

Doctrine of Anti-Christ in History

The Beast

The Beast out of the Sea

Rev. 13:1-10

First Beast

Daniel 7:4

Third Beast

Daniel 7:6

The Beast out of the Earth

Rev. 13:11-18

Second Beast

Daniel 7:5

Fourth Beast

Daniel 7:7

Anti-Christ and the Man of Lawlessness: The Historical Development

1. As a general principle it may be stated that behind the idea of Anti-Christ, is the concept of a power in the universe that is opposed to God. As Christ is the incarnation of all that is good, Anti-Christ is the incarnation of all that is evil.
2. The struggle between good and evil is found in many religions of the world. The Babylonians believed in the struggle of Marduk, the creator with Tiamat, the dragon.
3. The idea of an evil dragon is found in Jewish thought in such passages as Isaiah 51:9; Psalms 87:4; 89:10. The dragon reappears in Revelation 12:9.
 - *Isaiah 51:9 Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?*
 - *Psalms 87:4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there.*
 - *Psalms 89:10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.*
 - *Revelation 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*
4. The most obvious Anti-Christ figure is the fallen angel Satan, the devil.
 - *Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*

5. However, Satan will always remain an angel, while it appears that there is to be a visible figure upon earth, into which the very essence of sin is incarnated. This Man of Lawlessness to appear is the Son of Perdition, a description once given to Judas Iscariot.
 - *John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*
 - *2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

6. The best historical representative of Anti-Christ for the Jews prior to AD 70 would have been Antiochus Epiphanes, who invaded Palestine and captured Jerusalem. Antiochus was the eighth ruler of the house of the Seleucids, 175-164 BC A ruthless man of war, Antiochus either killed or sold into slavery 80,000 Jews. He offered a pig sacrifice on the holy altar in the Temple and there established an image of himself. He turned the rooms of the Holy Place into public brothels. The Maccabees restored the Temple, but to the Jews Antiochus was the incarnation of all evil.

7. The idea of a visible figure upon earth of evil incarnate is found in the Man of Sin, or the Man of Lawlessness. Paul had already taught the Church something about the Man of Sin. What Paul taught has not been preserved.
 - *The Man of Lawlessness. 2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. 3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*
 - *The Man of Sin. 2 Thessalonians 2:5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?*

8. In context, there was a growing rumor in the early Church that the Second Advent of Christ was drawing very near. The increase of excitement caused some believers to live in a nervous state of anticipation. Some were afraid to meet the Lord. The idle found an excuse to stop working. Paul wanted to put an end to the rising expectation of the soon coming of Christ.
- *2 Thessalonians 2:2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*
9. Paul knew by revelation, that the coming of Christ, and the resurrection of the saints (2 Thess. 2:1), was not imminent, as was being taught because certain specific events had not happened. Before the Second Coming of Christ there must first be:
- a falling away and,
 - the revealing of the Man of Sin, the Son of Perdition. *2 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*
 - ❖ The Man of Sin was to exalt himself above God, and claim the worship, which belongs to God.
 - ❖ Furthermore, the Man of Lawlessness was to perform lying signs and wonders which would deceive many. *2 Thessalonians 2:9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.*
10. At the time Paul was writing there was something which was restraining this final manifestation of the evil person called the Man of Lawlessness.
- *2 Thessalonians 2:7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*
11. The obvious question is, "*Who is the Man of Lawlessness*"? Other questions follow. "*Is the Man of Lawlessness a historical person?*" "*Who is he?*" "*Is the Man of Lawlessness still to come?*"
12. If the passage in 2 Thessalonians is considered to be futuristic, then the Man of Sin must still be revealed before the Second Coming of Christ.
13. Perhaps the greatest argument for a still future view of a coming Man of Lawlessness is that 2 Thessalonians 2:8 says that he will be destroyed by the presence of Jesus Christ.
- *2 Thessalonians 2:8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*
14. There is a reason why the Church has not come to a united position on the view of a Man of Lawlessness.

15. Part of the problem is that every generation has viewed itself as the fulfillment of prophecy, that means that people look at current events, and argue that their generation is the apostate generation, and that the Man of Sin is present.
16. For example, in the first century Rome was believed by some to be the restraining force, Judaism was the apostasy, and the Pope was the Man of Lawlessness.
17. In more recent days there is the popular concept that the restraining force is not government, but the Holy Spirit, communism is the apostasy, and some current political leader is the Man of Lawlessness. The end of all of this is total confusion.
18. The Bible does teach that there is coming, prior to the Second Advent of Christ, some sort of general apostasy, and the revealing of a Man of Lawlessness, who will hold power in the Temple.
19. He will persuade the people of the earth to worship him and not God.
20. So powerful will this person be that he will deceive many by godless doctrines and by false miracles.
 - *2 Thessalonians 2:10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*
21. God will allow people to believe a lie, because they do not love the truth.
 - *2 Thessalonians 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*
22. At the Second Advent of Christ, when the saints are resurrected, the Lord shall destroy the Man of Lawlessness with the Spirit of His mouth.
 - *2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.*
23. Any effort in a generation to identify the current generation as being in a state of apostasy, and harboring the Man of Lawlessness, should reconsider Paul's words.
 - *2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, 2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*
24. The apostle warned the Church NOT to become unsettled by prophetic utterances, by clever arguments, or by spurious letters or writings, that the Day of Christ was imminent.
25. That advice is still valid today.

26. Since Satan cannot totally destroy the hope of the resurrection he can try to undermine people's faith in the Christian message by raising false expectations only to have them dashed to pieces. This has been done time after time in recent years.