

APOSTASY BEFORE THE COMING OF THE ANTICHRIST

NO ONE GETS MORE AIRTIME with end time thinkers than the one called Antichrist. He captures the imagination of Hollywood as well as students of prophecy as being someone who is dark, deceptive, and dangerous. There is a sense that he is on the scene today and that it is our generation that will see him in person "eyeball to eyeball".

What does the Bible say? Who is the Antichrist?

What will be his agenda? Should we expect him to appear any day now?

The first time we are introduced to this man comes from the prophet Daniel, who refers to the Antichrist as the "little horn" speaking great words of blasphemy (Daniel 7:8-11). Eventually he will make war against God's people and kill them (Daniel 7:21-26). Through his policies deceit will prosper and truth will be cast down; the economy will be good under his authority, and he will bring political peace for a short three and a half years. The western and middle eastern nations will submit to the Antichrist's leadership. It is through this peace and prosperity that he destroys and deceives many (Daniel 8:23-25). Those who opposes him will die...those who support him will be blessed.

In the New Testament Antichrist is referred to as "the man of sin" and "son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4); "the beast" (Revelation 11:7, 13); "that Wicked" (2 Thessalonians 2:8); and the "beast from the sea" (Revelation 13). The first time the term antichrist is used to refer to a specific man was by the apostle John in First John chapter two verse eighteen:

"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."

The antichrist will also call himself God (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

What I am about to tell you now may go against what you have been taught...but it is the truth. To believe otherwise is to place yourself in grave danger and position you for great disappointment when you find yourself in the great tribulation: The Antichrist will not appear until a worldwide apostasy has taken place within the church. This is what the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Thessalonians 2:3:

"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."

This is also how we are to understand the apostate churches of Revelation chapters two and three. This apostasy precedes the revealing of the Antichrist in Revelation chapter six.

Understand: The Antichrist cannot appear as long as the church is healthy. Once the church is diseased with incurable apostasy, a welcome mat is placed in front of the world's doorway welcoming the Antichrist with open arms. Please understand that the church is not raptured out before the Antichrist is revealed. The church will go through the great tribulation brought about by this man of sin.

The witness of Scripture is clear that Antichrist will appear in the end of the world and he will cause much death and destruction wherever he turns. When he is on the scene, the world has only a few short years left before Christ returns.