

## The anti-Christ and Tribulation (Part 1)

Matthew 24: 15-22

As we continue our study in the Olivet Discourse, Jesus offers additional details concerning the end times and the coming Tribulation upon the earth. While these verses are shrouded in mystery, and difficult to discern, they do reveal actual events that will transpire upon this earth prior to the second coming of Christ.

Our text today deals with the middle of the Great Tribulation – a time of suffering and desolation unlike this world has ever experienced. Not only will there be intense persecution of those who believe in Christ, but God will also pour out His wrath upon this earth for the sin and wickedness that has permeated the world at that time. Clearly this will be a dreadful time for all who remain on the earth. *People have a natural longing for a better day, a time of peace and harmony among nations, of greater economic stability and of decreased crime, disease, and discord. But Scripture is clear that, despite temporary times of improvement, things are destined to become much worse before they permanently become better. Human society faces a time that is going to be more calamitous than any ever experienced before...The Tribulation will encompass the entire world but will focus on the nation and people of Israel. It will mark the end of man's day and the coming of God's.*<sup>i</sup>

As we continue, I want to consider the [perils](#) revealed in the text as we think on: [The anti-Christ and Tribulation](#).

**I. A Time of Desolation** (15) – [When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, \(whoso readeth, let him understand.\)](#) Jesus spoke of the appearance of the abomination of desolation prophesied by Daniel. This will be a key event in the end times. Consider:

**A. The Character** – We can accurately identify the “abomination of desolation” as the anti-Christ, who will appear on the world stage during the Tribulation. He will be the minister of Satan, wreaking havoc and destruction upon the earth. He is prophesied in Daniel and revealed in Revelation. [Rev.13:5-8 – And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.](#)<sup>[6]</sup> [And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.](#)<sup>[7]</sup> [And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.](#)<sup>[8]</sup> [And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.](#)

**B. The Conditions** (15) – Jesus warned of the time when the anti-Christ would be found standing in the holy place. This will actually be the moment when the true identity and agenda of anti-Christ will be revealed, but we also have supporting Scriptures that reveal much about the conditions of that time. We know there will be:

**1. Social Depravity** – The end times will be marked by utter rejection of truth and righteousness for the lust of the flesh. The majority in that day will have no desire for the ways of God, seeking only to satisfy their lustful depravity. Paul warned of this as he spoke of the climate the world will encounter in the last days. [2 Timothy 3:1-5 – This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.](#) <sup>[2]</sup> [For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,](#) <sup>[3]</sup> [Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,](#) <sup>[4]</sup> [Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;](#) <sup>[5]</sup> [Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.](#) We are already seeing this environment in the majority of America and in many other places around the world. It is impossible to deny that conditions are right for the end times.

**2. Spiritual Apostasy** – We also know that the end times will be marked by a great falling away from truth within the church, and in regard to the Gospel in general. [2 Thes.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 phrase “falling away” speaks of “*a departure into apostasy.*” No doubt we are already seeing this fulfilled in our day as well. Many denominations and large ministries are abandoning biblical truth and convictions for the sake of political correctness. Few are willing to stand and boldly proclaim the truths of the Gospel, the righteousness of God, and the preeminence of Christ! This departure from biblical truth will continue to worsen as we near the end. Like Paul proclaimed, there is a form of godliness, but most deny the power thereof!

➤ I have no doubt we are rapidly approaching the return of our Lord. He has as timetable set for these events, and they will happen according to His sovereign plan. The one factor that is preventing the world from total spiritual collapse is the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, working to restrain the forces of evil. The Spirit will eventually be removed from His present work, although He will continue to inhabit believers. When the Spirit is removed from His present position in the world, the restraint will also be removed. [2 Thes.2:7-8 – For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.](#) <sup>[8]</sup> [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.](#) Can you imagine a world where the Spirit of God is not active and working to restrain Satan and evil? It will be a reality during the Tribulation. Many casually throw the phrase around about all hell breaking loose, but that will literally be the case then.

**C. The Charisma** – We also need to take a moment to discuss the influence anti-Christ will have on the world. He will come on the scene as a very charismatic leader. He will be embraced as the greatest leader the world has ever known. He will be successful in bringing about what is perceived as political, social, and financial reform. Humanity will quickly embrace their new world leader and support his global agenda. Scripture reveals:

- **He will unite the Nations.** (Rev.13:1) – *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.* The seven heads and ten horns spoken of here describes a league of nations, uniting together under the leadership of anti-Christ. He will be successful in accomplishing what the United Nations and European Union have been trying to accomplish for decades. The anti-Christ will usher in a one-world government, and he will be the supreme ruler.
  
- **He will unite the global economy.** (Rev.13:16-17) – *And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: <sup>[17]</sup> And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.* Likely most are familiar with these verses dealing with the mark of the beast. They confirm that the anti-Christ will successfully establish a common currency throughout the world. This currency, along with the finances and assets of the world will be linked together and controlled with some sort of device implanted in the hand or forehead to track all financial transactions. This technology has already been developed and is being used in places around the world. Recently a company in Wisconsin used similar technology for their employees who were willing to have a chip implanted in their hands. The European Union, made up of several nations, has used a common currency for years. Again, the foundation for the anti-Christ and his agenda is already being laid in the world.
  
- **He will bring temporary world peace.** (Dan.9:27) – *And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.* Daniel speaks of the anti-Christ brokering a deal that will bring peace to the Middle East and Israel. His influence will be such that he will be able to accomplish what world leaders have tried to accomplish for generations. Israel will enjoy peace and be allowed to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Scholars agree that the week Daniel spoke of actually refers to a seven year period. While the anti-Christ will break the deal after three and a half years, he will bring peace to Israel. As we will see in a moment, this peace was never intended to last.

**D. The Corruption (15)** – *When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand.)* As we return to our text verse, we see the corruption and devastation the anti-Christ will bring on Jerusalem, and even those throughout the world. Three and a half years after making the covenant with Israel, anti-Christ will break his covenant and begin a campaign of corruption and mayhem. This will be ushered in as he storms the newly rebuilt Temple and sets himself up, within the holy place, as God. *2 Thes.2:4 – 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.* At this moment, the horrified Jews will know that have been deceived, but it will be too late. The campaign of death and destruction will begin in earnest. Anti-Christ will destroy countless saints of God throughout the world, including all who refuse to worship him. *Rev.13:7-8 – And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.* <sup>[8]</sup> *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

➤ As difficult as this is to consider, the atrocities brought about by anti-Christ and those who support his agenda are not the only devastation the world will endure. As we continue in our study next week, we will further discuss the Great Tribulation, which will include the wrath of God being poured out upon this earth.

**Conclusion:** These are sobering events to consider, and they will one day become reality. All who reject the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will face the judgment and wrath of God. Even those who died prior to the Tribulation without Christ, will stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne Judgment and be judged for their sin. All who die apart from Christ will be there and face the fury of a righteous God.

I must ask if you know Christ as your personal Savior. Being saved by His grace is the only escape from the wrath of God. If you are unsaved, I urge you to respond today while the Spirit is leading. Don't put it off until it is eternally too late. You might argue that you will wait until that time and then be saved. According to the Bible, that will not be a possibility. *2 Thes.2:10-12 – And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* <sup>[11]</sup> *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:* <sup>[12]</sup> *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* This passage reveals those who have heard the Gospel and rejected it will not have the opportunity for salvation in that day. You will believe the lies of anti-Christ rather than the truth of the Gospel. If you are unsaved, come today!

---

<sup>i</sup> MacArthur New Testament Commentary, The - MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Matthew 24-28.