

1. **Introduction:** The word “antichrist” appears in the Bible only in John’s letters. The letters have only a hint about his role in God’s judgment in end times. Does the “antichrist concept” appear other places in the Bible?
 - For example, do the “beast of Revelation” and Paul’s “man of lawlessness” point to the antichrist, the ultimate opponent of God? First, consider Paul in 2 Thessalonians.
2. **2 Thessalonians 2:1-4:** *Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³ Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.*
 - Paul warns believers to not be tricked into thinking that Christ’s return and the Day of the Lord have already arrived (or even that a specific date of return is known, Jesus says no one can know). He explains that there are two specific warning signs that must happen first. (1.) A major spiritual rebellion (or falling away). (2.) the public exposure of an evil figure known as the "man of lawlessness" or "son of destruction."
 - Paul tells believers not to listen to false rumors, fake letters, or wrong teachings that claim the final day of judgment has or is already happening. We are to use good judgment and caution in accepting teachings.
3. **2 Thessalonians 2:3-4:** *Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.*
 - Paul’s point is the “*apostasia*” will come before the man of lawlessness. *Apostasia* means a falling away, defection, or massive rebellion against God. Many scholars view this as a widespread abandonment of Christian truth before the final day, a moral and religious rebellion. It appears to be a rebellion within the church.
 - At the time 2 Thessalonians was written (50-52 AD) the second Temple still stood in Jerusalem. It is possible Paul speaks of the Man of Lawlessness sitting in the Second Temple.
 - But it seems more likely that “in the Temple” is a metaphorical expression. Metaphorically, “sitting inside God’s Temple,” (consistent with NT use), means to operate inside the community of believers (the Church).
4. **Antichrist Spirit:** **Denies the Trinity and each Person in it. Denys that Jesus is the God-Man. The antichrist spirit thrives by deception, using lies and misunderstandings to its advantage**
5. **Antichrist:** **By deception, the Antichrist person pretends to be like Christ but fiercely fights Christ’s truth and the church.**
 - Antichrist is a person (or persons) who combats Christianity by substituting self for Christ but secretly opposes God. The aim of Antichrist is to take the place of Christ as King of everything. Six names in the Bible are commonly associated with the Antichrist:
 - (1.) Antichrist (1 Jn 2:22): Counterfeits Christ and opposes Him, strives to replace Him. (2.) The Man of Sin (2 Thess 2:3), is full of sin and promotes sin in others. (3.) The Son of Perdition or destruction. (2 Thess 2:3), who is a destroyer by nature. (4.) The Lawless One (2 Thess 2:8), who is against God’s law and will. (5.) The beast from the sea (Rev 13:1) whose name signifies a wild or venomous “beast” who exhibits political power. (6.) The “little horn” (Dan 7:8), whose name signifies increasing political power.

- All the names associated with Antichrist highlight satanic characteristics: Antichrist is full of sin, opposed to God, a destroyer, a wild beast, a deceiver, seeker of political power, etc. Antichrist counterfeits and opposes Christ, seeking to replace Him in all things., behaving like his master - Satan.
 - Satan is the great Deceiver. The final Antichrist will certainly be a great deceiver who will deny Jesus as King, Savior. and Lord, but still acknowledge Jesus as a great teacher, perhaps even saying Jesus is the (or a) Son of God. A Jehovah's' Witness would say Jesus is a Son of God but will not mean the Jesus of the Holy Trinity.
 - Using words to deceive has been common practice since the deception in the Garden of Eden. Listen again to 1 John 2:1-3. Its message is vital.
6. **1 John 4:1-3:** *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.*
- “Testing the spirits” means to critically examine teachings, prophets, and spiritual claims to see whether they originate from God or from a source of deception, i.e., practice spiritual discernment. Look around our nation today. Do you think the spirit of antichrist is active?
 - OT Babylon is a “type” of the antichristian kingdom Satan seeks. Satan believes he can be like God. and has been tremendously successful in using that deception, as he attempts to manage world events, rule God’s earth, and control people’s self-expression. Satan clearly believe he can succeed.
7. **Satan’s Involvement with People:** Satan continuously works in various ways to subvert God’s plan. Satan’s successful attacks on humans began in the Garden of Eden when he persuaded Adam and Eve to disobey God. Adam and Eve acquired a sin nature. All their offspring to this day have inherited their sin nature.
- The power of the sin nature can only be constrained by God. Unconstrained, a person’s sin nature will achieve total control. After several generations, the majority of Adam and Eve’s descendants were evil.
 - By the time of Noah (roughly 1656 years according to traditional calculations from genealogies), the people of the earth had become so evil that God decided to eliminate all but Noah’s family (Noah, his wife, 3 sons and their wives). God caused a great flood.
 - After being warned of the flood to come, Noah lived 120 years before it began to rain. During the 120 years, Noah preached righteousness but to no avail. Following God’s instruction, he built a massive wooden ark.
 - Then, the great flood destroyed all people except the 8 members of Noah’s family. Did that judgment on sin eliminate evil? No! Noah’s flood did not end the sin problem. Noah’s family members each had a sin nature.
 - After the flood, the earth’s population began to build once again, this time entirely from Noah’s family. Those born after the flood inherited a sin nature. Within about 300 years (maybe less), the Genesis record shows that cities and kingdoms had been and were being established. It was not long before a revolt against God occurred.
8. **Genesis 10:8-12:** *Cush fathered Nimrod; he was the first on earth to be a mighty man. ⁹ He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Therefore, it is said, “Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord.” ¹⁰ The beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. ¹¹ From that land*

he went into Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir, Calah, and ¹² Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.

9. **Cush (great grandson of Noah), the father of Nimrod:** Cush was recognized as a mighty hunter before the LORD for his success in hunting. Apparently, Nimrod's hunting mastery was in killing men in defiance of God. Nimrod's kingdom began with Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, all in the land of Shinar.
- Genesis 10 reveals how families spread after the flood judgment and serves as a Table of Nations. Data from archaeology confirm southern Mesopotamia, the land between the rivers (Shinar) as the cradle of early post-flood civilization. The Sumerian King List describes early monarchs who "ruled in Shinar."
 - Though, Nimrod's appearance in the Biblical record is brief, he was a very significant person in the revolt against God after the flood. Nimrod's name is said to be derived from a Hebrew word that means "let us revolt." Nimrod was a tyrant. He began a rebellion against God.
 - He established the first empire in Mesopotamia, conquering the city-states of Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh in Shinar. Then he built other city-states (7 total) including Nineveh and dominated a huge area.
 - After the flood, all future humanity was derived from Noah's family. All spoke the same language. Nimrod decided to build a great tower that would allow him to ascend unto God. The tower was called "Babel" which meant "gate of God." The tower was an affront to God. Later "Babel" came to mean confusion.
10. **Kingdoms and Empires:** After the flood, people eventually began to fulfill their evil nature by establishing control over their fellow men through tyrannical government, establishing false religions, refusing to recognize God's sovereignty.
- The tower of babel construction project satisfied both impulses. The situation was so serious that God personally intervened to put a stop to the project by confusion of tongues so that it became impossible for workers to understand one another.
 - The long-term result was that people who could understand one another's speech formed groups and dispersed to form their own civilizations. They formed nations and some built nations into empires.
 - Harmonizing disparate nations into an empire is not easy. Only Rome seems to have succeeded for any length of time perhaps through their flair for simple administration coupled with brutal military efficiency.
 - The characteristics of Nimrod's kingdom and his rule set a precedent and pattern for all antichristian activity in history. It remains the model for the final expression of Antichrist.
 - The point is that ever since Adam and Eve sinned, mankind has been intrinsically sinful, each person having a sin nature. The steady flow of sinful actions lead to continual judgments from God.
 - Only the salvation provided by Jesus Christ can change that situation. If there are "unsaved people" in the world, there will be attempts to preempt God and rule in His stead. That is the spirit of Antichrist in action.
 - When sin becomes overly blatant or aggressive, God sends judgment. Because the occurrence of excessive sin is constant, God's preliminary judgments against sin are also constant.
 - The spirit of antichrist (opposition to God) has been active in the world since Adam and Eve's sin. After that initial sin, we next see the spirit of antichrist active in their son Cain who killed his brother Abel. The spirit of antichrist has remained active in humans all through the ages and is certainly active today.
 - As we have seen, Scripture indicates there will be a person in "end times" so filled with the spirit of antichrist that he will cause severe disruption of devotion and worship to God. On the "Last Day," Jesus will come again and act in final judgment against all evil. There will be "no sin" in the New Jerusalem.

11. **Revelation 14:1-5:** *Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ² And I heard a voice from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder. The voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, ³ and they were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb, ⁵ and in their mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless.*
- Revelation 14:1-20 is the last part of the extended interlude between judgements (interlude 12:1-14:20).
 - Recall that chapter 13 opened with the dragon standing on the seashore gathering his minions. In contrast chapter 14 begins with the Lamb standing victoriously on Mount Zion among His faithful followers.
 - The battle of chapter 13 becomes victory in the 3 sections of chapter 14. Each new section begins with a reference to some form of John “seeing” the vision, followed by his “hearing” that explains the vision.
 - What John sees and hears is the glorious outcome as God wins the battle between Him and the evil of Satan.
 - It is a comforting contrast to the terror of the reign of the Beast and an outcome that should provide every believer with bountiful encouragement to persevere to the end.
 - In complete contrast to the earthly tyranny of the Beast, chapter 14 begins with a comforting vision of the victorious Jesus (the Lamb) standing on Mount Zion with 144,000 sealed believers who bear the Father’s name on their forehead signifying divine ownership and protection.
12. **Next:** Continue Revelation 14:1-5.