

The Antichrist

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Without a doubt, the most feared and talked about characters of end-time sensationalism is the antichrist. Emphasizing his powerful and evil nature, Hal Lindsey referred to him as the “Future Fuehrer.”¹ In a similar way, Texe Marrs writes, “We may therefore well ask, has the ghost of Adolf Hitler been resurrected? Bible prophecy indicates the answer is *yes*.”²

Descriptions such as these are typical among sensationalistic end-time authors. They repeatedly write of how this evil individual will rise to a position of world power. They tell us he will appear to do so through peaceful means, yet his intentions will actually be anything but peaceful. They conclude that his evil actions will eventually lead the world into the battle of Armageddon.

This all sounds intriguing, perhaps frightening to some, but did you know that nothing of this nature can be found in the Bible? What many do not realize is that the antichrist of modern end-time sensationalism is nothing more than the fictional creation of men.

The antichrist of today’s popular prophecy writers is a mixture of a number of *misapplied* Bible texts. He is said to be the little horn that came forth and possessed the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts (Dan. 7:8). He is the insolent king and skilled in intrigue (Dan. 8:23), and the prince who is to come, who will destroy the city and the sanctuary (Dan. 9:26). He is also the despicable person who seizes the kingdom by intrigue (Dan. 11:21), and the man of lawlessness and son of destruction (2 Thess. 2:3). In addition, he is the personified beast of the book of Revelation (Rev. 11:7). Some have even associated the antichrist with the rider on the white horse in the book of Revelation (Rev. 6:2).

Apparently, it doesn’t seem to bother any sensationalistic teachers that the term “antichrist” is not found in any of these texts! This popular end-time villain represents more the contrived product of literary imaginations than solid biblical truth.

Having seen what men have been saying about the antichrist, we turn to the Bible to see what it *actually* says about the subject. In so doing, some will be surprised to learn that the term “antichrist” is only found in four verses, none of which are located in the book of Revelation. In looking at the passages where the word “antichrist” is used, we can see what, or whom, the term is actually describing.

Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour (1 John 2:18).

Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:22).

And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world (1 John 4:3).

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist (2 John 7).

Those four verses are the full extent of the Bible's use of the word "antichrist." The apostle John’s inspired description of *an* antichrist is much different than the ideas of the popular writers. There is nothing in any of John’s descriptions that mentions a world leader. He mentions

nothing about the antichrist being possessed by the devil. Nothing is said about peace covenants or breaking covenants. There is not a hint that we are to connect John's description of antichrist with Daniel's description of "the little horn" or Paul's "man of lawlessness." Any connections made in this way are based solely on the conjecture of men.

According to John, *an* antichrist is simply *anyone* who denies that Jesus is the Christ, *anyone* who denies the Father and the Son, and *anyone* who does not confess Jesus. In addition, it is *anyone* who denies that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.

The question now to consider is whether John had reference to one specific antichrist or many. In favor of one specific individual, John does say, "You have heard that antichrist (singular) is coming." However, if the antichrist was a single individual, can we accurately identify him? Since John does not tell us his specific identity, we are once again left only to conjecture in such an attempt.

One clue to identifying the general time of his existence is found as John tells his readers, "It is the last hour" (1 Jn. 2:18), and "the spirit of the antichrist is *already* in the world" (1 John 4:3). These words must be interpreted in the context of John's first century audience. It *was* the last hour for them, not us. Whoever antichrist was (if a single individual), he was *at that time* in the world. This would exclude his existence today.

Rather than being a single individual, it seems more likely that John had *many* antichrists in mind. John writes, "...*many* antichrists have appeared" (1 Jn. 2:18).

The term antichrist (*antichristos*) literally means "against Christ" or "in place of Christ." The latter idea would suggest a false Christ. This would harmonize well with the words of Jesus in the Olivet discourse, "False Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect" (Matt. 24:24).

Using John's *inspired* definition of *an* antichrist, we can see that there will always be those who will deny the Father and the Son. These antichrists are not the much-feared *antichrist* of today's popular end-time sensationalism. That individual is a fictional creation from the imaginations of men.

Notes:

1 Hal Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, 92.

2 Texe Marrs, *Millennium: Peace, Promise, & the Day they Take Our Money Away*, 208.