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THE RISE OF ANTICHRIST AND HIS FINAL BEAST EMPIRE

Soon – I believe very soon – a shadowy figure is going to come out of a great darkness to engage in the ultimate wickedness of all human history. I am not certain exactly what “very soon” means, but I am a healthy 78 years old, and I believe I have an opportunity to still be here when this shadowy figure makes his entrance onto the world stage.

There are some godly and sincere Bible teachers who believe the Church will be raptured before this shadowy figure comes on the scene. Their sincerity and good intentions notwithstanding, I believe they are wrong. And if these teachers are wrong, I am concerned their influence may unintentionally jeopardize the generation living when the events of the end of the age begin to unfold. I dislike being so direct, but the issue is too critical to remain unaddressed. It is not simply maudlin sentimentality when I say I love God’s sons and daughters too much to be silent.

When this shadowy figure of whom I speak arises, he won’t like you. He won’t like you even a little bit. As a matter of fact, he’ll hate you with an unholy hatred. In particular, he’ll hate you because you love the true and living God and Jesus, His only begotten Son.

THE SHADOWY FIGURE IS THE ANTICHRIST

The Antichrist is not a comic book personality, nor is he the lead character in a Hollywood science fiction film. He is as real as your next breath, and there is a good chance that when he arises, he may impact your life and those you love.

God’s Word tells us that, at present, the Antichrist is held “on a short leash.” That is, he is being restrained by something or someone. If such was not the case, evil and wickedness in the world would be dramatically worse than they now are. When the Antichrist is loosed, the Great Tribulation will begin. What is currently taking place in our world strongly suggests whatever – or whoever – is now restraining or hindering the Antichrist may unleash him shortly – in perhaps five, fifteen, or twenty-five years. Though I am not a date-setter, I don’t believe the “last days” are still fifty or one hundred years away.

For this reason, the quest to identify the final empire of the Antichrist to which I have given attention in the previous issue of *Zion’s*

Fire is of critical importance. If we are to be prepared for the vicious attack that is coming upon the earth, we must seek to understand the nature and character of the Antichrist and his beast empire.

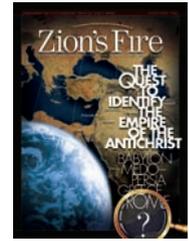
The Antichrist, like a deadly rattlesnake, is coiled up ready to attack billions of people, and there is no antidote for his bite. The evil and death he brings will be in the physical and spirit realms. Thankfully, there is a powerful preventative that can protect our eternal souls from his venom. The preventative is faith in the redemptive work of Christ. You are absolutely secure in Christ. In fact, there are no more secure human beings on earth than the loved ones of the Savior.

The Antichrist *will* impact us. Some of us may even become martyrs. However, there is one thing the Antichrist cannot do; that is, take away our eternal salvation.

I did not undertake writing this article to frighten anyone, but I do plan to inform everyone. Being informed is the first line of defense to live triumphantly for Christ during the shortened Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22). The Great Tribulation will begin at the mid-point of Daniel’s Seventieth Week (commonly known as the seven-year Tribulation period), which will be cut short (amputated) with the Lord’s coming in the clouds to rapture the true Church and commence His Day of the Lord wrath on unrepentant humanity.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST

It is the apostle John, and only the apostle John, who provides a direct reference to this agent of Satan. Four times he calls him, “Antichrist” (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7). Antichrist is not a name – it is a title. The name of God’s Son is “Jesus” – this is His name, His full name. “Christ” is not His last name. Christ is an office in the same way that president, king, and prime minister are offices. Technically, Jesus is *the* Christ. Saying Jesus is the Christ is to say that He is the Messiah, Anointed One, or Savior. The Antichrist will oppose the true Christ, but will do more than that; the “anti” in Antichrist means both “against” and “in place of.” The apostle John tells us the attacks of the Antichrist are against the humanity of Jesus (1 John 2:22) and the deity of Jesus (1 John 4:3 and 2 John 1:7).



Editor’s Note:
This article is Part 2 of the July-August, 2013, article, “The Quest to Identify the Empire of the Antichrist.”

The Antichrist will impact us.

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Written by
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The Antichrist

► **is the man of sin – 2 Thessalonians 2:3.** *He not only commits sins, he is the personification of sin.*

► **is the son of perdition – 2 Thessalonians 2:3.** *He is the son of hell.*

► **is empowered by Satan – 2 Thessalonians 2:9 and Revelation 13:4.** *The Antichrist will be specifically empowered by Satan for 3½ years – during the second half of Daniel's Seventieth Week.*

► **is the little horn – Daniel 7:8.** *The little horn is a reference to the Antichrist who will form a confederation of nations (most likely an Islamic caliphate) in his plan to rule the world.*

The first prophecy of the Bible says the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). Man by divine design was created to rule the earth under God. Because of man's sin, Satan usurped man's right to rule the earth and only a man could redeem man's lost inheritance.

In the Bible, the seed is always linked to the male. Only here in Genesis 3:15 is the Redeemer said to be "the seed of the woman." This prophecy reinforces the virgin birth of Christ. Jesus is perfect humanity and undiminished deity. As a result of the virgin birth, Jesus is one hundred percent man and one hundred percent God. Jesus is the God-Man, and it is this solid rock of truth that the Antichrist and his followers will vainly attempt to deny. In so doing, the Antichrist will tragically persuade billions to take his mark and in doing so pledge their loyalty to Satan.

TELL ME SOME MORE ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST

I noted above that only four times in the Bible is the term "antichrist" specifically referred to, and that only briefly. This, however, should not lead to the conclusion that God's Word does not have a great deal to say about the Antichrist. The reality is precisely the opposite. Here I make a brief reference to some of the things we know about "Satan's progeny."

- **The Antichrist is the man of sin – 2 Thessalonians 2:3.** He not only commits sins, he is the personification of sin.
- **The Antichrist is the son of perdition – 2 Thessalonians 2:3.** He is the son of hell.
- **The Antichrist is empowered by Satan – 2 Thessalonians 2:9 and Revelation 13:4.** The Antichrist will be specifically empowered by Satan for 3½ years – during the second half of Daniel's Seventieth Week.
- **The Antichrist is the little horn – Daniel 7:8.** The little horn is a reference to the Antichrist who will form a confederation of nations (most likely an Islamic caliphate) in his plan to rule the world. Animals with horns use them in battles for dominance, hence, the horn has become a symbol of power and then to speak of kings.

In Revelation 13:1-10, a beast will arise out

of the sea (probably a Gentile out of the Mediterranean Sea region). This beast will blaspheme God, make war against God's people, and rule over many nations.

In Revelation 13:11-18, a second beast (probably Jewish) will arise out of the land. This beast is a false prophet. He, in like manner as the first beast, will also be empowered by Satan. He will perform miracles to authenticate his counterfeit message with the purpose of directing people toward the Antichrist.

During His Olivet Discourse, when the Lord Jesus discusses His coming and the last days, He warns there will be false (pseudo) christs and false (pseudo) prophets. This is a perfect picture of what the two beasts of Revelation 13 depict.

ANTICHRIST AND THE SHORT LEASH

The apostle Paul wrote to the church of Thessalonica,

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work [that is, the spirit of the Antichrist was manifest in the apostle's own day]: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:7).

The expression in old English, "only he who now letteth will let," has also been appropriately translated "only he who now hindereth will continue to hinder."

The identity of the one who is hindering is an important piece of the prophetic puzzle. To understand why and when he ceases to hinder is extremely helpful in understanding what is happening at the end of the age. That which is presently being hindered is "the mystery of iniquity" (2 Thessalonians 2:7); the "spirit of antichrist" (1 John 4:3). If it were not so, things would be far worse in the world.

When the Antichrist sets up an image of himself in the Temple on Mount Moriah, at the mid-point of the Seventieth Week, and demands at first that Israel and then the world give him allegiance (Revelation 13), that which is presently hindering will be taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:7). That which is hindering will "cease" or "desist" from hindering, and the Antichrist will arise to power for 3½ years (Revelation 13:5).

The identification of that which is doing the hindering has been a subject of considerable

debate. The historical position of the Church for almost 2,000 years has been that divinely sanctioned “human government” or “law” is that which has been doing the hindering. With the emergence of the Antichrist, human government and law, according to this view, breaks down and consequently ceases to hinder. As a result, the Antichrist is then “unhindered” in his advance toward world domination.

Within the last 150 years, pretribulation rapturists have frequently identified the restrainer as the Holy Spirit. Such a view serves to complement their position. A number of major problems, however, exist for this view.

First, the restrainer (hinderer) is not identified anywhere in Scripture as the Holy Spirit, nor does the Holy Spirit have a direct, restraining-of-sin ministry, either in the Thessalonian context or anywhere else in the Bible. The Holy Spirit’s presence, once He has indwelt a believer, has a purifying influence in the world. That, however, is an indirect influence and its effectiveness depends upon the spirituality of the Church. However, the language of 2 Thessalonians 2:7 gives no hint whatever of restraint through *indirect agency*.

Second, the expression “until he be taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:7) can literally be translated “become out of the midst.” *Midst* more literally means “middle.” The restrainer stands “between” or “in the middle.” However, the restrainer will, at the appointed time, in the words of the great scholar, Lenski, “get out of the way.” In no sense does 2 Thessalonians 2:7 say the restrainer leaves the environment of earth and goes to Heaven, as normally taught by those who identify the Holy Spirit as the restrainer. He simply ceases in his restraining work. He gets out of the way.

Third, the usual pretribulation view is that when the Church is raptured, the Holy Spirit is also taken away since the Holy Spirit is indwelling the Church. However, as has already been noted, the text does not say the restrainer goes to Heaven. It simply states that he will “get out of the way.” The idea is he will “cease” or “desist” from restraining. The contention that the re-strainer “hitchhikes” on the removal of the Church – that when the Church is raptured, the restrainer is removed – is superimposed on the text. It places the restrainer’s cessation of restraining into the category of being a byproduct of the Church’s removal.

Fourth, if the Holy Spirit is the restrainer and He is removed pretribulationally from the earth’s scene to Heaven, how does one account for the Holy Spirit’s active and dynamic ministry during the Seventieth Week of Daniel? We are told the “gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world” (Matthew 24:14). The Church hasn’t been able to accomplish this feat in 2,000 years. Is a remnant of newly saved believers (as required if the Church has been raptured pretribulationally) going to be able to do in seven years what the Church could not achieve in 2,000 years – and do it while the Antichrist is physically present and without the Holy Spirit’s fullness of ministry?

Further, the Lord speaking within the context of the Seventieth Week said,

But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost (Mark 13:11).

And again, within a Seventieth Week context, the Lord taught,

But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you (Matthew 10:19-20).

This conspicuous ministry of the Holy Spirit cannot be diminished to the limitations of His work in the Old Testament as is sometimes claimed. There is not a verse of Scripture that so much as hints of a diminishing of the Spirit’s ministry during the Seventieth Week. Such arguments are made from silence.

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According to Acts 2:32-33, the present fullness of the Spirit’s ministry rests on the resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Christ. Since they are historical facts not subject to negation, they assure eternal abundance of the gift of the Spirit. His partial withdrawal is a regression to the “beggarly” (Galatians 4:9) elements and immature status of the Old

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Covenant, which would amount to an annulment of Christ’s exaltation.

The restrainer is neither the Holy Spirit nor human government. Evidence is non-existent to support either of these contentions. There is, however, substantial evidence to identify the restrainer. He who restrains until “he be taken out of the way” is the archangel Michael. The evidence is so strong – so overwhelming – I do not see how any Bible teacher can deny it. The following evidence will substantiate this fact.

① The archangel Michael has long been recognized by both Jewish and Christian scholars as having a special guardian relationship to Israel (Daniel 10:12-13). In Daniel 10:21, his direct relationship with Israel is clear when it says he is “Michael your prince,” and he “holdeth” (Hebrew, *Chazaq*, which according to *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* means “to bind” or “restrain”). Michael has a restraining (or hindering) ministry on behalf and for the protection of Israel.

② Revelation 12 describes a war that occurs in Heaven. The time for this conflict can be pinpointed at precisely the middle of the Seventieth Week of Daniel (Revelation 12:6, 13-14). It is described this way:

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and [the dragon] prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.... And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child (Revelation 12:7-8, 13).

The woman represents the nation of Israel – who gave Christ (the man child) to the world (Revelation 12:5) – who will be severely persecuted during the Great Tribulation (Revelation 12:13-17).

③ Speaking of this one who will hinder the Antichrist, Paul said, “only he who now letteth [hindereth] will let, until he be taken out of the way” (2 Thessalonians 2:7). The word “letteth” literally means “to hold back,” and the phrase “taken out of the way” means “to step aside [get out of the way].” Therefore, the one who has the job of hindering the Antichrist will step aside; that is, he will no longer be a restraint between the Antichrist and those the Antichrist is persecuting.

④ The Bible is explicit that the archangel Michael is the personage who will “step aside.” Daniel records that event this way:

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time (Daniel 12:1).

It is important to note when the restrainer will be taken out of the way. The preceding verse says, “And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain” (Daniel 11:45). This can only refer to the Antichrist, who will establish his headquarters between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea on the glorious holy mountain – Jerusalem. This occurs in the middle of the Seventieth Week in connection with his desecration of the Temple and erection of a statue (image) of himself.

Further, Daniel has already said Michael will stand up during “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time.” The unprecedented time of trouble can only refer to the Great Tribulation. Since Daniel is told this great trouble relates to his people – and his people are the Jews – this can only be “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7), which is a synonym for the Great Tribulation. It is at that time that the archangel Michael will stand up.

But what does the expression, “And at that time shall Michael stand up,” mean? Rashi, one of Israel’s greatest teachers, whose Hebrew scholarship is unquestioned, and one who had no concern regarding the issue of the timing of the Rapture, understood “stand up” (Hebrew, *amad*) to literally mean “stand still” in Daniel 12:1. Michael, the guardian of Israel, had earlier fought for her (Daniel 10:13, 21), but now he would “stand still or stand aside.” He would not help; he would not restrain; he would not hold down.

Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible says that *amad* means “To stand, stand still or fast.” And *Strong’s* concordance cites one of the root meanings of *amad* as “cease” and one of its definitions as “stand still.”

If a man is reclining or seated and is said to *amad*, he will stand “up.” If a man is standing and active and said to *amad*, he will stand

“still.” The archangel Michael, in context, was already said to be actively defending Israel. To *amad* means he would “stand still,” “desist,” or “cease” his defense on their behalf.

Some clear biblical instances of *amad*, meaning “to be still” or “desist,” are: “they... stood still [desisted], and answered no more” (Job 32:16); and again, “And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up” (Nehemiah 8:5). Commenting on this verse, Rashi indicates that the people kept quiet (stood still) while Ezra read the Torah.

Rashi wrote, concerning Daniel 12:1, “The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Michael, ‘You are silent? You do not defend my children.’” The archangel Michael who had specifically been involved with standing for Israel will, in the middle of the Seventieth Week, “stand still,” “desist,” “stand aside,” “cease” to stand for her.

The Word of God gives specific reason for the cessation of the restrainer’s work at precisely that point in time.

Since Israel rejected her true Christ and refused God’s truth, God will send on her strong delusion so that she will believe the lie and accept the Antichrist. Paul put it this way:

They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12).

The strong delusion comes from God. It is His purifying judgment on Israel. This is why Michael will no longer hinder or hold down the wicked one.

Leon Wood, in his book, *A Commentary on Daniel*, commenting on the expression, “the breaking up of the power of the holy people” (Daniel 12:7), wrote “The angel thus revealed the reason for God’s permitting the Antichrist to bring his persecution, namely, to break the power of the Jews. As parallel passages indicate, this power and resulting self-sufficiency [of the Jews] will need to be broken so that the Jews will be willing to accept Christ as their own rightful king.”

This observation provides perfect logic for the view that on this occasion and for this pur-

pose, Michael will stand still – he will abstain, he will not fight for Israel. When Michael ceases to defend Israel, the time of Jacob’s troubles will begin (Jeremiah 30:7).

The clear and compelling parallel between the action of Michael in the Old Testament – “And at that time shall Michael stand up [literally, stand still or desist from helping Israel], the great prince which standeth [whose normal and continual ministry had been to help Israel]” (Daniel 12:1) – with the Pauline statement concerning the restrainer in the New Testament – “He who now hindereth [restrains] will continue to hinder [restrain], until he be taken out of the way [ceases his normal and continual ministry of restraining]” (2 Thessalonians 2:7) – is unmistakable. Paul unquestionably had Daniel 12:1 in mind when he wrote 2 Thessalonians 2:7 and, therefore, had no need to specifically name the restrainer. The clear and compelling allusion to Daniel 12 would indicate the restrainer is the archangel Michael.

Given the present, feverish activity on the part of “many” (Daniel 9:27) within Israel to enter into some kind of covenantal relationship with a power base of foreign nations for protection, rather than to trust in her own God, it is reasonable to assume that her great apostasy and the consequent manifestation of the man of sin cannot be far off. These events

Given the present, feverish activity on the part of “many” (Daniel 9:27) within Israel to enter into some kind of covenantal relationship with a power base of foreign nations for protection, rather than to trust in her own God, it is reasonable to assume that her great apostasy and the consequent manifestation of the man of sin cannot be far off.

will dramatically impact the entire world. They will clearly signal the soon coming of the King of kings. At His coming, He will resurrect the dead in Christ and rapture the living. Only then will He commence the judgment of the wicked during the Day of the Lord and be vindicated against all evil.

The strong delusion comes from God. It is His purifying judgment on Israel.

► *This is why Michael will no longer hinder or hold down the wicked one.*



The Book of Revelation details the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ, the events associated with His coming, and the final battle of history.

► *My quest to more fully understand the role of the Antichrist, the nations involved in his brief kingdom, and his ultimate defeat requires that some insight into the Book of Revelation is essential.*

THE ANTICHRIST WAS, IS NOT, AND WILL BE

In recent years, the Book of Revelation has become my favorite book of the Bible. The reason is not because it gives me a feeling of warmth and good will. Obviously, this is not the case. The reason is more pragmatic than that.

The Book of Revelation details the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ, the events associated with His coming, and the final battle of history. My quest to more fully understand the role of the Antichrist, the nations involved in his brief kingdom, and his ultimate defeat requires that some insight into the Book of Revelation is essential.

In the seventeenth chapter of Revelation, John introduces us to a harlot. He describes her this way: “. . . Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth” (Revelation 17:5). This is not a gracious way to introduce a lady. But this harlot is not a lady. She is the mother of all false religion no matter by what name it is called or in which country it is located. Her harlotry began at the tower of Babel (Mystery Babylon) and she continues her activity to the present hour. She is said to dress like a prostitute.

And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication (Revelation 17:4).

She will do whatever it takes to seduce men and women away from the true and living God to embrace Satan and his kingdom. She is said to become intoxicated with the martyred blood of those who are faithful to Christ (Revelation 17:6).

As John beholds the scene of the harlot, he is bewildered at her success. *How, he wonders, can she draw so many away from the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world, to embrace an evil and wicked imposter (Revelation 17:6)?* The answer is quickly revealed to John by an angel. The harlot is carried throughout history on the back of a beast that has seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 17:7). In other words, false religions were aided by governments throughout the ages. This is the explanation for the harlot's impressive success.

The angel then gives John further clarification, “And here is the mind which hath

wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth” (Revelation 17:9). The seven heads are said to be seven mountains, and mountains are a reference to kingdoms (see Daniel 2:35, 44). Associated with these seven kingdoms are seven kings. Doubtless there were far more than seven kings, but the seven kings and kingdoms referred to have special significance. John is told that “. . . five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space” (Revelation 17:10). These kingdoms and kings had one feature in common. They were all enemies of Israel. They were all enemies of Israel because they were enemies of God and His Son who is the rightful heir to the Davidic throne of Israel.

The first kingdom is Egypt, and the king who is fallen is the Pharaoh who ordered that all Jewish male children be murdered by the midwives at birth (Exodus 1:8-19).

The second kingdom is Assyria, and the king who is fallen is the king, Shalmaneser, who took the ten northern tribes of Israel into captivity and treated them brutally (2 Kings 17-18).

The third kingdom is Babylon, and the king who is fallen is Nebuchadnezzar who attacked Jerusalem three times (2 Kings 24), destroyed the temple on Mount Moriah (2 Kings 25:8-10), and plucked out the eyes of Israel's last ruling Davidic king, Zedekiah (and this after he was forced to watch the murder of his sons) (2 Kings 25:1-7).

The fourth kingdom is Medo-Persia, and the king (prime minister) who is fallen is Haman who hated the Jew Mordecai and had a decree passed to execute all the Jews in the kingdom (Esther 3:6-13). Only the intervention of Queen Esther prevented it from occurring.

The fifth kingdom is Greece, and the fifth king who is fallen is not Alexander the Great who treated the Jews with kindness. After Alexander's death, the Grecian Empire was divided up by four of his generals. Of the four, the one who wanted to stamp out Judaism and the Mosaic Law and replace it with the worship of Jupiter is Antiochus Epiphanes (Daniel 11:29-34).

The sixth kingdom was still existing when John wrote the Book of Revelation in about A.D. 90 and is described as the one that “is” (Revelation 17:10). The sixth empire was Rome, and the Caesar or ruler was still alive.

The Caesar at that time was Domitian.

The seventh kingdom yet to persecute the Jewish people was described this way: "...and the other is not yet come ..." Then we are told of this seventh kingdom, "... and when he cometh, he must continue a short space" (Revelation 17:10). The identification of this seventh kingdom and king can only be left to conjecture.

This brings us back to the Antichrist toward which all of this discussion is tending. "And the beast [the Antichrist] that was, and is not, even he is the eighth" (Revelation 17:11).

- The first kingdom was Egypt – it persecuted Israel.
- The second kingdom was Assyria, part of modern-day Iraq, Iran, Syria – it persecuted Israel.
- The third kingdom was Babylon, modern-day Iraq – it persecuted Israel.
- The fourth kingdom was Persia, modern-day Iran – it persecuted Israel.
- The fifth kingdom was Greece, modern-day Syria – it persecuted Israel.
- The sixth kingdom was Rome, modern-day Italy, North Africa, much of the Middle East, and especially Turkey – it persecuted Israel.
- The seventh kingdom is unknown. It would have persecuted Israel and have been a kingdom for a little while. Speculation points to the Ottoman Turks or possibly to the Third Reich of Hitler.
- The eighth kingdom will be the beast – Antichrist – and he will be the ultimate persecutor of Israel (Revelation 17:11).

Two things of great importance are said of the Antichrist. First, he "...is of the seven." I understand this to mean that *he comes out of the seven* and was the force behind them throughout all of history as Satan's progeny. This strongly suggests the Antichrist and his kingdom should not be looked for in Rome or Europe. The place to look will probably be in the region north of Israel including Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and the area between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea and just north of the Caucasus Mountains. These regions are overwhelmingly Muslim.

Secondly, it is clearly stated that the Antichrist and those kings that follow him will be destroyed. The source of their destruction is the

Lamb of God who is the "Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14).

Narrowing down the search any further than the Word of God allows has done nothing but baffle mankind for two millennia. Clearly, however, one need not focus on any other part of the world to find the place from which the Antichrist will come.

Keep one eye on the personalities emerging from the region of the former empires that persecuted Israel. In particular, don't focus on the major personalities in the news, but look to the lesser characters on the stage of Middle Eastern politics, perhaps someone who appears to be a moderate, a negotiator. It will be, after all, a little horn who will become great (Daniel 7:8; 8:9).

Keep your other eye focused on Israel and what is occurring there to better ascertain how close we are to seeing this man of perdition step onto the stage from behind the curtain.

Ultimately, keep your heart turned toward our God and His Son, for "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). If you have done so, your salvation is assured.

Stand strong as we move forward toward these prophecies possibly becoming a reality in our lifetime. Remember, and prepare, because "...ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

And should you have the privilege of still being here, of enduring to the end just before the rapture, when the world is seemingly spinning completely out of control, be comforted by these words:

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:25-28).



Keep one eye on the personalities emerging from the region of the former empires that persecuted Israel. In particular, don't focus on the major personalities in the news, but look to the lesser characters on the stage of Middle Eastern politics, perhaps someone who appears to be a moderate, a negotiator. It will be, after all, a little horn who will become great (Daniel 7:8; 8:9).

Matthew 10:22: In context, this verse is speaking of physical salvation by rapture. The believer's eternal salvation is already assured.