

## **Recognising The Antichrist**

*"... he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."*

(2 Thess. 2:4)

The Bible tells us that one day a man, called the Antichrist, will appear in the Temple (yet to be built) and declare himself to be God. 2 Thess. 2:4 speaks about this saying, *"He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God."* When this happens, we will know beyond question who the Antichrist is yet Jesus tells us, in Matt. 24, that many, many believers will still be deceived and follow this false Messiah believing that he is the real Christ. This deception will occur because the coming of the Antichrist will be with powerful but false miracles, signs and wonders. 2 Thess. 2:9-10 say, *"The coming of the lawless one [the Antichrist] will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing."* Believers who are always looking for signs, wonders and miracles will need to be especially careful as the Antichrist and the False Prophet will have Satan's enormous power and will deceive many people (see Rev. 13 also).

Because of this coming deception, we all need to study end time prophecy so that we won't be amongst those who get deceived and fall away. In Matt. 24:4-5, 10, Jesus said, *"Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many ... At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other."* Jesus is warning us that, because of the great hype, emotion and deception during that time, many Christians will be deceived and betray and hate one another. In Matt. 24:12-13, He further warns, *"Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved."* Then, in v.25, He stresses the point by saying, *"See, I have told you ahead of time."* Given the seriousness of these warnings, we all need to study prophecy to be aware of end time events so that we won't be deceived and fall away but stand firm as we wait for Jesus, the real Messiah, to return.

### **Signs of the Antichrist's coming**

The following events indicate that the coming of the Antichrist is nearing:

Firstly, Israel, the focal point of prophecy, was re-established in 1948. Secondly, Matt. 24 tells us that there will be earthquakes, famines and wars and we see plenty of that today. Thirdly, 2 Thess. 2:3 tells us there will be a great apostasy within the church. We see this today in the doctrinal compromise found in the Ecumenical Movement, the Emerging Church and the general trend towards a One World Religion. Lastly, 2 Thess. 2:4 tells us that the Antichrist will proclaim himself to be God in the Temple. For this to happen, a new Temple needs to be built and the Temple Mount Society in Jerusalem is already prepared to do that. These events indicate that we are nearing the time of the Antichrist but it could still be many years away. Who can really say? However, the following events will enable us to identify the Antichrist and know that his appearance in the Temple is very near:

1) The rise of the Little Horn: Daniel 7 speaks about a final beast kingdom with ten horns which represent ten kings. After this beast kingdom is formed, the Antichrist, called the Little Horn, will overcome three of the kings and rule the Beast as outlined in Dan. 7:7-8, Dan. 7:19-25 and Rev. 17:12-17.

2) A possible peace treaty with Israel: Dan. 9:27 appears to tell us that the Antichrist will make, or confirm, a seven year peace treaty with Israel and he will break the treaty midway through that period. This peace treaty is alluded to in the likes of Ezek. 38:8, 11, 14, Dan. 8:25, Dan. 11:21 and Isa. 28:15-19.

These events will occur soon before the Antichrist claims to be God. If, for some reason, we fail to notice these events then, when he appears in the Temple and proclaims himself to be God, we will have no doubt about his identity. After appearing in the Temple, this satanically empowered false Christ will set out to destroy Jews and Christians (Rev. 12:17; Rev. 13:7). This will bring about a time of severe persecution known as The Great Tribulation which is spoken of in Matt. 24:21.

### **The sign of Jesus' return**

In Matt. 24:24-26, Jesus strongly warns that we should not believe or even go near the many false Christs who will appear during the end times. Instead, we should patiently wait for His return which will be unmistakable. Just before His return, there will be a great sign in the sky and after that He will be seen like lightning. Jesus has told us, "*Immediately after the distress of those days [that is, The Great Tribulation] the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky ... For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man*" (Matt 24:29-30, 27). No one will mistake the real Christ's return because there will be a mighty change and shaking of the sun, the moon and the stars just before He appears and lights up the sky from East to West.

### **Finally**

We have been given enough information to recognise the Antichrist who will be empowered by the Devil to persecute Israel and Christians. During this Great Tribulation period, believers will need the Lord's strength more than ever to patiently persevere through terrible persecution. Jesus has warned us not to be deceived into believing someone who claims to be the Christ but to keep away from them and wait for His unmistakable appearance on the clouds, visible like lightning from East to West. When He returns, Jesus will first gather the saints and then pour out His wrath on sinners. After this time of wrath, known as The Day Of The Lord, the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be thrown into the lake of fire and the saints will rule the earth with Jesus (Rev. 19:20; Rev. 20:4; Dan. 7:23-27).

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