

Notes for the Ekklesia Meeting

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc dantrygg@msn.com Today's Date: November 16, 2008

What About The Antichrist?

by Dan Trygg

“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand)...”

Matthew 24:15

“After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns. ⁸ While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth uttering great *boasts*. ...As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise; and another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. ²⁵ And he will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.”

Daniel 7:7-8,24,25

“...the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. ²⁷ And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Daniel 9:26-27; Cf. Daniel 11:31;12:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; Rev. 13:1-18; 14:9-12; 17:1-18; 19:11-21

I can't tell you how many times I have heard people make foolish and ignorant statements, suggesting that some political figure is the antichrist. I have heard people strongly argue nearly every possibility, ...from Henry Kissinger, to Prince Charles, to the king of Spain, to President-elect Obama, to President George W. Bush! The Bible clearly tells us to avoid speculations, conspiracy theories and foolish controversies (I Tim. 1:3,4; Tit. 3:9), yet so many get sucked into such craziness. Therefore, I thought it may be helpful to set forth some of what God has revealed about the antichrist.

The best place to *begin* to look at end time events is Jesus' teachings. He gives us a very clear overview of what to expect, both in the way of general signs that will occur throughout the age, as well as an outline of the events immediately surrounding His return. These teachings are recorded in Matthew 24,25; Mark 13; and Luke 21. As you peruse these passages, it is clear that Jesus uses several references to Old Testament books, but specifically cites the prophet Daniel, encouraging the reader to go there for background information regarding the “abomination of desolation”. Jesus was not just pulling things out of the air, or coming up with a totally new prophetic vocabulary. **He was using the images and teachings of OT prophets in order to present His teachings regarding these end-time events.** In other words, there are no short cuts to understanding these things. **We have to go back to the original prophetic visions in order to attempt to see what the Lord was referring to** as He mentions them in passing. Paul does the same thing in his passages that discuss end time events, and the Revelation to John is filled with OT citations and allusions. So, we need to understand that **delving into a discussion of end-time events is a very complicated and extensive study, one that is deeply rooted into OT prophetic revelation.**

Having stated that, **let's begin our study by going where Jesus directs us, to the prophet Daniel.** In this book **there are five prophetic revelations regarding future events** (Daniel 2; 7; 8; 9:20-27; and 10-12).

(1.) The first, recorded in Daniel 2, is a dream given to King Nebuchadnezzar, which was also later revealed to Daniel. In the interpretation, which God gave to Daniel, the dream revealed that there would be four earthly empires, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar himself, which would successively follow one another. These would seem to be the Babylonians, followed by the Medio-Persian empire, which was then defeated by Alexander the Great, whose Greek empire dominated the earth, until it was in turn overthrown by the Roman empire. During the days of those kings (the Romans), God would set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed, but would crush and put to an end all the other kingdoms. This is a reference to the Kingdom of God established through Jesus which spread the message of hope and personal freedom which eventually undermined all the old power bases that supported the old Roman dominion, and other monarchical systems of government, and which has spread throughout the earth.

(2.) In chapter 7, Daniel himself has a vision of four beasts, which also represent four successive empires, again referring to Babylon, Medio-Persia, Greece and Rome. In this vision, the fourth beast (Rome) was described as “dreadful, terrifying and extremely strong”, and it crushed all the other beasts under its feet. It was different than the other beasts, in that it had ten horns (powerful leaders). As Daniel watched, a “*little horn*” came up from among the others, pulling three of them out by their roots. This horn developed eyes and a mouth, and uttered great boasts. This beast was destroyed, and then “with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming” (Jesus' return – Matt. 24:30).

(3.) Two years later (7:1; 8:1), Daniel had another vision, one in which *a small horn grows out of one of the four horns that are the recipients of the Greek empire*. This horn grew to become great, and stretched out toward Israel. He magnified himself to be equal to the “Commander of the Host”, the “Prince of princes”, putting an end to the sacrifice, destroying mighty men and the holy people. He is described as “insolent and skilled in intrigue. And his power will be mighty, but not by his own power, and he will destroy to an extraordinary degree” (8:23,24). Most scholars see this as a reference to Antiochus Epiphanes, who defiled the Jerusalem temple in 167 B.C., and fulfilled much of this vision. But the words of Gabriel, “Son of man, understand that the vision pertains to the time of the end” (8:17), suggests that there may be yet another fulfillment of these words. Whoever this is, he will be “broken without human agency” (8:25).

(4.) In another encounter with the angel Gabriel (9:20f.), Daniel is given a time frame for the appearance of the coming Messiah, some 483 years after a command to rebuild Jerusalem (this works out to be 26 A.D.), after which time the Messiah “will be cut off and have nothing”. Then “*the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and its sanctuary*” (9:26 – the Romans destroyed the city of Jerusalem, and burned the temple, in 70 A.D.). This prince will make a covenant with many for a week (7 years?), but in the middle of the week (3 1/2 years?), he will “*put a stop to the sacrifice*” and “*on the wings of abominations will come one who makes desolate*” (9:27).

(5.) The final vision Daniel records is the most extensive. Most of it pertains to the ongoing conflicts between kingdoms originating from two of Alexander the Great’s generals. Alexander died, leaving his empire to his four generals (the four horns of Daniel 8:8). *One of them was Seleucus, who settled in the area of Mesopotamia, Syria and Asia Minor*. Another was named Ptolemy. He settled in Egypt. Palestine was a buffer zone between these two kingdoms, and was literally “caught in the middle” of their conflicts. Most of Daniel 10 and 11 prophetically describe what would happen between these two powers. Antiochus Epiphanes is again alluded to, as Gabriel describes his hostility toward the people of the covenant. He predicts the desecration of the Jerusalem temple, the abolishing of the daily sacrifice, and the setting up of the abomination of desolation (11:29-31), a reference to the setting up of an altar to the pagan god, Zeus. Some religious leaders, and many others, will be corrupted, choosing to compromise in order to live under Antiochus’ reign. Many of the faithful will be murdered and tortured for their resistance to Antiochus’ decrees. Those who know their God will take action, and throw off the domination of this evil king.

Beginning in 11:36, however, Gabriel begins to describe a scenario that does not fit any we know of in history. *The king of that future day will “exalt and magnify himself above every god” (11:36). He appears to invade from the north, passing through numerous countries, reaching as far south as Egypt, Libya and Ethiopia*. He will pitch his tent at Mount Zion, yet he will come to an end, and no one will help him (vss. 40-45). Gabriel also mentions that “at that time” *there will be a time of great distress, such has not occurred in history to that time*. Then, too, will come the resurrection of the dead, some to life and others to disgrace and everlasting contempt (Dan. 12:2).

When Jesus refers to Daniel, He compels us to look at these passages. We see Paul also alluding to them, insisting that *Christ will not return until there is a great apostasy, and the “man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself to be God” (II Thess. 2:3,4)*. He also mentions that Jesus will take him away with the breath of His mouth, when He returns (vs. 8). *This man of lawlessness will come with Satanic power, doing false signs and wonders so as to delude people (vss. 9-11)*. **The apostle John adds more detail, but it is all in agreement with the basic information from Daniel’s visions.** The antichrist (beast) will be empowered by Satan himself (Rev. 13:2). He will have ten horns and seven heads (the third beast in Daniel 7:6 had four heads, representing Alexander’s four generals), and one of his heads will be as if it had been slain, but his fatal wound will be healed (vs. 3). He speaks arrogant words against God, and he makes war against God’s people. His public relations man will require people to worship the beast, or die. He will also require that no one will be able to buy or sell anything unless he or she takes a mark, either upon the right hand or forehead, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name (vss. 15-17). On the other hand, God says that those who worship him, or take his mark, will take upon themselves the judgment and punishment of hell (14:9-12). Another clue is given in Revelations 17. There *John tells us that the seven heads of the beast are seven hills* (Rome was proverbially referred to as “the city on seven hills”), *as well as seven kings*, five from the past, one who was current when John wrote, and one yet to come (vss. 9,10). In the end, the beast (antichrist) will be among those gathered at Armageddon to make war against the coming Christ, and will be thrown alive into the lake of fire (19:19,20).

Two significant clues regarding the antichrist: It appears that he will arise from the old Roman empire, and possibly from the Seleucid lineage, or from the area he had ruled, the region from modern Turkey to India. Just this little bit of information excludes most of the candidates suggested by conspiracy buffs. We would do better to learn to walk in truth and love, than to get into fruitless discussions (I Tim. 1:3-5). Talkin’ is easy; doin’ is tough.