

THE RISE OF THE
ANTICHRIST

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“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has, even to subject all things to Himself.”

“... so stand firm in the Lord.”

“Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men.”

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

*“Finally brethren,
 whatever is true,
 whatever is honorable,
whatever is right,
 whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely,
 whatever is of good repute,
if there is any excellence
 and if anything worthy of praise,
let your mind dwell on these things.”*

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PREFACE

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While this section is important, it can wait.
It is absolutely ok to jump forward and return here later.

How Does the Author Feel about Biblical Prophecy?

When I was younger, I found every aspect of Biblical prophecy absolutely thrilling. As I would read and study these events I sensed a palpable nearness to God. There was an indescribable immediacy to His kingdom. Those feelings still persist but now they are tempered by a growing realization of the sheer scale of destruction and unprecedented sorrow these future events will generate for those called upon to endure them. Being both drawn toward Biblical prophecy and yet horrified by many of the events it describes, I now approach the serious topic of the Antichrist without the enthusiastic delight a younger me would have expected.

Through the years I have also grown more skeptical. Sadly, when it comes to Biblical prophecy, it is now my 'default' position. When the claims of more than a few popular titles in the prophecy aisle sound eerily like the brazen cries of carnival barkers hawking tickets to a side-show, it seems reckless not to be skeptical.

No doubt, in time, the pendulum, will again come to swing more freely in the opposite direction. But even then, not everything will be as it was. At least, not for me. A decade of concentrated thought, of intently staring at the Antichrist, has sobered me, bruising my body, even denting my spirit somehow.

So, if studying the Bible's explanation of the future makes God's kingdom feel that much closer, I completely understand and

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am truly glad. But, if part of you would really rather think about anything else, I am right there with you too.

Yet, with knowledge comes responsibility. Suppose it came to our attention that a near-by foot bridge spanning a high yawning chasm had dangerous unseen gaps in the walkway? What would we do? Since our knowledge of the bridge's true condition could potentially spare others, wouldn't we feel a deep obligation to act? In a similar way, knowledge of this future terrible time obligates us also, despite how this knowledge may make us feel.

Why Choose This Title and Topic?

In the spring and early summer of 2004, I became increasingly intrigued by the seemingly self-contained enigma of Revelation 17:7-11.

And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I shall tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. The beast that you saw was and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to go into destruction. And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. And the beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction.

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I worked with these five verses over the next nine years. In the book that follows, you will find not only a new interpretation of these verses but also its implication for other biblical prophetic texts. These Biblical passages, when considered in their context, identify the Antichrist from his earliest deeds, his place in the changing structure of the world's future governing authority, and his final rise to complete religious and ruling power on earth.

Why Are We Told About the Future?

The Bible's prophecies consistently reinforce God's sovereignty. When history unfolds just as these prophecies predicted, we are reminded that history has an Author and Director. Fulfilled prophecy also demonstrates the reliability of the Bible. As future events come to pass just as the biblical record prophesied, the Scriptures are shown to be reliable and accurate. Biblical prophecy also plays an especially important role during the time of its fulfillment. Prophesied events are many times fulfilled during turbulent chaotic periods of history. When stability seems uncertain or lost, these prophecies remind us that God is in control.

Prophecies about important events are not usually delivered once. These significant future events are revealed by different biblical authors over time. What may have been only hinted at in a previous prophecy is often revealed with more specific information later, building anticipation in readers throughout history. The progressive nature of prophetic revelation also permits the reader to observe the same future event from the different perspectives of the human authors, giving a more complete picture.

How Are Biblical Prophecies to Be Understood?

When we are attempting to understand any biblical statement, whether prophetic or otherwise, our goal is to determine the author's intended meaning in that passage. Scripture will not have a meaning that is different from what its authors were intending to

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say. Both the Divine and human authors communicated through the medium of language, which touches both the literary context of the passage and the historical context in which the message was created. Since every language is an integral component of the culture in which it is used, the historical context of the human author must be considered. This includes important cultural and societal factors that influenced the way the author saw himself, his world and his place in that world. To the degree we are able to enter into the cultural and social setting of the author, the better we will see how that author saw the meaning of his own words and the message they are meant to convey. This process rarely happens easily and never perfectly, but it is an essential part in understanding the author's intended meaning.

When we are considering the literary context, careful attention must be given to the specific words that comprise the message. The words must be understood in the normal way that the language worked. The words, clauses, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and sections all influence the meaning of each other. The type of literature must be considered. Also, prophetic messages need to be considered in light of other such prophecies.

The correct understanding of prophetic messages *does not depend upon an individual's personal interpretation*. If an understanding of a particular prophetic message is confirmed by others, then it is more likely to stand the tests of time. Those committed to the authoritative nature of Scripture comprise the community best able to confirm the understanding of a particular biblical message. So while an understanding of a prophetic statement may initially arise from the study of one individual, the new understanding must eventually receive the considered judgment of this larger community before it should be accepted as approaching the biblical authors' intended meaning.

This process may take considerable time. New or novel interpretations must not be received by the community of believers without strict review and careful consideration. They must not surrender too quickly what they received from

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preceding generations and faithfully guarded. Even still, we must recognize that our understanding of the Scriptures is not static. There is a dynamic quality to our understanding of God's Word, that is the result of intense interaction and growing intimacy with the sacred writings.

We need to remember that the Scriptures themselves do not err, but our understanding of them often can. Revising our collective understanding is not a rejection of the Scriptures themselves. The process of refinement proceeds from the recognition that we are all finite and fallible.

It is our profound responsibility to always try to discover the biblical author's intended message. While this may often leave us with more questions than answers, we cannot presume to restrict the author's message to a more manageable dynamic that seems to fit our assumptions at the moment. If all we can pass along to succeeding generations are more precisely defined *unanswered* questions, then we must be content to have filled that role. It may not be our generation's task to answer those questions. The frustration this tends to generate must not be permitted to re-frame the author's intended message into something we believe we can answer now. [¹]

At the same time, we must not shy away from trying to discover that message, even if it means crossing over a boundary possibly erected upon mistaken, misguided or incomplete past attempts at successful interpretation. [²] These boundaries are not the author's message, but past attempts to understand his intentions. Therefore, arriving at the intended message may involve crossing the boundaries of past incomplete attempts and laying down new interim boundaries that are considered more in tune with the message of the author. These new interim boundaries may be redrawn later as following generations more precisely acquire the author's intention.

The boundaries move because our knowledge is not perfect. Yet, possessing incomplete knowledge does not mean we know nothing for certain. Our imperfect knowledge about the author's

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intended message is valuable, extremely so. As our understanding of the biblical message expands the boundaries between the known and unknown move.

What Issues Were Considered When Constructing This Book?

After examining a particular prophetic statement in light of its immediate context, related prophetic statements, and the larger issues that the Scriptures communicate, how does the individual place his results before the community of believers for their evaluation? Should he present his interpretation in part or in the whole? Should he provide a comprehensive examination of the particular prophetic statement, including his conclusions as to its effects on other aspects of the greater prophetic message? Or should he provide a series of more narrowly focused presentations?

The individual must also grapple with the issue of who among the community should be targeted to hear his conclusions. Those members of the community who have training and expertise in serious biblical studies should obviously be among those targeted. Yet those committed to biblical authority are not restricted to the expertly trained. Does the individual have an obligation to the community as a whole if he seriously believes his study of a prophetic statement may contribute to their appreciation of the biblical message? The individual may be aware that profitable study by biblical scholars is not always driven by their own curiosity, but may be brought for eventual evaluation from outside their immediate interests.

In addition to considering the scope of his presentation and his target audience, the individual must consider the ramifications of the prophetic statement, as he understands it. Is there an urgent nature to the prophetic message? Are there potential negative results that might arise from a delay in making his presentation to the committed community? If so, what means are available to the individual to stimulate the community's interest, thereby initiating its collective review? These issues were all weighed against each

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other when the scope, audience, and nature of this presentation were decided.

There seemed to be a need to weave a more comprehensive scenario out of the threads that developed from a new understanding of Rev 17:8-11. There are multiple implications arising from this new understanding of the prophecy. Presenting these implications seemed just as important as relating the new understanding itself. Certainly, this is not without risk. If an aspect of the newer understanding is found to be inaccurate, then the supposed implications are likely to also be inaccurate. Having placed a scenario of events before the reader based upon the direct and implied results of the newer understanding of the prophecy, the discovery of a flawed aspect would damage not only that part of the newer understanding, but invalidate swaths of the proposed scenario, leaving its value to the community greatly diminished if not entirely eroded.

Every non-fiction author assumes he has something worth reading. Among his readers, he hopes many will be curious enough to persevere to the end of the book. However, curious readers do not all expect the same things. Most readers are interested in *what* and *when*. While others are also interested in the *why* and *how*. *What* and *when* are usually the end product. They are the results of his investigations. If the writer is to be successful in changing minds, he must also demonstrate *why* his *when* and *what* are valid, which means he must demonstrate *how* he arrived at them. But not all readers care about the process or proof of validity. Explaining the *why* and *how* would leave some readers over-burdened. While including only the *when* and *what* would leave others feeling empty. What to do? Some readers are likely to be disappointed no matter what the author includes. If he can't avoid disappointing some, who should the writer disappoint least?

Given the nature of the proposed scenario, this book leans toward providing more explanation. Since there may be elements of the proposed scenario that some might find extraordinary, erring

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on the side of too much explanation seemed more forgivable than erring with too little.

The heart of the proposed scenario has been distilled into 7 key paragraphs. They contain the basic implications arising from a new understanding of Revelation 17:8-11. Each key paragraph is followed by at least one chapter devoted to its underlying supporting arguments. Some paragraphs are examined in two chapters. The discussion continues in the endnotes where important aspects of the scenario are compared with positions held by others. There are two appendices. These contain even further discussions of material presented in some chapters.

What Is Not in this Book?

While we are curious to know when these momentous prophetic events are to begin, the Scriptures seem to ignore our curiosity. Instead, the Bible consistently focuses on *what*. Of the two, *when* and *what*, the most important, of course, is *what*. If we know *what* will happen in the future *when* becomes unnecessary. If the prophesied events have not happened, the Scriptures' answer to the question of *when* seems to be 'not yet.' If these events are already happening, the answer is 'now.' This seems to be as far as the Scriptures are willing to satisfy our desire to know *when*.

Yet many have attempted to identify specific dates when prophetic events are to occur. Some have relied upon supposed 'codes' found among the letters that make up the biblical message. Others have tried to tie the unfolding of future prophecies to key dates or events in recent history. Still others, have predicted the start of the prophetic end by calculations of 'significant' numbers. Among the many flaws in these methods is a lack of reliance upon the biblical authors' intended message.

The Scriptures are a precious treasure preserved for us by God through real persecution and suffering. They were never intended to be a database of letters that could be sifted and repeatedly aligned until something of assumed coherence 'pops up.' Such

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'findings' could also be achieved by sifting and aligning the works of Shakespeare or any other large grouping of words.

The method used when handling the Bible must be based upon what the authors thought they were saying. While the Divine author of Scripture may have intended some words to bear more meaning than the human authors were aware, this Divinely intended message is found to be complementary, not contrary, to the intent of the human hand that wrote it. Some may disagree with what I believe the authors of Scripture were intending to say, but I trust we can agree that the principle of authorial intent is the necessary foundation for biblical interpretation.

Since the authors of Scripture did not indicate at what date these future events would begin, we sacrifice credibility by going past such omissions to create 'start times' of our own. The prophetic authors did specify that certain events would occur with or near other future key events. But no specific date is given for any of them. Every reader must be content to understand the prophecy as accurately as possible while waiting for these key events to occur in the course of history. Readers looking for dates in history when these prophetic events will occur will be disappointed. There are no specific dates or 'Bible codes' in this book.

Who Helped Make this Book Possible?

I am greatly indebted to Fred Plastow. His passion, insatiable curiosity and keen intellect were all brought to bear when he graciously agreed to review a rather impenetrable very rough early draft. His 20 pages of observations and suggestions helped lay the groundwork for this book's current format. His contribution was crucial to this project moving forward.

I am also very thankful for David Hudson's thorough review and many suggestions. Being a gifted writer, David patiently tried to show me how to say things simply (often in vain, I'm afraid). I truly wish I could better emulate my son's clear effortless style.

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The book's cover was designed by my brother, Lane Hudson. It is now much more visually appealing and easier to read. He also made very helpful suggestions concerning the format of the book's interior layout.

The greatest contribution came from my wife, Bev, who helped in many ways large and small. With surprising enthusiasm, she took up the thankless and painstaking task of proofreading the final draft, usually after having spent many long stressful hours at work. Without her help and encouragement, this book would not exist.

INTRODUCTION

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The Bible is clear. Life on earth will be better than we can possibly hope or imagine, but not before it gets far worse than ever before. Nearly every living thing on earth will die. People, plants, and animals will die in unimaginable numbers. Blow after blow will rain down on the planet killing almost everything. Then, just as it teeters on the edge of complete lifelessness, the earth will be reborn. Wastelands and deserts will thrive, the ruined places will be rebuilt and earth will know its golden age.

But why will things become so horrible? What will make God so angry that he destroys almost all life? The rapid near extinction will be God's judgment on a world at war with him and his followers. It is his response to those who will be rejecting him, worshiping another, and killing his own. The world will be worshiping a man who believes he is god. While he has many names in the Bible, we will call him the Antichrist. [3]

Although initially blocked by those already holding power, the Antichrist's incredible display of supernatural ability will dissolve their opposition allowing him to eventually become the most powerful ruler on earth. He will be heralded as the long awaited savior, come to usher in a new era of self-discovery, enlightenment and peace.

The changes he brings, however, must be accepted by everyone. Those who reject his message will be regarded as the 'unbelievers.' Their continued resistance will be a barrier to the fulfillment he promises. The Antichrist will institute specific measures on a global scale to identify, marginalize and eliminate this group.

INTRODUCTION

The Antichrist and his followers will wipe out nearly everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ. However, God will ultimately demonstrate the absurdity of the Antichrist's divine claims as he brings crushing devastation that this false god will be powerless to prevent. The anticipation and hopes of God's followers will then be realized. The long promised age of harmony, peace and righteousness will truly begin when Jesus Christ finally begins his reign on the earth.

Our goal in this book is to expose the Antichrist and our strategy has two parts. First, we will look at the specific actions and events he will fulfill as found in the Bible's prophecies. Second, we seek to begin a discussion among those committed to the authority of the Bible about our interpretation of these prophetic texts. To do this we will spend some time examining the method used to find such specific future events in the prophecies of these times. If successful, this discussion will add these findings to the collection of biblical teaching that our generation will seek to pass along to others.

By doing this we hope to both warn and encourage humanity during the future reign of terror. Those who may be tempted to avoid the terrible cost of remaining faithful to Jesus need to consider that the Bible promises an even worse fate for those who pledge themselves to obey and worship the Antichrist. In the time of the Antichrist, truth will be unwelcome and punished. Deception, false signs, and wonders will accompany the lies of the Antichrist. Prophecies about these times will warn those tempted to take part in that deceit and encourage those who have determined to worship none other than the true God. Those who remain faithful to Jesus the Messiah will be called upon to demonstrate that commitment under severe trials. Those committed to Jesus during the worst time the world will ever know, have a bright and wonderful future that cannot be taken from them, if they remain faithful to the end.

The prophecies about this future time are remarkably specific and startling. God gives detailed prophecies about the future to demonstrate his absolute control over the course and destiny of

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