

One Nation, Under . . . Antichrist

The Many Faces of Evil – Part VI

Revelation 13:5-10

Introduction

One of our nation’s founders once made the statement that is now famous, “Man will ultimately be governed by God or by tyrants.”ⁱ

When Benjamin Franklin made this statement, it was not as much a matter of prophecy as it was history.

A study of the history of mankind will, in fact, reveal a crowded stage with men pushing and shoving to rule each other. They do this with no more dignity or wisdom than school children trying to push their way to the front of a line for recess . . . or lunch.

Napoleon thought he would be the one who would create the revived Roman Empire and also a new dynasty – so much so that he gave his son and heir the title, “The King of Rome”.

However, this statement, “Man will ultimately be governed by God or by tyrants,” is also prophetic, even though Benjamin Franklin was certainly not a prophet. Tyrants have come and gone, but they are indeed alive and well throughout our world today.

There is coming a tyrant, however, who will make all others, throughout history and in contemporary times, look like beginners. We were introduced to this coming tyrant – the antichrist – in Revelation chapter 13, where he is simply referred to as a “beast,” which he really is.

We do not have time to rehearse our past study, but let me touch on the major description points of the antichrist.

In verse 1, we learned, through consistent symbolic terminology in both Revelation and the book of Daniel, the antichrist has a unified kingdom of ten horns; that is, ten kings over whom he rules supreme.

In verse 2, we learned that the antichrist’s power comes directly from the dragon, which is a descriptive title for Satan himself.

In verse 3, we were shown that the antichrist is assassinated with a fatal wound to the head, but

resurrected. This counterfeit resurrection solidifies his rule over the world, as John writes in this verse,

. . . the whole world was amazed and followed after the beast

The antichrist’s rule is now supreme and unimpeachable – he is *the* King of Rome.

This king will succeed where every other world ruler failed. He will create a new world order – a revived Roman Empire in Europe that will encompass the world.

What is it in the heart of mankind that wants to unify the nations of the world?

Just travel back to Genesis 11 and the tower of Babel. This was a time in which mankind’s desire to make a name for himself became his chief objective. This was a unified world that actually wanted to rebel against the authority of God and become accountable to no one. And it was in need of help from no one and capable of running the planet all by itself.

This desire has never left the planet. It surfaces from time to time in kingdoms and leaders.

Only this past week, a former president called for the interdependence of nations in order to bring about peace and the survival of the planet. His speech is not original, by the way.

Since the close of World War I, Europe and the civilized nations of the world have sought to unify the nations for the good of mankind.

President Woodrow Wilson called for a New World Order, and nearly every Western leader since has issued some sort of call for a new world system.

Winston Churchill, some seventy years ago, made it clear when he said, “The purpose of the New World Order is to bring the world into a [one] world government.”ⁱⁱⁱ

After 1,600 years of fighting among the nations of Europe, we have watched as these nations have come together in the last fifty years, in what was originally called the “Common Market”.

A coalition of the United Nations has created the World Bank, the World Health Organization, the

International Criminal Court, and the International Court of Justice.

Today, the United Nations has a world constitution, a world currency, a world income tax, a world military force, a global identification number, and what they call a global ethic – which is code for a future world religion.ⁱⁱⁱ

Some world leaders mask their intentions of uniting in a one-world government by using phrases like: global management, the rule of world law, collective sovereignty, the interdependence of nations, a global village, collective security.^{iv}

Ladies and gentlemen, these are nothing more than catch phrases for a one-world agenda.

Now do not misunderstand – there are good things happening because of this effort.

We can eat imported foods safely because of global standards. At least this is the theory – I am a little leery of peanut butter these days.

We can use global cooperation in tackling disease, encouraging education, and battling poverty.

I can travel throughout most of the world today because of this. We can now take the gospel to many nations because of cooperation between countries and borders that are open – some more than others. In fact, on this side of the rapture, we can benefit from and maximize these developments for the sake of the gospel.

However, make no mistake that what we are watching could be a wonderful illustration of what will one day happen. In fact, it could be the prelude to the very world system that will coalesce under the leadership of the antichrist.

For the first time in fifteen centuries, a unified European coalition has begun to take shape – with twenty-seven countries now a part of the European Union.^v

All that is occurring in our world may have nothing to do with the end times or the antichrist's rule on planet Earth. It could be blown apart by rogue nations or a worldwide epidemic. We have no idea of God's timetable and we certainly do not know the moment when the church will be raptured and the Tribulation period will begin. This could have begun a thousand years ago or it could begin a thousand years hence.

However, that which we see happening might be the mixing of the mortar for this new empire. We might be watching the prelude to the revival of the Roman Empire. And every time we turn on the

television and read the newspapers, we see one more step taken.

This is not the ten-nation coalition spoken of in Revelation that will be ruled by the antichrist, but it is, without a doubt, the basic idea. This is an economic, political, and governmental system whereby one man can eventually rise in power to rule the world.

The world will one day get its wish. According to Revelation 13, engineered by the god of this world – Satan, a one-world government will rise. It will be a new, one-world system with political, economic, and religious unity.

It will be one nation, under . . . antichrist.

The Antichrist

John now reveals even more characteristics about this world ruler – the antichrist – in the next few verses of Revelation 13. Let me point these out.

1. First, there is the antichrist's global defiance.

Notice the first part of verse 5.

There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies . . .

One commentator said, "He was given a mouth and it was a really big one too."^{vi}

By the way, you should underline the four times the phrase appears, "given to him".

- In **verse 5a** – a mouth was "given to him";
- In **verse 5b** – authority to act for forty-two months was "given to him";
- In **verse 7a** – to make war was "given to him";
- In **verse 7b** – authority over every tribe, people, tongue, and nation was "given to him".

The antichrist has four "givens":

- to blaspheme;
- to lead;
- to persecute;
- to rule.

We might wonder who gave these things to him. Obviously Satan is the intermediate source, as, in fact, we are told in verse 4 that Satan gave his own authority to the beast, or the antichrist.

However, these four “givens,” beginning in verse 5, are passive verb forms. Satan might be the intermediate source, but God is the ultimate source.^{vii}

This is all according to God’s plan – God’s delegated power to the forces of evil to ultimately bring about His purposes on earth.

Imagine the implication of someone being allowed by God the ability to speak eloquently, passionately, and persuasively, and they then use this ability to blaspheme Him.

Notice that while God allows him to blaspheme, God also allows the antichrist to have authority. Notice the last part of verse 5.

There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.

Remember that the Tribulation period is divided into two, three-and-a-half-year periods.

The first half of the Tribulation is relatively peaceful among the nations, as the antichrist rises in power – beginning with his peace accord with Israel.

It is around the midpoint of the Tribulation that the antichrist is assassinated, miraculously resurrected, steps forward to declare himself the Messiah, desecrates the Tribulation temple, tramples Jerusalem, and demands the worship of the world (Daniel 9 and Revelation chapters 11 and 13).

Keep in mind that forty-two months is three and a half years. Revelation 13:5 tells us that for forty-two months this man will begin to blaspheme God.

This lets us know that at the midpoint of the Tribulation, the antichrist will take off his nice-guy, peace-negotiator, wonderful-leader who wants to serve mankind mask. He will then openly declare himself the world ruler, God in the flesh, the long-awaited Messiah and begin to wage open war against the knowledge and name of God.

The antichrist’s defiant blasphemy and arrogance will surpass that of anyone else in human history. He will be Satan’s mouthpiece, voicing his master’s frustrated rage against God.^{viii}

Notice in verse 6, the extent of his blasphemy.

And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name [God’s Person] and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven [God’s people].

Satan will now openly, through his puppet king, be able to blaspheme God’s character and God’s children.

The time of global defiance has begun. It will be like the world has never seen and it will be worldwide.

2. Secondly, not only does the antichrist’s time of global defiance begin, but his time of global dominance begins.

Forty-two months of global domination by the antichrist begins during this part of the Tribulation as well. There are two aspects to his world dominance according to verse 7.

- **First, the antichrist becomes *the* believers’ final persecutor.**

Notice the first part of verse 7.

It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them . . .

The antichrist will not overcome the believers in a spiritual sense, but in a physical sense. He will kill them.

This is not referring to a military campaign (at least not yet); this is referring to a time of tormenting, harassing, persecuting, and executing the people of God.^{ix}

This is the answer to the martyred Tribulation saints’ prayer in Revelation chapter 6, when they asked God how long until He vindicated His name and brought justice to their persecutors. God told them to . . .

. . . rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed as they had been, would be completed also. (Revelation 6:11b)

During this forty-two month period of persecution, the number of the Tribulation saints who are martyred for their faith will be completed.

Christians will be especially hated by the antichrist because they will be a reminder that his master has long since met his Master.^x

Why does the antichrist pull out all the stops? He does so because his time is short; because he only has forty-two months left. He will be passionate to dishonor Jesus Christ.

By the way, if only we would have such passion to honor Jesus Christ, knowing our time to serve Him in this life is short. Who knows how many months you and I have left to bring Him glory with our lives?

The antichrist is passionate to:	Are we passionate to:
defy God	obey God
blaspheme God	praise God
corrupt others	convert others
dishonor Christ	honor Christ as Lord and Savior

The antichrist becomes the believers' final persecutor.

- **Secondly, the antichrist becomes the unbelievers' final ruler.**

Notice further in verse 7.

It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

The antichrist will succeed in what every other ruler only dreamed about – total world domination.^{xi}

Could it be that even now the world is moving toward this climactic setting of a one-world government?

Is the world ready for a one-world system of authority, commerce, and rule of law? Like never before.

In 1957, at what was called “The Treaty of Rome,” the modern European Union was created.

This does not have to be and does not guarantee that it will be, but it could be the beginning stages of the revival of the Roman Empire, as prophesied by Daniel and illustrated in Revelation.

In 1973, the European Economic Community was formed. This could be the rumblings of the Roman Empire as well.

The Euro currency was officially issued in 2002 – now a monetary currency can be used between member nations.^{xii}

Today five hundred million people are represented by twenty-seven member nations who swear some form of allegiance to a parliament, a president, armed forces, trade agreements, courts of law, and a constitution.

In light of a mounting global economic crisis, World Net Daily carried an article a few days ago that someone in our church sent to me. It quoted Klaus Schwab, the founder of the World Economic Forum based in Switzerland. Schwab told CNN that the global economic crisis was a “transformational crisis” which could be useful in reshaping a “new

world” (here are these words again). He told CNN this past week, “We have to create a new world and that is what [the World Economic Forum is] all about...”^{xiii}

One day this dream will come true. The world will be one nation, under antichrist.

This dream will quickly become a nightmare.

John the apostle does not pull any punches as he records his inspired revelation.

John says in verse 9,

If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

In other words, “Listen up. Take note.”

We have heard this phrase often in Revelation already, “If anyone has an ear, let him hear”. In fact, every single time it has been used, it has always ended with the phrase, “If anyone has an ear, let him hear . . .

. . . *what the Spirit says to the churches.*

This is the only time these words are mentioned without this last phrase, “. . . what the Spirit says to the churches.” Why?

This phrase is gone because the church is gone. The church is no longer listening on Earth. It is already in heaven before the throne of God.

However, the saints who have come to faith in Christ have just been told the worst news in the world – things are going to get even more horrific and painful, and death is around the corner.

Why tell these people this? Because this book was given not only to us in this dispensation, living in this church age, but was written for the one who will believe in Christ during the Tribulation. And they are going to need to know the answer to the question, “What do we do about these horrific forty-two months of persecution?”

John provides the answer in verse 10.

If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.

John is saying, “Listen, whatever happens to you – whether captivity or execution – it’s destined for you; that is, it’s God’s divine plan for your life.”

In other words, “Don’t fight your oppressors. Don’t grab guns and fire back. Don’t grab a sword, Peter. These aren’t our weapons.”

“Accept this as God’s design and, in submission, even to tormentors, glorify Christ by sharing in His sufferings.”

Paul wrote it this way sometime before his own execution at the hand of Nero,

Don't be [alarmed] by your enemies. This will be a sign to them that they are going to be destroyed, but that you are going to be saved, even by God Himself.

For you have been given not only the privilege of trusting in Christ but also the privilege of suffering for Him.

(Philippians 1:28-29 NLT)

So, these saints, living through the Tribulation, will take comfort in their fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, who suffered and died for them.

However, some of these believers might think – and perhaps you are tempted to think this now in your own suffering, “Will I somehow be lost in the chaos; the confusion in this twisted world? Will God lose sight of me?”

To them – and, by the way, this promise is for you too, dear friend – there is a wonderful little phrase in verse 8. I wanted to save it until this point in our study.

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, [that is] everyone whose name has not been found written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.

The unbeliever who worships the antichrist is not registered in this book of life. Those who have trusted Christ are registered. And their names were written in the book of life before the world began.

In other words, if your name has not been dropped from the registry of heaven since the time the world was created, God is not going to lose sight of you over the next forty-two months. Your future in heaven is secure.

Some would ask, “But doesn't Exodus 32:33 record God saying to Moses,

. . . “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.”?

Yes, and this is a reference to a book of life. David the Psalmist referred to this same book of life, which had in it the names of everyone who ever lived – the righteous and unrighteous (Psalm 69:28).

This is referring to the ancient custom of registration that was well known to John's audience in Revelation. Each city, town, or village had a book or a scroll – a registry, and in this registry, the name of every person born within their town or village was

written down and when they died, their name was erased or blotted out.^{xiv}

In other words, being blotted out of this book of life simply meant the person had physically died.

However, in this verse in Revelation, a different book is being referred to than the one in Exodus and Psalms. Notice again, John writes that this is “the book of life” pertaining to or belonging to “the Lamb”. This is the Lamb's book of life. This is the registry of heaven.

One author said, “This is the roster of the redeemed which contains the name of every saint who will be in glory.”^{xv}

John writes later, in Revelation 21, about the new heaven and the new earth, and says the people who enter heaven are . . .

. . . those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:27b)

So at the end of world history, as well as any age, it all boils down to this – is your name written in the Lamb's book of life or not?

If it is, it will never be erased. It was put there before you committed your first sin and it will not be removed after you have committed your last sin. You are in this book because of God's grace – He opened your eyes and you placed your faith in the Lamb who died for you. And you today, know the truth, and because you have . . .

. . . believed in the name of the Son of God . . . you may know that you have eternal life. (I John 5:13)

Think about it – the people of the Earth are looking for salvation. They think it will come in the form of a one-world system – and it will one day come, but it will be under the antichrist's cruel fist. The world will get its wish.

It occurred to me in my study that we, as believers, are the ones who will actually enjoy a new world order – isn't that something?! We are the ones who really get a new world order – and it will not just last for forty-two months. The new earth and the new heaven will provide an everlasting joy in the new system, new economy, and new kingdom with new bodies – all for those who belong to the Lamb.

We, who have registered in the Lamb's book of life, will enjoy eternity under the kind and benevolent rule of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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- ⁱ Craig L. Parshall, "In the Shadow of a Praying Nation," National Religious Broadcasters Convention Issue Magazine (2009), p. 22.
- ⁱⁱ Daymond R. Duck and Larry Richards, The Book of Revelation (Thomas Nelson, 2006), p. 183.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.
- ^{iv} Ibid.
- ^v Mark Hitchcock, Seven Signs of the End Times (Multnomah, 2002), p. 41.
- ^{vi} Sam Gordon, Worthy Is the Lamb (Ambassador, 2000), p. 285.
- ^{vii} Kendell H. Easley, Holman New Testament Commentary: Revelation (Holman, 1998), p. 229.
- ^{viii} John MacArthur, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 2000), p. 47.
- ^{ix} Life Application Bible Commentary: Revelation (Tyndale House, 2000), p. 155.
- ^x Donald Grey Barnhouse, Revelation: God's Last Word (Zondervan, 1971), p. 239.
- ^{xi} Robert L. Thomas, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 1995), p. 163.
- ^{xii} Hitchcock, p. 42.
- ^{xiii} Hal Lindsey, "Prophesied cashless society: It's almost here," 1/30/09, <http://www.worldnetdaily.com/index.php?pageID=87455> and Simon Hooper, "Davos delegates gather to 'shape new world,'" 1/27/09, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/BUSINESS/01/27/davos.tuesday.crisis/index.html>.
- ^{xiv} William Barclay, The Revelation of John: Volume 2 (Westminster Press, 1976), p. 95.
- ^{xv} Stewart Custer, From Patmos to Paradise (BJU Press, 2004), p. 150.