.

4. Greece, the third kingdom (Daniel 8:21), is represented by a leopard with four wings and four heads (Daniel 7:6). What do the wings represent? What do the four heads

represent?

Answer: The four wings (instead of two, as the lion had) represent the incredible speed with which Alexander conquered the region (Jeremiah 4:11–13). The four heads represent the four kingdoms into which the empire of Alexander the Great was divided when he died. The four generals who headed these areas were Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus.

5. The Roman Empire, the fourth kingdom, is represented by a powerful monster with iron teeth and 10 horns (Daniel 7:7). What do the horns represent?



The world empire of Rome is symbolized by the monster beast of Daniel chapter 7.

Answer: The 10 horns represent the 10 kings or kingdoms into which pagan Rome was eventually split (Daniel 7:24). (These 10 kingdoms are the same as the 10 toes of the image described in Daniel 2:41–44.) Roving barbarian tribes swept in upon the Roman Empire and carved out land niches for their people. Seven of those 10 tribes developed into the countries of modern Western Europe, while three were “uprooted” and destroyed. The next section will discuss those kingdoms that were rooted up.

Visigoths - Spain

Anglo-Saxons - England

Franks - France

Aleman - Germany

Burgundians - Switzerland

Lombards - Italy

Suevi - Portugal

Heruli - Rooted up

Ostrogoths - Rooted up

Vandals - Rooted up

6. In the Daniel 7 prophecy, what happens next?



The little horn of Daniel 7:8 represents Antichrist.

“I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words” (Daniel 7:8).

Answer: The “little horn” power appears next.

We must identify it carefully because the biblical characteristics identify it as the antichrist of prophecy and history. There must be no mistake in making this identification.

7. Does the Bible give clear points identifying antichrist?

Yes. God’s Word gives us nine characteristics of the antichrist in Daniel 7 so we can be certain of his identity. And even though some might find these truths painful, we must be honest enough to accept them as His revealed will. Now let’s discover these nine points.

Answer:

- A.** The little horn would come “up among them”—that is, from among the 10 horns that were the kingdoms of Western Europe (Daniel 7:8). So it would be a little kingdom somewhere in Western Europe.
- B.** It would have a man at its head who could speak for it (Daniel 7:8).
- C.** It would pluck out or uproot three kingdoms (Daniel 7:8).
- D.** It would be different from the other 10 kingdoms (Daniel 7:24).
- E.** It would make war with and persecute the saints (Daniel 7:21, 25).

F. It would emerge from the pagan Roman Empire—the fourth kingdom (Daniel 7:7, 8).

G. God’s people (the saints) would “be given into his hand” for “a time and times and half a time” (Daniel 7:25).

H. It would “speak great words against” or blaspheme God (Daniel 7:25 KJV). In Revelation 13:5, the Bible says the same power speaks “great things and blasphemies.”

I. It would “intend to change times and law” (Daniel 7:25).

Don’t forget—all these identification points come directly from the Bible. They are not some human opinion or speculation. Historians could tell you quickly what power is being described, because these points fit only one power—the papacy. But in order to be certain, let us carefully examine all nine points one by one. There must be no room left for doubt.



8. Does the papacy fit these points?

Answer: Yes—it fits every point. Let’s take a closer look:

A. It came up among the 10 kingdoms of Western Europe.

The geographical location of the papal power is in

Rome, Italy—in the heart of Western Europe.

B. It would have a man at its head who speaks for it.

The papacy meets this identifying mark because it does have one man at the head—the pope—who speaks for it.

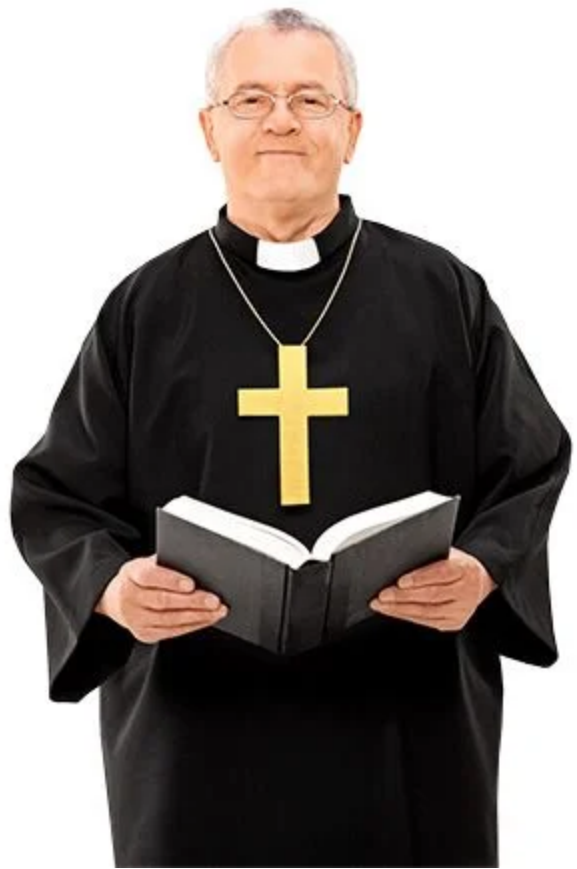
C. Three kingdoms were plucked up to make way for the rise of the papacy.

The emperors of Western Europe were largely Catholic and supported the papacy. Three Arian kingdoms, however, did not—the Vandals, Heruli, and Ostrogoths. So the Catholic emperors decided they must be subdued or destroyed. Here is how theologian and historian Dr. Mervyn Maxwell describes the results in volume 1, page 129, of his book *God Cares*: “The Catholic emperor Zeno (474–491) arranged a treaty with the Ostrogoths in 487, which resulted in the eradication of the kingdom of the Arian Heruls in 493. And the Catholic emperor Justinian (527–

565) exterminated the Arian Vandals in 534 and significantly broke the power of the Arian Ostrogoths in 538. Thus were Daniel's three horns—the Heruls, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths—'plucked up by the roots.' It is not difficult to recognize that the papacy fits this point.



D. It would be



different from the other kingdoms.

The papacy clearly fits this description, as it came on the scene as a religious power and was different from the secular nature of the other 10 kingdoms.

E. It would make war with and persecute the saints.

That the church did persecute is a well-known fact, and the papacy admits doing so. Historians believe the church destroyed at least 50 million lives over matters of religious conviction. We quote here from two sources:

1. "That the Church of Rome has shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed among mankind, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a competent knowledge of history."¹

2. In *The History of the Inquisition of Spain*, D. Ivan Antonio Llorente provides these figures from the Spanish Inquisition alone: "31,912 persons were condemned and perished in the flames," and 241,450 were "condemned to severe penances."

Words of Care and Concern

Lest anyone should think that we are attacking fellow Christians by identifying the little horn power, please keep in mind that the prophecy is aimed at a system and not individuals. There are sincere, devout Christians in all churches, including the Catholic faith. Daniel 7 is simply a message of judgment and correction upon a large religious institution that compromised with paganism, as many other churches have also done.

Prophecy Reveals Faults of All Faiths

Other prophecies point out the faults of the Protestant and Jewish faiths. Sincere seekers of truth can be found in every religion, but not every religion is true. Those seekers who are listening for the voice of truth will hear the correction of the Lord and will not shut their hearts against Him. They will go humbly where He leads. We should be thankful that God's Word speaks with impartial honesty on every subject.

Prophetic Time:

Time = 1 year

Times = 2 years

½ time = ½ year

F. It would emerge from the fourth kingdom of iron—the pagan Roman Empire.

We quote two authorities on this point:

1. "The mighty Catholic Church was little more than the Roman Empire baptized. ... The very capital of the old Roman Empire became the capital of the Christian empire. The office of Pontifex Maximus was continued in that of the pope." ²

2. "Whatever Roman elements the barbarians and Arians left ... [came] under the protection of the Bishop of Rome, who was the chief person there after the emperor's disappearance. ... The Roman church ... pushed itself into the place of the Roman World-Empire, of which it is the actual continuation." ³

G. God's people (the saints) would "be given into his hand" for "a time and times and half a time."

Several things need clarification here:

1. A time is a year, times is two years, and half a time is half of a year. The Amplified Bible translates it: "Three and one-half years." ⁴

2. This same time period is mentioned seven times in the books of Daniel and Revelation (Daniel 7:25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5): three times as a "time, times, and half a time"; twice as 42 months; and twice as 1,260 days. Based on the 30-day calendar used by the Jews, these time periods are all the same amount of time: 3½ years = 42 months = 1,260 days.

3. One prophetic day equals one literal year (Ezekiel 4:6; Numbers 14:34).

4. Thus, the little horn (antichrist) was to have power over the saints for 1,260 prophetic days; that is, 1,260 literal years.

5. The rule of the papacy began in ad 538, when the last of the three opposing Arian kingdoms was uprooted. Its rule continued until 1798 when Napoleon's general, Berthier, took the pope captive with hopes of destroying both Pope Pius VI and the political power of the papacy. This period of time is an exact fulfillment of the 1,260-year prophecy. The blow was a deadly wound for the papacy, but that wound began to heal and continues healing today.

6. This same period of persecution is mentioned in Matthew 24:21 as the worst period of persecution God's people experience. Verse 22 tells us it was so devastating that not one soul would have survived if God had not shortened it. But God did shorten it. The persecution ended

long before the pope was taken captive in 1798. It is plain to see that this point, likewise, fits the papacy.

H. It would speak "pompous words" of blasphemy "against [God]."

Blasphemy has two definitions in Scripture:

1. Claiming to forgive sins (Luke 5:21).
2. Claiming to be God (John 10:33).

Does this point fit the papacy? Yes. Let's first look at the evidence for it claiming to forgive sins, taken directly from its own literature: "Does the Priest truly forgive the sins, or does he only declare that they

are remitted? The Priest does really and truly forgive the sins in virtue of the power given to him by Christ."⁵ The papacy further undermines Jesus by setting up a system of confession to an earthly priest, thus bypassing Jesus, our High Priest (Hebrews 3:1; 8:1, 2) and only Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5). Next, consider the evidence for it claiming to be God: "We [the popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty."⁶ Here is more evidence: "The pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, but he is Jesus Christ, Himself, hidden under the veil of flesh."⁷



I. It would "intend to change times and law." In a future Study Guide, we will deal with the "times" of this point. It is a major topic and needs separate consideration. But what about changing "law"? The Amplified Bible translates "law" as "the law." The reference is to changing God's law. Of course, no one can really change it, but has the papacy attempted to do so? The answer is yes. In its catechisms, the papacy has omitted the second commandment against veneration of images and has shortened the fourth commandment from 94 words to eight and divided the tenth commandment into two commandments. (Check this for yourself. Compare the Ten Commandments in any Catholic catechism with God's list of the commandments in Exodus 20:2-17.)

There is no doubt that the little horn power (the antichrist) of Daniel 7 is the papacy. No other organization fits all nine points. And, incidentally, this is not a new teaching. Every Protestant Reformer, without exception, spoke of the papacy as antichrist.⁸

¹ W. E. H. Lecky, History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe, Volume 2, 40.

² Alexander Clarence Flick, The Rise of the Medieval Church, 148, 149.

³ Adolf Harnack, What is Christianity? (New York: Putnam, second edition, revised, 1901), 269, 270.

⁴ Amplified Bible, La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 2015

⁵ Joseph Deharbe, S.J., A Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion (New York: Schwartz, Kirwin & Fauss, 1924), 279.

⁶ Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter "The Reunion of Christendom" (dated June 20, 1894) trans. in The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII (New York: Benziger, 1903), 304.

⁷ Catholic National, July 1895.

⁸ R. Allen Anderson, Unfolding the Revelation, 137.

9. Wasn't Daniel told to seal up his book "until the time of the end" (Daniel 12:4)? When will Daniel's prophecies be opened to our understanding?



The angel told Daniel that the prophecies of this book would be sealed until 1798, the time of the end.

Answer: In Daniel 12:4, the prophet was told to seal the book till the "time of the end." In verse 6 an angelic voice asked, "How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?" Verse 7 says, "It shall be for a time, times, and half a time." The angel assured Daniel that the section of the book dealing with end-time prophecies would be opened after the end of the 1,260-year period of papal control, which was, as we learned earlier in this Study Guide, 1798. So the time of the end began in the year 1798. As we have seen, the book of Daniel contains crucial messages from heaven for us today. We must understand it.



All religious teachings must be compared with Scripture to determine their accuracy.

10. Many Christians today have been misinformed regarding the antichrist. To believe an untruth about the antichrist could cause a person to be deceived. What should a

person do when new Bible teachings are encountered?

“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).

Answer: When a new Bible teaching is encountered, the only safe procedure is to compare it carefully with Scripture to see if it is in harmony with God’s Word.

11. Are you willing to follow where Jesus leads, even though it might be painful?



Concluding Remarks

Many momentous prophecies from the Bible books of Daniel and Revelation will be featured in upcoming Amazing Facts Study Guides. God has given these prophecies to:

- A. Reveal earth’s closing events.
- B. Identify the participants in the final phase of the battle between Jesus and Satan.
- C. Clearly reveal Satan’s sinister plans to ensnare and destroy us all.
- D. Present the security and love of the judgment; God’s saints will be vindicated!
- E. Uplift Jesus—His salvation, love, power, mercy, and justice

Major Participants Will Appear Repeatedly

Key participants in the closing war between Jesus and Satan will appear repeatedly in these

prophecies. These include: Jesus, Satan, the United States, the papacy, Protestantism, and Spiritism. Jesus repeats and expands His messages from the prophets to make certain His warnings of love and protection come through with clarity and certainty.

Answer:

Thought Questions

1. I always thought the antichrist is a person, not an organization. Am I wrong?

This Study Guide has presented evidence that the antichrist is an organization—the papacy. The words “eyes of a man” in Daniel 7:8, however, do point to a leader. Revelation 13:18 speaks of a man with a number being involved. In Daniel 8, Greece is represented by a goat and its leader, Alexander the Great, is symbolized by a horn. The same is true of antichrist. The organization is the papacy. The pope in office is its representative. The prophecy of Daniel 7 is not saying that popes are evil and that Catholics are not Christians. There are many warm, loving Catholic Christians. The system, however, is called antichrist because it has attempted to usurp Jesus’ authority and attempted to change His law.

2. Do you think it is wise for Christians to pass laws enforcing Christianity?

No. The Bible is clear that all should have freedom to choose the direction they wish to go in matters of conscience (Joshua 24:15)—even if they choose to deny God. The Creator permitted Adam and Eve to choose to disobey even though it hurt both them and Him. Forced worship is not acceptable to God. Forced worship is the devil’s way. God’s way is loving persuasion. History shows that virtually every time the church passed laws to enforce its beliefs, persecution and murder of others resulted. This is a lesson we can learn from the history of the little horn during the Middle Ages.

3. Perhaps I have misunderstood, but my concept has always been that antichrist would be an evil being who openly opposed God. Is this concept incorrect?

We usually consider the word “anti” to mean “against.” It can also mean “in the place of” or “instead of.” Antichrist is guilty of assuming the prerogatives of God. It claims:

A. Its priests can forgive sins—which only God can do (Luke 5:21).

B. To have changed God’s law by dropping out the second commandment (against worshiping images) and splitting the tenth into two parts. God’s law cannot be changed (Matthew 5:18).

C. That the pope is God on earth.

Satan's Original Plan

Satan’s original plan was to assume God’s position and authority. His aim was to oust God and rule in His place. (See Study Guide 2.) When Satan was ejected from heaven, his aim did not change but rather intensified. Through the centuries he has endeavored, using various human agencies, to discredit God and take over His position.

Antichrist Appears to Be Spiritual

Satan aims to replace God in these last days by deceiving people into following the antichrist, who appears spiritual and holy. The main purpose of the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation is to expose Satan’s traps and strategies and lead people to anchor in Jesus and His Word for safety.

Antichrist Will Deceive Many

Most people will follow the antichrist (Revelation 13:3) thinking they are following Christ. Only the elect will be safe (Matthew 24:23, 24). They will be secure because they test every spiritual teaching and leader by Scripture (Isaiah 8:20). Religious deception is everywhere. We cannot be too careful.

4. Doesn’t the Bible say in 1 John 2:18–22 that there are many antichrists?

Yes. There have been many antichrists down through history who have worked against the kingdom of God. However, there is only one entity that specifically fulfills all the prophesied characteristics of the antichrist. In Daniel chapters 7 and 8 and in Revelation chapter 13, you will find at least 10 identifying traits of the antichrist. These 10 identifying marks are all fulfilled in only one entity—the papacy.

5. In prophecy, does the symbol “beast” mean “beastly” characteristics?

Not at all. God uses the symbolism of a beast to signify a ruler, nation, government, or kingdom. It is His way of depicting governments in prophecy. We do this ourselves to some degree: We have depicted Russia as a bear, the United States as an eagle, etc. The symbol “beast” is not a demeaning, disrespectful term. It is synonymous with “animal” or “creature.” Even Christ is portrayed as a lamb by John the Baptist (John 1:29) and the apostle John (Revelation 5:6, 9, 12, 13). The term “beast” is utilized by God to give us a message about nations and leaders—good and evil.

Quiz Questions

1. Which four world kingdoms are represented by beast symbols in Daniel chapter 7? (4)

- Sweden.
- Egypt.
- Greece.
- China.
- Medo-Persia.
- Japan.
- Babylon.
- Iraq.
- Rome.

2. In Bible prophecy, a beast represents a (1)

- Computer.
- Kingdom or nation.
- Creature or alien.

3. The 10 horns on the monster beast represent (1)

- Ten years.
- Ten special cities.
- Angels.
- Riches.
- The kingdoms into which pagan Rome eventually split.

4. How many tribes or nations were "rooted up" by the little horn power? (1)

- Eight.
- One.
- Six.
- Three.

5. The little horn power, or Antichrist, represents (1)

- One of Babylon's generals.
- An evil ruler from the days of old pagan Rome.
- An evil power that will arise after the second coming of Jesus.
- Atheism.
- The papacy.

6. Check the true statements about the little horn (Antichrist) power from the list below: (3)

- It came from Egypt.
- It would persecute God's people.
- It arose immediately after Babylon fell.
- It speaks great words against God.
- It attempted to change God's law.

7. In prophecy, "time, times, and a half time" is symbolic of (1)

- Three and one-half literal days.
- 42 years.
- 1,260 literal years.

8. When did "the time of the end" begin? (1)

- A.D. 31
- A.D. 1991
- A.D. 588
- A.D. 1798

9. Antichrist is an organization, rather than a person. (1)

- Yes.
- No.

10. Antichrist exists today. (1)

- Yes.
- No.

11. God approves of enforcing true worship by law. (1)

- Yes.
- No.

12. General Berthier's capture of the pope only wounded the papacy. Its deadly wound began to heal and continues healing today. (1)

- Yes.
- No.

13. What item from the list below is essential for the spiritual safety of God's people in these end-time days? (1)

- Learn to preach.
- Pray much in public.

_____ Test every religious teaching by the Bible.

14. Are you willing to follow where Jesus leads, even though it may be painful? (1)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.