

CLUES TO THE IDENTITY OF ANTICHRIST



1 JOHN 2 :18

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

THE ORIGIN OF ANTICHRIST

Look up the word 'antichrist' in Strong's concordance. Record what it means, and then write a description in your own words. This description will be your first clue to the identity of Antichrist.

"Anti" Meaning: _____

"Christ" Meaning: _____

CLUE #1 - Write a description of Antichrist from the meaning of the Greek words:

CLUE #2: Write out some of the words Jesus used to describe the 'antichrist' system. Highlight the phrases that give clues to what "antichrist" is: _____

CLUE #3: 'even now' - What does this phrase tell you about "antichrist" and why is this significant?

CLUE #4: 'there are many antichrists' – What does this phrase tell you about "antichrist" and why is this significant?

1 JOHN 2 :19

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

1. a) Who are the "they" of verse 19 above? _____

b) Who are the "us" of verse 19 above? _____

2. Comment on how Acts 20:20-30 is significant in this context.

CLUE #5: Membership of the Antichrist System. From whom or what did this 'antichrist' system originate?

1 JOHN 2 :21 - 22

I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.

CLUE #6 - Based on these verses, with what is "antichrist" associated?

CLUE #7 - What teaching does "antichrist" deny?

1 JOHN 4 :1

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1. 'try' - Greek# _____ Meaning: _____

(Notice that in 1 John 4:1 – ‘the spirits’ that are to be tested are linked to the ‘false prophets’)

CLUE #8: Would the work of the false prophets concern a few people or many? (Use 1 John 4:1 and Matthew 24:11 in your answer) Why is this significant?

1 JOHN 4 :2 - 3

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

Note: This is one of the most important verses to understand. It gives the test case for Antichrist’s teaching.

1. 'confesseth' – Greek # _____ Meaning: _____

How strong a word is this? Is it talking about a firm belief, or just a casual understanding?

2. 'flesh' - Greek# _____ Meaning: _____

Note how this word is used in relation to Jesus in the following passages:

Romans 7:5, 18 _____

Romans 8:3, 5, 6 _____

Hebrews 2:14-18 _____

Hebrews 4:14-16 _____

CLUE #9: What teaching about Christ’s nature distinguishes between true teachers and those of Antichrist?

CLUE #10: Again, is the Antichrist system something only to exist in the future, or was it already in existence before the New Testament was completed? Why is this significant?

Clues to identifying Antichrist



1 John 2 – The Origin

The word “Antichrist” conjures up many thoughts and images in one’s mind today, mostly involving a super-natural fiend, a diabolical creature and the archenemy of God. Many people would speak of Antichrist as a singular individual who appears at some time in the future, near the “end of the world”, to be involved in the “Final Battle” between the forces of good and evil.

Is this picture of Antichrist found in the Bible? Let’s find out.

Ironically the term appears only FIVE times in the whole Bible and all the occurrences are in one small book – The Epistles of John.

The word itself is of Greek origin. In the original Greek it is “antichristos”, (as you can see, it’s transliterated faithfully into English!) made up of the two Greek words “anti” and “christos”. The word “Anti” means an opposite or opponent (as in ‘antidote’ – something that counteracts the effects of poison), or it can mean “instead of” or “substitute for” – literally “in the room of” (as in ‘anticlimax’ – an event having strikingly less impact than the anticipated event it replaces!).

“Christos” or Christ comes from the Hebrew word “Messiah” which literally means, “anointed one”.

So, simply put, an antichrist is someone or something that is in opposition to Christ (Jesus), either in fighting against Christ as an opponent, or in being put forward as a substitute (replacement) for Christ.

1 John 2:18 “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.”

Notice that John says antichrist was already in the world in HIS time (that is, the 1st century), so “antichrist” is **NOT** just a future concept. Also John uses the plural antichrists, so antichrist is **NOT** just a singular individual, but can represent a group of people, or a system. John says they had ‘heard’ that antichrist should come. Jesus himself warned his disciples of this in **Matthew 24:24**, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Here Christ also refers to these ‘false Christs’ in the plural, not singular. The apostle Paul also warned the believers of this happening in Acts 20:28-31.

1 John 2:19 “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

Antichrist originated from the true believers of John’s day – “they went out from us”. This would indicate that antichrist represents a false religious system that is NOW in opposition to truth.

1 John 2:21-22 “[I] have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ: He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”

This ‘opponent’ to Christ and the true gospel is therefore associated with lies and deceit. It/he teaches a false gospel. The main tenet of antichrist involves a denial that Jesus is the Christ, and leads to a denial of the Father - Son relationship that Jesus has with God.

Summary:

Clue 1. Antichrist is one who sets himself up as an opponent to Christ, or as a replacement for Christ.

Clue 2. Antichrist is involved with false teachings, is capable of performing signs and wonders, and will deceive many.

Clue 3. Antichrist originated in the 1st century.

Clue 4. Antichrist is not just a singular individual but can also refer to a group of people – a system.

Clue 5. Antichrist was originally part of the true system of religion (the first century Church).

Clue 6. Antichrist is associated with lies, falsehood and deceit.

Clue 7. Antichrist teaches a doctrine that contradicts the true relationship between God and Jesus.



1 John 4 – The Teachings

From 1 John 2 we learned that Antichrist made its appearance in the first century when individuals who were once part of the true church departed from the teachings of the Bible and established a new system of religion, based on doctrines that deny the true relationship between God as Father and Jesus Christ as His Son. Now we read in 1 John 4:1 “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

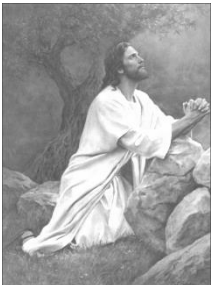
The Apostle John encourages believers to put ideas, doctrines and concepts (here called “spirits”) to the test. That is, don’t believe everything you hear (no matter what the source) but rather examine it and compare it to scripture. Like Israel of old we should expect false teachers to arise and we must be prepared to examine their teachings and practises. (See Deuteronomy 13:1 – 5; 18:20 – 22)

Then John writes in 1 John 4:3 “Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” So after telling his readers to examine these false spirits, John now gives the ultimate test! The key is whether an individual can confess that Jesus came in the flesh. If so – he is of God; if not – he is part of the antichrist movement!

This singular issue is at the crux of the matter. To ‘confess’ something is to believe it firmly and without reservation. Jesus coming in the ‘flesh’ is the central teaching that delineates between truth and error. The phrase ‘in the flesh’ is used in the New Testament to mean more than simply stating Jesus had an outward physical body that looked like ours, which he inhabited for about thirty-three years! The word ‘flesh’ is used extensively in Scripture to represent human nature. That is, ‘flesh’ in the sense of ‘fleshly’ thinking, lusts, and the ‘carnal mind’. (See Romans 3:20; 7:5, 18; 8:5, 6 - 7 [carnally minded]; 13:14)

John wrote these words because there were people in his day claiming that Jesus was a spirit who only used a body for 33 years and then discarded the body when he died. The apostle John says that this is antichrist teaching because it separates Jesus from his body and teaches that Jesus did not really come “in the flesh”, since according to these people, he could exist without the body.

The truth of the matter is that Jesus was born of a human mother, with God as his father (Luke 1:34,35; 2 John 3). Because his mother was human, Jesus inherited a nature like ours, which was tempted to sin (Matthew 4:4). His nature was identical to ours. He was tempted like we are; he had the promptings and enticements common to all human beings. Yet, unlike us, he NEVER gave into temptation but lived a perfectly sinless life. (Hebrews 2:14; 4:15; Romans 8:3) When the body of Jesus died, Jesus himself died and remained dead for three days (Acts 2:23-32; Matthew 16:21). After that, Jesus was resurrected and his body was changed to flesh and spirit, instead of flesh and blood (Luke 24:36-43; Acts 2:24,32).



Jesus was victorious over every prompting to sin that he ever faced. His struggle to overcome the sinful nature he had is exemplified in Matthew 26:38-42 when he was in the Garden of Gethsemane. He obviously had a “will” opposed to the “will” of God, his father. Yet strengthened by the knowledge that God was his Father and the ministration of angels, Jesus triumphed over sin, was crucified as a sinless man, and was raised by God to immortality with a new nature incapable of sin. This is the hope of all true Christians who try to follow in the steps of Jesus. (Matthew 26:36-42; Luke 22:41-44)

Antichrist teaches something opposed to this. A doctrine that says Jesus really didn’t have a nature like ours - that it would have been impossible for him to sin, because his “body” was not part of who he really was, but just a temporary shell that he occupied.

SUMMARY OF CLUES 8-10

Clue 8. Antichrist will be a popular religious system.

Clue 9. The Antichrist system will teach that Jesus didn’t have our nature.

Clue 10. Antichrists had already left the true church and begun their corrupting influences before John wrote his epistles. Antichrist is a false system of religion, paralleling the true church.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. **Hebrew 4:15**

Clues to Antichrist – Outside of John’s Epistles 2 Thessalonians 2 – The Man of Sin



The disciples of the First Century were already looking for Christ to return and ‘gather’ the believers to himself and to restore the Kingdom to Israel (vs.1, Acts 1:6). Paul had to make it very clear to them that Christ’s return was not imminent because there had to be a ‘falling away’ from the truth first. Paul makes it very apparent that the Man of Sin (or Antichrist system) would be revealed BEFORE Jesus Christ returned to gather the believers for judgment and to establish God’s Kingdom on earth. Therefore, believers would be present to witness the manifestation of the Man of Sin power, and would not be spared his influences! In fact, believers in the First Century had already experienced suffering at the hands of this power.

Recall that John said the antichrists ‘went out’ from the true church (1 John 2:19). ‘The Man of Sin’ spoken of here in 2 Thessalonians 2 is this same class of individuals. They ‘fell away’ or apostatised from the true church, and began teaching a false gospel. The connection to the ‘Antichrist’ of John’s epistles is further strengthened in 2 Thessalonians 2:4 where the Man of Sin ‘opposeth’ God and ‘exalts himself’ above God – and as a replacement – sits ‘as God’ in his ‘temple’! This “man of Sin” is therefore in every sense opposed to God and hence Antichrist! As John says “He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” (1 John 2:22)

When John and Paul wrote these words the Temple in Jerusalem was soon going to be destroyed (by the Romans in 70 A.D.). Yet Antichrist (or the Man of Sin) was about to be revealed (in fact was “already at work”) and would continue to exist for almost 2000 years, since he wouldn’t be destroyed until Christ’s return (verse 8). So the temple in which the Man of Sin sits, must refer to a self-proclaimed ‘temple of God’ – not the one in Jerusalem (which has not existed for almost 2000 years). Note that believers are called the ‘temple of God’ throughout scripture (1 Peter 2:4-6; 1 Timothy 3:15) and this false system (Antichrist) arose from out of the midst of the true believers – so this false organization retains much of the outward appearance of the ‘true church’ or ‘temple’ of God, calling their very own buildings “temples”! In fact, Antichrist claims to represent the truth of Jesus Christ, but its Gospel is actually a “false Gospel”!

Paul makes it obvious that this false system will be destroyed when Jesus returns (vs.8). This false system is one of deception and deceit (vs. 9). False miracles and claims of supernatural power will be a hallmark of the Antichrist. The claims of truth and power made by this system will be so influential that even the very elect (or true believers) will in some cases be deluded.

Why is this system so popular? It seems many people favour falsehood because they do not have a love for ‘truth’. The truth sometimes hurts and so people would often rather believe a lie. God has so designed His Word that one must earnestly seek for His truth from the Bible to escape the delusion of the lies to come (vs.10-12). Likewise, Jesus spoke in parables whilst he was on earth so that only those with ‘ears to hear’ would understand his words (Mark 4:11-12). As John exhorts to ‘test the spirits/doctrines’ to ensure they are from God, Paul here warns against the ‘strong delusion’.

Jesus himself warned of false prophets and false Christs who would deceive the very elect because their love of truth would grow cold (Matthew 24:11-13).

Paul elsewhere spoke of the attitude of this type of people when he wrote in 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (RSV): *For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.*

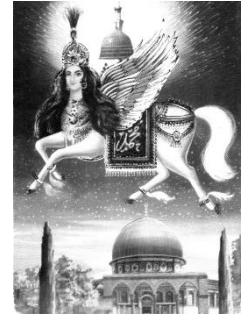
SUMMARY OF CLUES:

- CLUE 11.** The Man of Sin will appear before Christ returns to gather believers to himself.
- CLUE 12.** When the Man of Sin is revealed, there will also be an apostasy from the true gospel.
- CLUE 13.** The Man of Sin exalts himself over all.
- CLUE 14.** The Man of Sin claims to be God.
- CLUE 15.** The Man of Sin rules from a pseudo temple of God.
- CLUE 16.** The Man of Sin will be destroyed by Christ at his coming.
- CLUE 17.** The Man of Sin performs signs and wonders that deceive many people.
- CLUE 18.** People will only be saved from this system if they have a strong love for God’s truth.
- CLUE 19.** Some doctrines of this false system include dietary regulations and enforced celibacy.
- CLUE 20.** This false system persecutes true believers and gains wealth through merchandizing.

The Muslim View

The concept of an End Days, in which God's Kingdom will be established on earth, exists in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam – though it is sometimes suppressed in all three faiths.

Arabs (like the Jews) are also descendants from Abraham (through Ishmael and Esau) and therefore stake a claim to the land of Israel and its holy sites. According to Muslim tradition, the angel Gabriel guided Muhammad on his journey, after placing him on the winged horse, Al-Burak. In Jerusalem Muhammad dismounted by the gate to the mosque and tied the horse to the iron ring that was affixed to the Western Wall. From the top of the great rock on the Temple Mount, Muhammad ascended to heaven, saw Paradise and Hell, met figures from the Bible and the New Testament, and spoke to Allah about the precepts of Islam.



The stakes claimed do not just involve geography however – religion is also an issue. The Prophet Muhammad's initial plan was to establish a religion that would take the best from Christianity and Judaism, avoiding the errors in both. Muslim treatment of Jews and Christians was at first very fair and respectful. The more militant Islamic position common today, grew more from a result of mistreatment of Muslims by others (especially Christians), than from basic Muslim theology.

Muslims see the moral decay in society today as a sign that the end is near. While they bemoan the rampant murder and adultery in today's world, to Muslims a classic example of the rise of immorality is the prevalence of beauty contests. This mindset was recently demonstrated when the 2002 Miss World pageant was moved from Nigeria to London because of violent Muslim protests. The abundance of war and famine also heralds the end, and in a classic case of hyperbole, some Muslims say the sun rising in the west will climax these events!

Muslims see themselves taking an active role in end time events, since Muhammad said, "God sent me with a sword, just before the Hour . . ." - hence the phrase "Jihad" (or "Holy War"). In fact, some Muslims believe the restoration of the Jews and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was prophesied in the Koran. However, they believe God gathered the Jews so they would be punished by the conquest of Islam.

As a final and conclusive sign of "End Times", Muslims predict the rise of a Jewish Antichrist (called "Dajjal" in Arabic) who will attempt to destroy the Dome of the Rock and help Jews build their third temple. Islam teaches that Antichrist and his Jewish followers will have some success before the Muslim prophet Jesus returns to defeat them in battle, giving the Jews the choice of converting to Islam, or death. Jesus will then raise the dead, administer the judgment in the valley of Jehoshaphat and convert the world to Islam.

Jesus will rule from Jerusalem. The Ka'ba (Islam's shrine in Mecca) will be moved to Jerusalem for this "Messianic age". Islam's armies will then be on the move, supported by Jesus, to conquer Constantinople and Rome and to recover treasures taken from the Temple by the Romans in A.D. 70. These treasures will be put in the Dome of the Rock – which will be used as the millennial temple. Killing all pigs, breaking all crosses, and leaving Islam as the world's sole faith will highlight Jesus' reign.

Egyptian writer Sa'id Ayyub's book "Al-Massih al-Dajjal", that is, "The Antichrist", expands radically on the old Islamic idea that at history's finale a Jewish Antichrist will rule until Jesus, a Muslim prophet, returns to defeat him. The cover of his book shows a hook-nosed man wearing a Star of David on his neck, an army coat with a U.S. flag and a Hammer & Sickle on the shoulders, and missiles on his back. Published in 1987, this book spawned an entire genre of Islamic books on the End, many selling out before they reached the shelves of bazaars and bookstores in Cairo!

MUSLIM VIEW ON THE PURPOSE OF THE DOME OF THE ROCK

"The building, though, provides clues to its purpose. Its Byzantine form half-suggests a church, and the Dome overshadows the city's Christian shrines. Inside, mosaic inscriptions from the Koran address "the people of the book", the Islamic name for the religions of the Bible; here clearly the Christians: "Do not say things about God but the truth! The Messiah Jesus, son of Mary is indeed a messenger of God . . . So believe in God and all the messengers, and stop talking about a trinity . . . Verily God is the God of Unity. Lord Almighty! That God would beget a child? Either in the Heaven or on the Earth?"

For the Jews the message was even simpler; the Dome stands where everyone knew the Temple did. 'Islam', the building says, ' is the culmination of Judaism and Christianity.'"

('The End of Days – Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount' by Gershom Gorenberg p.72)

The Jewish View

The Jews have always had a very strong Messianic Hope. "Great Deliverers" have been a hallmark of their faith from the earliest days. Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, David . . . are but a few names that come to mind.

Moses himself prophesied the words of God, "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken . . . and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him . . . whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19)

Jews have looked for the fulfilment of this prophecy ever since. The irony is that their Messiah came in the person of Jesus Christ and they rejected him. This fact will become obvious to them in the near future!

The Jews see their Messiah as being a righteous king descended from David, who will restore Jewish fortunes and bring in an era of peace. They believe the Messiah is human, not divine – a prophet like Moses. They do not believe he will also be the Son of God – this mistake caused them to reject Jesus when he came the first time.

"End Time" prophecies, from a Jewish perspective, revolve around the Temple. The fact that there must be a third temple built is undisputable in Jewish tradition. There are supposedly 613 Divine Commandments in the Jewish Torah. Commandment Number 20 is "Build the third temple". Yet there is a debate in Jewish circles over WHO must build it! Tradition states that when the Messiah comes, he will build the temple. Some Jews feel THEY must commence this work NOW by getting rid of the Dome of the Rock – thus precipitating Messiah's coming.



The problem lies in the fact that the Temple Mount is unclean and the Jews consider themselves ceremonially defiled. So work on the Temple cannot begin without a 'cleansing' first. Cleansing can only take place (under Jewish tradition) when the ashes of a Red Heifer are sprinkled in water, and that water is used to cleanse the people and the Mount. There have supposedly only been 9 red heifers in history (according to Jewish tradition) and finding the tenth will signal Messiah's coming!



So a sequence of events including the killing of a 3 year-old Red Heifer, the purifying of a priestly class, Messiah's arrival and the building of the third temple, are all part of the Jewish view of end times. For this purpose priestly garments have been rigorously made to Divine specifications, along with the necessary sacrificial utensils. There was even a plan to secretly raise a special class of Levitical boys, to be kept pure and undefiled in a hidden complex, that they might serve as priests in the future Temple!

Jewish writer Meir Kahane, in his 1983 book "Forty Years" wrote: "The Holocaust was the worst possible desecration of the Name [of God], because the Jews were so weak. God therefore created the State of Israel to prove His might. He gave the Jews forty years (or a few more, or a few less) to prove themselves – to create a theocracy, to drive out the Arab . . . cleanse the Temple Mount – before the End. If the Jew passed the test, redemption would come peacefully. If not, it would be preceded by a needless holocaust, more horrible than anything we have yet endured." Meir Kahane was shot dead in New York City in 1988 by an Islamic extremist!

In 1967, after Israel reclaimed Jerusalem during the six-day-war, and established it as their national capital, Zorach Warhaftig (Religious Affairs Minister) said in the Knesset: "The Temple Mount belongs to us but isn't in our hands. It's in the hands of millions of Muslims. I see no reason to turn a conflict with the Arabs into a battle with all Muslims, all the way to Indonesia." The Israeli government of the time therefore pursued a policy that left the Temple Mount under Muslim control, even though many Jews wanted to blow up the Dome of the Rock, and reclaim the Mount for Jews.

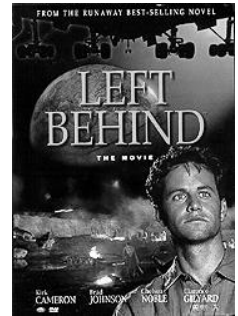
As a Jewish Rabbi of Jerusalem once said, "If Zorach Warhaftig hadn't given the Temple back, the Messiah would have come in 1967!"

He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. **Luke 1:33**

The "Popular" Christian View

Of the three faiths we have considered in our 'Worldview of Antichrist' sessions, the "popular" Christian view is the most extensive and elaborate.

We will only attempt to give a brief summary of the "popular" Christian view, based on the 'Left Behind' series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins. These books pick up on the ideas expressed in earlier writings by Hal Lindsey ("The Late Great Planet Earth", "The Final Battle" and others). In later sessions we will look in more detail at some of the events predicted by these writers, contrasting and comparing the three worldviews of Antichrist with each other and the teachings of the Bible.



Some of the signs these Christians believe herald the return of Christ are: Israel returning to the land in prosperity and dwelling in peace, a move to one global currency, an invasion of Israel by Russia and her allies (like Ethiopia, Libya and Iraq) that is supernaturally defeated, and the rising influence of a popular UN leader - later revealed as the Antichrist (a singular future individual).

The climax of all these events will be the "rapture" to heaven of the faithful Christians and all children 12 years of age and under (including fetuses) to be with Christ. The "raptured" ones leave behind all material possessions like clothes and jewellery, in a "pile" where they last were! This results in worldwide panic and catastrophe as cars left driverless cause massive pileups, planes without pilots crash to earth, and the people taken leave behind relatives and friends wondering what strange thing has happened. Did aliens vaporize all their loved ones? Was it the result of the build-up of nuclear waste that consumed only people with certain DNA? Or was it an atmospheric subatomic condition that some people's electromagnetism couldn't resist? Would anyone "left behind" ever really know?

According to the "popular" Christian view, everyone not "raptured" is 'left behind' to face seven years of tribulation and distress before Christ returns to set up the kingdom. At this very time, the beginning of the tribulation, a prominent Jew is the first to show support for the 'Antichrist' figure, a handsome young European, who makes his first appearance as a rising star on the global political scene. Because of his charm, incredible knowledge and charismatic speeches he is 'pushed' into power by other world leaders desperate for stability, and then starts to show his true colours. This 'Antichrist' makes a covenant of peace with the Jews, builds them a Third Temple (after convincing the Arabs to move the Dome of the Rock to a rebuilt Babylon) and is heralded as a hero by the Jewish people. Later on, in full power, Antichrist takes over the Temple as his own headquarters, desecrates it and turns the Jews against him.

Thus Antichrist, after a meek and humble beginning, shows himself to be a ruthless dictator and a blasphemer of God, in the end. People are commanded to worship him or face the guillotine. Anyone who opposes him or questions him is disposed of immediately. The world moves towards one world government, one currency, one religion and one language. All in the name of peace and prosperity for everyone.

This Antichrist is believed to be Satan incarnate and he performs many signs and wonders, doesn't need to sleep, seems to control the weather and appears at times in glowing clothes. He is opposed by a faithful group of Christians (converted after being 'left behind'), who form a "Tribulation Force". At the end of the seven years of terrible tribulation Jesus returns, destroys the Antichrist and rules *over* the earth with his saints for 1000 years.

A short quote from the ninth book in the series called "Desecration" (page 156) will give the gist of the "Left Behind" series:

"From the time he [Antichrist] negotiated with the Muslims to move the Dome of the Rock mosque to New Babylon, the potentate made it clear that all activity in the rebuilt Jewish temple would be allowed only with his approval. It is no secret that Orthodox Jews have continued with the daily rituals and sacrifices of their own faith even after Enigma Babylon One World Faith was instituted as the only legal international religion, designed to incorporate the tenets of all faiths. After His Excellency resurrected himself from the dead, he became our object of worship, resulting in the dissolution of One World Faith and the establishing of Carpathianism. Still, the Jews and a faction of fundamentalist Christians known as Judah-ites – after their leader, self-proclaimed Messianic Jew, Dr. Tsion Ben-Judah – remain the last holdouts against our true and living god [the Antichrist]."