

A COMPOSITE PICTURE OF THE “FINAL WORLD RULER” IN DANIEL 7-11

“The key to understanding Daniel 7—12 of Daniel’s prophecy is to understand that Daniel is focusing his attention on this one great ruler and his kingdom which will arise in the end time.”¹ This paper will build a composite picture of the final world ruler from Daniel chapters seven through eleven based on his type, title, rise, revelation, character, and collapse.

His Type

This future ruler is most often referred to as the Antichrist, coming from the Greek (*Antichristos*), where “anti” means both “against” and “in the place of” for he will both oppose Christ, and look to take over His place. John tells us that while there have been many antichrists, there is still one Antichrist yet to come (1 John 2:18). The implication by John is that this future Antichrist will not only supersede but also be the culmination of all prior antichrists. Therefore, in order to build a composite of this final ruler we must look at these prior antichrists, in particular Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the eighth ruler of the Seleucid Empire from 175–163 B.C., who the Antichrist will be a type of.²

The Antichrist will be a type of Antiochus Epiphanes in his similar but magnified attributes and actions therefore it is valuable to see how and why Antiochus Epiphanes rose to

¹ John F. Walvoord, *DANIEL, The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1971), p. 195; Quoting J. Dwight Pentecost, “Prophecy for Today”, pp. 82, 83.

² Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, vol. 18, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 225. Dan. 8:9-12; 23-25.

power. Antiochus Epiphanes, the “small horn” (קַרְנֵי קָטָן lit. “less than significant”)³, started from insignificant beginnings but through his aggressive military campaigns against the south, east, and the holy land, he rose to prominence among the four other generals who had divided up the vast empire upon the death of Alexander the Great (Dan. 8:8-9).⁴ Even though he started “small”, as Antiochus grew in power so did his cruel treatment of the Jewish people⁵, having executed thousands throughout his reign (2 Maccabees 5:11–14). As his prominence grew, so did his pride, self-exaltation, and arrogance beginning with his self-appointed title “Epiphanes” (“illustrious one”), having coinage minted in his likeness and inscribed with *theos epiphanēs* (“God manifest”)⁶, and culminating in his opposition of the “Prince of princes”, an allusion to God himself, by forbidding worship and laying waste to the sanctuary.⁷ In 165 B.C. we see the end of Jerusalem’s oppression by Antiochus at the hands of Judas Maccabeus, its sanctuary is purified, and its offerings and worship are restored (2 Maccabees 9:1).

Knowing the attributes and actions of Antiochus helps us better understand Daniel’s prophetic visions as it provides a foreshadowing of what the Antichrist will do. Antiochus had an insignificant beginning, yet as he gradually conquered people and accumulated power he magnified himself, oppressed the Jewish people, prohibited their worship, defiled their

³ Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: SESB Version., electronic ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2003), Da 8:9.

⁴ J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*, ed. H. Wayne House and William D. Barrick, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020), 491.

⁵ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 9 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 688–689. By the stars we are to understand the people of God.

⁶ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, 235.

⁷ Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 23, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), 175. Forbidding worship meant no burnt offerings or sacrifices in the temple (1 Macc. 1:45). The state of the sanctuary was in ruins, polluted, and trampled (1 Macc. 1:39,46; 3:45).

sanctuary, deified himself, but who ultimately was defeated by a redeemer.⁸ Comparing Dan. 8:23-27 with verses 9-14, we see that the attributes and actions of the Antichrist parallel those of Antiochus.

His Title

In building our composite of this future world ruler it will be beneficial to investigate the various names and titles given in Daniel to this figure as they can imply designation, position, rank, and status.

The little horn (Dan. 7:8)

The title of “little horn” as seen in Daniel 7:8 refers to the final world ruler, the Antichrist and a similar title is given to Antiochus in Daniel 8:9 who is a “type” that prefigures the Antichrist. This title implies that the Antichrist will have an insignificant beginning which could mean either position, rank, or status but the implication is that he will not initially be a prominent figure on the world scene but will rise to power from seemingly nowhere to gain control over the fourth kingdom (Dan. 7:24-25; Rev. 13:1-10).

A king, insolent and skilled in intrigue (Dan. 8:23)

The Antichrist’s kingship will be characterized by his merciless treatment and oppressive tactics of those who oppose him. The term “skilled in intrigue” can either be understood in a positive light as being skilled in solving difficult problems or in a more negative manner as being skilled in deceitful dealings – one who is a “master of political intrigue”.⁹ I

⁸ Dan 8:9-13, 24-25; 11:24, 28, 30-31. Insignificant beginning. Attacked the saints (Jewish people) and defiles the sanctuary. Self-exaltation and deification.

⁹ J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*, 512.

prefer to see this term “skilled in intrigue” as describing someone who is skilled in solving difficult problems as this fits better fits the description of the tribulation leader. After the rapture, this tribulation leader will be able to solve the difficult problems of the world, bringing temporary peace, until the mid-point of the tribulation period is reached when his real “merciless” treatment begins.

The one who makes desolate (Dan. 9:27)

This title implies designation as the Antichrist himself will be the one who mid-way through the tribulation period will begin persecution of his opponents, halt the sacrificial system, forbid worship in the temple, deify and exalting himself requiring others to worship him and thereby causing the temple to become desolate.¹⁰

The king who does as he pleases (Dan. 11:36)

The term “as he pleases” describes not only his actions but his very nature which is to do his will and not God’s will. Like Antiochus before him, his ability to persuade, to problem solve, and to make significant gains will lead the Antichrist to arrogantly believe in his own self-sufficiency.¹¹

The man of lawlessness (2 Thess. 2:3)

In his letter to the Thessalonians, Paul refers to the “man of lawlessness” as one to come who will deceive, oppose, take his seat in the temple, and exalts himself above God (2 Thess. 2:3-4). The future world ruler who carries this title will be vile, blasphemous, and openly

¹⁰ Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, The Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 319.

¹¹ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, 306.

opposed to God's law. He is not Satan himself but will be empowered by him to bring destruction upon God's people, plans, and purposes.¹²

His Rise

The rise of the Antichrist was prophesied in the both the Old Testament and in the New Testament by Jesus himself (Matt. 24:11-31). The Antichrist will appear on the world scene seemingly out of obscurity in the midst of chaotic times filled with many false prophets and false Christs, and he will be the culmination of all those antichrists before him, the ultimate false Christ, the "son of perdition", the "man of lawlessness". According to 2 Thess. 2:6-7, it is the Holy Spirit who is currently restraining the Antichrist from revealing himself, therefore I believe that when the church is raptured, so too will the Spirit who is working in and through the church.¹³ When the Rapture occurs and the restraints are removed, the Antichrist will rise to power as part of a ten nation coalition (Dan. 7:24) and display an unnatural ability to bring unprecedented peace in the midst of a chaotic post-Rapture scene. The apostle Paul tells of the rise of the Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, who will "come in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and deceptive wickedness" (2 Thess.2:9-10), and whose arrival will signal the end of an age (1 John 2:18), just before Christ's second coming.

His Revelation

In our pursuit to build a composite of this final world ruler it is imperative that we understand when this figure will be revealed in history. The apostle Paul gives us a few hints of

¹² 2 Thess. 2:9 Distinguishes the lawless one from Satan. 2 Thess. 2:3 Son of Destruction. John 17:12, Rev. 13:2 The power, authority, and the throne of Satan was given over to the one with the title Son of Perdition.

¹³ Mark Hitchcock, *The End*, (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2012), 257.

events that must happen in order when resolving the timing of the Antichrist's revelation. The event that must occur *first*, as mentioned in the previous section, is the departure of the Holy Spirit (2 Thess. 2:6-10). Paul says that lawlessness is currently happening, but that a specific event will occur and after which, lawlessness will culminate in the deeds of the "man of lawlessness". "He who now restrains" refers to the Holy Spirit at work in and through the church, therefore; when the church is raptured, the restraint will be removed, and that will setup the Antichrist to be revealed.

The *second* event that must occur following the Rapture is the signing of a peace treaty with the nation of Israel. In the face of the chaotic times and the mighty forces of the yet-to-be-revealed Antichrist, the nation of Israel will agree to a seven year treaty for the promise of their protection. The first three and a half years of the treaty will foster in peace for Israel but at the mid-point of the seven year agreement, the Antichrist will break the agreement, put an end to the sacrificial system, and begin to persecute all those who oppose him. The breaking of the treaty at the three and a half year mark begins the "great tribulation", and defines the time of the great apostasy by the Antichrist.¹⁴

The *third* event that must occur following the signing and subsequent breaking of the treaty is the ultimate act of apostasy, the abomination of desolation, committed by the Antichrist himself (2 Thess. 2:2-3). In the context of when the Day of the Lord would occur, Paul tells the Thessalonians that the Antichrist must first appear and perform the abomination of desolation and that would be a precursor to the Day of the Lord. After halting the sacrificial system and forbidding worship, the Antichrist will commit the ultimate act of apostasy, deifying himself,

¹⁴ Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, 271.

setting up an idol in the temple, and requiring allegiance and worship from the world (Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:11).¹⁵

His Character

Character traits can be defined as those values that are revealed over time in different situations whereas personality traits are more straightforward and visible. Building on our composite of the Antichrist it will be profitable to survey his character traits as displayed throughout the biblical narrative.

Arrogant, Boastful, and Blaspheous (Dan. 7:8, 11:36)

The Antichrist is described in Daniel 7:8 as one who will “possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.” This future world ruler will have the gift of gab, being able to eloquently speak – wooing the unbelieving masses – while at the same time from the same mouth speaking “monstrous things” against God.

Self-exultation and Self-deification (Dan. 8:25, 11:36)

Through his shrewdness, his deceit, and by satanic power, the Antichrist “will exalt and magnify himself above every god” (Dan. 8:25). True to his character and desiring to “replace” God and be worshipped like God (Isa. 14:13-14), in an act of ultimate self-deification will take a seat in the temple. (2 Thess. 2:4)

¹⁵ John Joseph Collins and Adela Yarbro Collins, *Daniel: A Commentary on the Book of Daniel*, ed. Frank Moore Cross, *Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 357.

Promises Peace but Delivers Destruction (Dan. 8:25; 9:27, 1 Macc. 1:30; 2 Macc. 5:24-26)

His rise from obscurity will begin as the Antichrist brings unprecedented world peace to a chaotic post-rapture world scene. It will be under this illusion and promise of peace that the nation of Israel will sign the seven year treaty. However, it is at this time of “security” that the Antichrist will begin his destruction upon God’s people, plans, and purposes (Dan. 8:25).¹⁶

Desires Worship but Does Not Desire Women (2 Thess. 2:4. Dan. 11:37)

Post-rapture the world will be in wonder of the Antichrist which will eventually turn into worship. In the “great tribulation” period, the latter three and a half years, the Antichrist will halt the sacrificial system and forbid temple worship, and in place of temple worship, will demand worship himself as a god. Paul mentions in 2 Thessalonians 2:10 that there will be those who “did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” and therefore they will be deceived into worshipping the Antichrist.

In Daniel 11:37 we see the character of the Antichrist will be someone who has no regard for two things: the “God of his fathers” and that “desired by women”. The first term “God of his fathers” as some, including the early church fathers, have suggested would imply that the Antichrist will be ethnically Jewish.¹⁷ However, I find it hard to fathom this position simply by looking at some of the other character traits the Antichrist possesses in regard to the Jewish people. We know that he will attack them, attack their sanctuary, and attack their Scriptures. In Daniel 8:24 and 11:24 we see the Antichrist as a persecutor of the Jewish people. Additionally, we see that the Antichrist will have no regard for that “desired by women”. In the context of

¹⁶ J. Dwight Pentecost, “Daniel,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1357–1358.

¹⁷ J. Paul Tanner, *Daniel*, 698.

Daniel 11, I believe the implication here is that it was the desire of Jewish women to be the vessel by which the Messiah was born. “The reason that antichrist has no respect for the Desire of women is that he will seek to take that place himself.”¹⁸

His Collapse

To wrap up our composite of the final world ruler it is valuable to know how his story ends – in destruction! The “little horn”, who rose from obscurity and grew in power and pride, blaspheming God and exulting himself, will ultimately be judged when the Lord comes (Dan. 7:11), destroyed “by the splendor of his Christ’s coming” (Dan. 11:45, 2 Thess. 2:8-9). In Revelation 19:19-21 John says the fate of the “beast” is sealed as he will be “thrown into the lake of fire at Christ’s return”. The implication here is that the judgment of God will be final and not even the Antichrist himself in all his satanic power will be rescued from that fate.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid., 702.

¹⁹ H. D. M. Spence, *Daniel*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 333.

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