

Final Years of the Antichrist

(Part 1)

Introduction

Most apocalyptic Scripture is associated with conflict. Spiritual and physical strife between Christ and His people and Satan and his minions define earth's final years. Satan's key agent, who will enamor most of humanity, is known as the "*antichrist*."

Stunning details regarding this leader fill pages of God's Holy Word as warnings to be fully aware that his deceptive practices will easily ensnare the mind and emotions. To make sure there is "prophetic recognition" of this evil, God has presented him in a myriad of ways. The imagery varies from a "*little horn*," a "*king*," a "*vile person*," the "*man of sin*," the "*sea beast*," to even a "*harlot*," which John centers in Rome (Revelation 17:9). There is one other picture that stands unique and singular in Scripture: identifying him as the "*king of the north*," which is addressed in Daniel 11.

It is important to note that this "*antichrist*" becomes the world leader as humanity approaches its *end*. This has been recognized by many expositors as being during a tribulation crisis that comes to the world. "The Scriptures teach that ... **[he will regain his] lost supremacy**," and then "**the fires of persecution will be rekindled**" against God's people.¹

It is fascinating to observe that this geopolitical position as that leader does not come easily. It will rely on the power of others, detailed especially in Revelation 13:4 (Satan and the earth beast – a prominent nation) and Revelation 17:12-13 (a ten-horn coalition of nations).

That ascendancy has been anticipated: "The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a **fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world**, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done."²

Daniel presents this **final era** of the **antichrist power** during a time of great unrest, called by many a "tribulation period." He details two phases of geopolitical aggression:

1. Against the Islamic world (11:40-43)
2. Against God's remnant (11:32-35, 44)

Within this narrative, focusing mainly on verses 36-45, is commentary dramatizing the antichrist finally achieving world domination and economic control. At the zenith of its rule come arrogant claims that end with its destruction (11:45), perceived to be at the Second Coming (cf. II Thessalonians 2:3-12, Revelation 18:7-8).

¹ White, *1888 Material*, p. 901 (emphasis added).

² White, *The Great Controversy*, pp. 565-566 (emphasis added).

This block of verses continues the Hebrew part of Daniel's book, given especially to inform the final "remnant" or group of saints of what lies ahead. It is earth's final history of Satan's desperate work through this key surrogate agent referred to as the "king of the north."

Preamble

"And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done" (Daniel 11:36 – KJV).

"Then the king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every deity and he will utter presumptuous things against the God of gods. He will succeed until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been decreed must occur" (Daniel 11:36 – NET).

"And the king shall do according to his will;" (vs 36)

This wording assumes that we already know much about this king! He was first introduced in 8:23-24, which describes a "time of the end" and an evil "little horn" (the antichrist)! Later, in 11:21-28, he is called a *vile person*. There, Daniel's description of him is during the apparent first rise of papal power. That was historically an early antichrist era.³ Then – a new eschatological timing period for that "vile person" (KJV) or antichrist work begins in 11:29 ("And at the appointed time **he** shall return"). From verses 29 to 35 this individual is referred to simply using the pronoun "he."

For centuries the "traditional" Christian religions have correctly viewed this "king" as "the man of sin" or the eschatological "antichrist" of II Thessalonians 2:3-12. This again links back to Daniel 8:23, which describes a king exercising his evil power – timed in verses 8:17 and 19 to the **time of the end**, at an **appointed time** (cf. 11:35c).

This final king is first shown as primarily superintending religious issues (11:36-39); thus, he is seen as a religious leader⁴ similar to what is described in II Thessalonians 2:4b: "so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." His authority, for a time, will remain unchallenged (8:9-12; 11:3, 16).⁵ This raised a cry from Gabriel (Daniel 8:13; cf. Daniel 12:6) similar to the cry of the fifth-seal martyrs (Revelation 6:10): "How long?" That is a timing plea, asking God, "**When** will You intervene to vindicate Your people and Your character?" That is finally answered as occurring at the end of a three-and-a-half-year period (Daniel 12:7).

"he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god." (vs 36)

One can immediately hear echoes of Satan's ambitions, described in Isaiah 14:11-14. This eschatological earthly antichrist, this king, is his key representative. Revelation 13 and 17 also describes this **earthly power** as wielding blasphemous abusive force against God.

³ Steinmann, Andrew E.; *Daniel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis), pp. 538-539.

⁴ Steinmann, *op. cit.*, p. 540.

⁵ Goldingay, John E.; *Daniel – Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 30 (Word Books, Publisher – Dallas, TX), p. 304.

“and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods,” (vs 36)

The “*God of gods*” refers to the one true God (Joshua 22:22; Psalm 50:1, 136:2; Deuteronomy 10:17).

One might conclude that such words would provoke a universal abhorrence. However, this “*king*” is such a charismatic, god-like figure, he mesmerizes the world while defying God! This is the descriptive imagery that God wants us to be alerted to.

“*Marvelous things*” (*niplaot*) is from the noun “*wonder*” (*pele*). Those Hebrew words usually refer to a divine *act* or *word* from God! This further rivets the observation that this “*king*” will have God-like charisma when he speaks. Such amazing “*gifts*” will draw the attention of the world toward this evil leader – portraying himself as God – with such “*marvelous*” words and likely works. All will be deceptively crafted to replace God’s truth (II Peter 2:1, 18; Jude 4, 16).⁶

This is supreme apostasy, a characteristic of this eschatological “*king*.” This antichrist is portrayed in Revelation as a powerful sea beast (Revelation 13:1 – where its heads are covered with *blasphemy*) **and** as a harlot riding a beast that is covered with *blasphemy* (17:3). The latter refers to a religious power centered in Rome (17:9). **Collectively**, these prophecies reveal a church–state power that unquestionably defies God.

“and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined [decreed] shall be done” (vs 36)

The success of this Roman religious power is **time-** and **event-**limited. At a defined point, God’s wrath or “*indignation*” rises against it. “**Indignation**” (*zaam* – H) usually refers to God’s wrath (cf. Isaiah 10:25, 26:20; Malachi 1:4). He brings this rebellion to an end. That wrath was previously noted in chapter 8:

- “*And he said, Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the final end of the indignation* [wrath – *zaam*]: *for at the time appointed the end shall be*” (Daniel 8:19).

This is history in advance of a ruler who “will live in the last days, immediately prior to the coming of the Lord”⁷ at the “*time of the end*” (*es qes*) (cf. 10:14). It will be associated with a time of tribulation (12:1) – referred to by Christ in Matthew 24:21, 24:29-31. “But the clearest indication that this ‘king’ will live in the latter days is that the resurrection of the saints will take place immediately after God delivers His people from this ... [antichrist] power (12:2).”⁸ That resurrection is an eschatological event.

Amazing additional information ensues:

⁶ Steinmann, *op. cit.*, p. 540.

⁷ Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 305.

⁸ *Ibid.*

“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all” (Daniel 11:37).

“God of his fathers” refers to Yahweh in the Old Testament (Exodus 3:13, Joshua 18:3, II Chronicles 7:23). That means that this king does not honor the God that his people anciently revered! He is an apostate! This is contrasted with a righteous people *“who know their God”* in 11:32. In verse 38 this king honors another god his fathers didn’t know. Thus, in this eschatological period, two divergent powers exist:

1. People **who know God**, who will be strong and teach others (11:32-33; cf. Exodus 6:7, 29:46; Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 7:9; 28:64).
2. King (of a kingdom of people – implied) **who is an apostate**, defying God – making himself as God (11:37).

This means that this end-time evil leader arises from a religious body that used to worship the one true God. In the context of earlier verses and Paul’s description of the antichrist, he claims to be a Christian.⁹ He takes his seat in God’s temple – His church (II Thessalonians 2:4), purporting to be its leader. He arises from what once were faithful believers (I John 2:18-19).

“Neither shall he regard ... the desire of women.” (vs 37)

The weight of evidence suggests that this refers to disfavor or rejection of normal marital relations (understood and affirmed by such men as Luther, Calvin, Keil, Leupold, Young and Archer).¹⁰ This reflects well the prohibition of nuns to marry by the Roman Catholic Church and relates to the celibacy mandated on its clergy. Its liturgy, guised as Christian, had its origins in ancient pagan rites. The unadulterated faith in the apostolic era was poisoned by such ancient myths.¹¹

“nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all” (vs 37)

This is amazing – this king holds himself up as supreme, superior to all other gods. He actively *“magnifies himself,”* pretending to be like God but functions as Satan’s supreme representative.

- *“For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High”* (Isaiah 14:13-14).
- Echoing the *“little horn”* prophecy: *“Yea, he magnified himself even to the Prince of the host”* (Daniel 8:11a) (referring to the Messiah – cf. 8:25, 9:25).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

¹⁰ Steinmann, *op. cit.*, p. 542.

¹¹ Cardinal J. H. Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 359; https://digitalcollections.newmanstudies.org/document/bt21_n5_1845/an_essay_on_the_development_of_christian_doctrine/1845-00-00

Some suggest that the phrase “*nor regard any god*” actually belies an atheistic stance. If correct, his demand that he be worshiped rather than allow obeisance to any other deity appears to reflect the conceited horror of this apostate king (cf. Revelation 13:12, 14-15).

“But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things” (Daniel 11:38).

“But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces:” (vs 38)

“Forces” (Maoz – H) here figuratively means *human protection by a temporal power*, especially a civil/national power (Isaiah 30:2). Could the papacy rely on a civil power of a nation(s) to see its purposes advanced? This eschatological king will deal with *temporal threats* – with the help of such “a foreign god” (11:39)! Note these observations:

“The church ***appeals to the strong arm of civil power***, and in this work, papists and Protestants unite.”¹²

“The spirit of persecution manifested by paganism and the papacy is again to be revealed. Prophecy declares that this power will say ‘to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast.’ [Rev. 13:14.] The image is made to the first or leopard-like beast, which is the one brought to view in the third angel’s message. By this first beast is represented the Roman Church, ***an ecclesiastical body clothed with civil power, having authority to punish all dissenters***. The image to the beast represents another religious body clothed with similar power. The formation of this image is the work of that beast whose peaceful rise and mild professions render it so striking a symbol of the United States.”¹³ (The land or earth beast of Revelation 13:11-17).

“In order for the United States to form an image of the beast, ***the religious power must so control the civil government that the authority of the state*** will also be employed by the church to accomplish her own ends.”¹⁴

Notice what is introduced later, in verse 40: “*and the king of the north shall come against him [the king of the south] like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships.*” That is military language. The antichrist will use civil power and the military might of other nations in the waning years of its global power.

This is what the late Pope John Paul II appealed to regarding mandatory Sunday worship:

“Therefore, also in the particular circumstances of our own time, ***Christians will naturally strive to ensure that civil legislation respects their duty to keep Sunday holy.***”¹⁵

In an encyclical called *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth) (June 29, 2009), Pope Benedict XVI called on world leaders to rethink the status of the global economy. He believes capitalism is

¹² White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 330 (emphasis added).

¹³ White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, pp. 277-278 (emphasis added).

¹⁴ White, *Maranatha*, p. 169 (emphasis added).

¹⁵ Pope John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, Section 67, May 31, 1998.

effectively obsolete. A world economy, driven by morally neutral concepts, would be for the common good of all. This, too, was a step into the world's geopolitical stage, appealing to civil power to bond with Rome's ideology.¹⁶

The endgame reveals that the antichrist depends on military might to deal with the king of the south (vss 40-41); he will lean on civil power to deal with those resisting its dictates (cf. Revelation 13:15-17). The text beautifully fits what lies ahead in the "time of the end.... instead of relying on God and His Word as a fortress to protect him ... he will rely upon temporal power."¹⁷

"and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things" (vs 38)

The word "god" is here difficult to define. Contextually, it suggests a different "god" than the "god of forces," previously mentioned. It appears to mean that **its power and ability to control and influence** secular nations comes through valuable gifts.

This "honour" given to that "god" of "power" is bought, which appears to be deceptive mechanisms bordering on bribery. It suggests that a religious leader – called a "king" – has the "services" of power (his god) from civil authorities in a coalition that prospers as the result of these gifts. The "religious" aims of this antichrist are coercive, just as was seen during the Dark Ages. They will, once again, become violent. It has power and wealth that enamors the world that support its evil hatred of right.

We have additional illustrations in Revelation that allude to this type of geopolitical coercion and might:

1. A symbolic tie is illustrated by a beast (papal kingdom) with ten horns (ten world divisions – currently geographically identified by the UN and the Club of Rome). They work together by resisting God/Christ (the God of their fathers).

*"And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have **one mind**, and shall **give their power and strength** unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful"* (Revelation 17:12-14).

"How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Revelation 18:7).

2. An earth beast (suggested as the United States) forcing earth's inhabitants to worship the sea beast (papal kingdom power).

*"And he exerciseth **all the power** of the first beast before him, and **causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed"*** (Revelation 13:12).

¹⁶ https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html#:~:text=%E2%80%9C Caritas%20in%20veritate%20%E2%80%9D%20is%20the%20principle, increasingly%20globalized%20society%3A%20justice%20and%20the%20common%20good.

¹⁷ Steinmann, *op. cit.*, p. 543.

The earth and its major powers sympathize with the leadership of this Roman antichrist; and, in turn, the world works on her behalf – all functioning in opposition to God.

What does the “king” or beast do for the world? There appears to be a false hope at a time of global despair. Additionally, the record says: “*With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication*” (Revelation 17:2).

“*Fornication*” means accepting deceptive beliefs. That gives them false hope. By the tight bond of the world’s nations with Rome, revealed in these prophecies, there is a “religious” coalition based on some doctrine or message, enamoring the world at a unique time of need. That universal bond is so strong that the power of at least one nation (the earth beast) will kill all those who don’t identify with the “image” or sign of loyalty to this antichrist (Revelation 13:15) and its singular “mark.”

“Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain” (Daniel 11:39).

“Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god,” (vs 39)

Again – this eschatological, religious king fails to rely on God, but relies on temporal powers. That might or authority is his “fortress” (his god); his stronghold, his alliances. In this light, this “king” has geopolitical power: “*And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*” (Revelation 13:7).

“The United States is the power represented by the beast with lamblike horns, and ... this prophecy will be fulfilled when the United States shall enforce Sunday observance, which Rome claims as the special acknowledgment of her supremacy. But in this homage to the papacy the United States will not be alone. The influence of Rome in the countries that once acknowledged her dominion is still far from being destroyed. And prophecy foretells a **restoration of her power.**”¹⁸

“Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ now than at any former period in her history. The Protestant churches are in great darkness, or they would discern the signs of the times. The Roman Church is far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation. She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to **regain control of the world**, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done. Catholicism is gaining ground upon every side.... These things should awaken the anxiety of all who prize the pure principles of the gospel.”¹⁹

“The peoples of the world will be so impressed by his might that they will say: ‘Who is like unto the beast? Who can make war against him?’ (Rev. 13:4).”²⁰

¹⁸ White, *The Faith I Live By*, p. 329 (emphasis added).

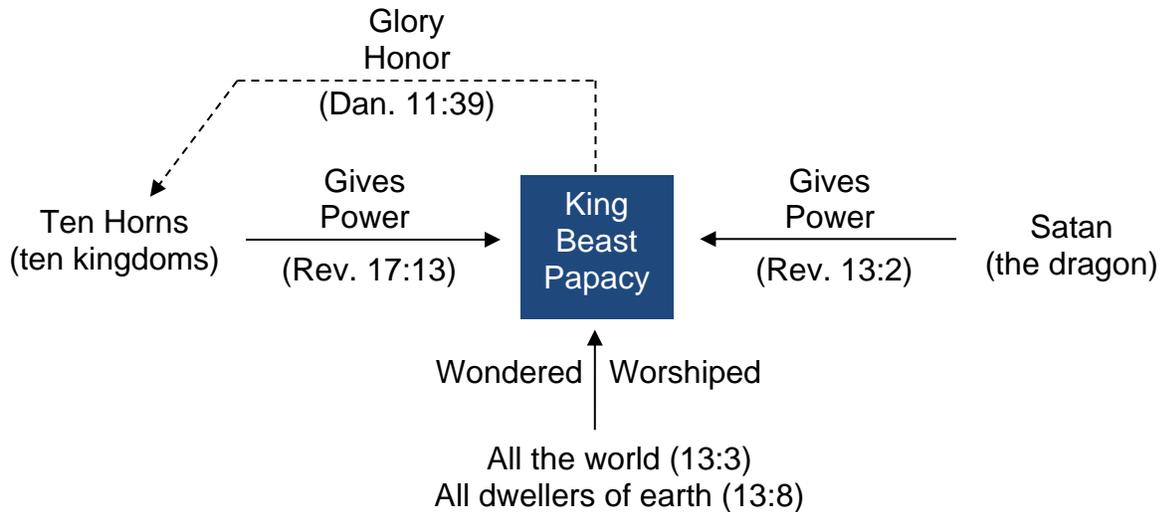
¹⁹ White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 565 (emphasis added); cf. Steinmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 547-555.

²⁰ Miller, Stephen R.; *The New American Commentary*, vol. 18 (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), p. 308.

“whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory:” (vs 39)

The powers – ten horns on the beast (Revelation 13, 17) – are said to “*have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast*” (Revelation 17:13). In turn, the beast, this king, acknowledges them before the world and increases their honor. His “god” is the **power** he receives from them. Now he reciprocates with fiendish gratitude.

A satanic bond is in view, where each power gives glory to the other. John also notes that “*the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority*” (Revelation 13:2). Combining all these verses:

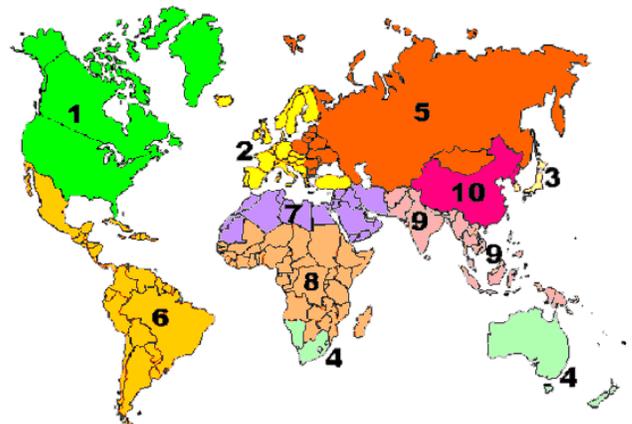


“and he shall cause them to rule over many,” (vs 39)

The imagery is stunning. “*He*” – the king – the papacy – apparently will now have unlimited power to designate who rules over these ten divisions of the world (the ten horns on the beast). The decision of who rules will be related to the support and power they arranged for him to have (with Satan’s direct intervention). Then – an issue that can only captivate our imagination:

“and shall divide the land for gain” (vs 39)

This refers to the world already provisionally divided by the United Nations into ten divisions or special regions. The evidence suggests that these powers/kings receive their geopolitical divisions to govern or rule by what the antichrist decrees – over people (“*many*”) and boundaries (“*land*”). Commensurate with this, the Club of Rome has made the recommendation seen on the map to the right – ten divisions, numbered like the ten horns on the antichrist beast.



Club of Rome’s Map

In Revelation it is first noted that ten horns/ powers/kings “*have received no kingdom as yet*” (Revelation 17:12). Then they (the horns) appear with crowns (Revelation 13:1). In both instances, they are horns on the beast.

Between Revelation 17 and 13, the Daniel 11:39 prophecy is fulfilled!

To be continued.

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